

**JOINT MEETING
RYE WATER DISTRICT
&
RYE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
AGENDA**

Tuesday, October 1, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.

Rye Town Hall & via Zoom

Rye Water District Present: Commission Chair Scott Marion, Vice-Chair Rosalie Lopresto, Commissioner Tom Mack, District Administrator Brian Goetz, and Superintendent Arik Jones

RCC Present: Chair Susan Shepcaro, Karen Oliver, Sally King, Suzanne McFarland, and Paula Mahoney

I. CALL TO ORDER

RCC Chair Susan Shepcaro opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and turned the meeting over to RWD Commissioner Scott Marion.

II. BUSINESS:

The Rye Water District and the Rye Conservation Commission will be holding a joint meeting to discuss the work that will be conducted at the Brown Lane Farm property in connection with the exploration of a new water source. Brush cutting at the property to provide a roadway out to the drilling site will begin on Thursday, October 3rd and work will continue on Friday, October 4th. The trail system will be closed for public access on October 3rd through the 4th.

RWD Chair Scott Marion explained that the intent was to access the Brown Lane Farm property last winter to explore the site for a potential water source, as the Water District is looking to expand its sources. The plan to explore the property has been approved, in conjunction with RCC, by Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) as the conservation easement holder for the property. He noted that this meeting is to give an update on how the work will be done. He also noted that the Town is in need of water and this property has potential. He continued that RWD has been doing a lot of preliminary work by doing surface water testing and testing of private wells on surrounding properties to see the water quality. The District has enough information that suggests the District should move forward with digging a test well to determine water flow and quality.

RWD Commissioner Mack explained that the intent is to use the access trail going into the property. The adjacent landowner has allowed RWD access across the back of their property so

there will be less disturbance of the Brown Farm Lane conservation land. RWD is working to limit the amount of cutting that needs to be done to get the drill rig onto the site.

RWD Chair Marion further explained that Mrs. Brown has graciously allowed RWD to cut across the back corner of her property, which would basically minimize the amount of tree cutting that would need to be done.

It was noted that the adjacent landowner, Patricia Brown, is the person who conserved the property that is now known as Brown Lane Farm, which is the site being considered as a possible water source.

RWD Commissioner Mack noted that a site walk was conducted with Patricia Brown. RWD laid out the area where the drill rig would need to come in. In order to bring the drill rig in on the existing trail, a wide area would need to be cut in order to make the two ninety degree turns. Mrs. Brown agreed it would be much less invasive to go in through her property. The Water District has agreed to go in after the fact to do some planting to close the path through her property. The two ninety degree turns will still be cut so the support trucks can get in during the drilling.

RWD Superintendent Arik Jones explained that tree cutting is not really anticipated. The majority of the cutting will be saplings that are quite overgrown. The work will be done by a mini excavator, which will allow for the selection of only what needs to be trimmed. The intent is to start the cutting work on Thursday of this week. It's anticipated that it will only take one day to do the work. The trails will be closed on that day; however, it's recommended to close the trails for two days in case some additional cleanup work is needed. He further explained that the "cutting" is really more of a mulching process. Moving forward, the drilling will be about a weeklong process, including the airflow test and water quality testing. From that point, the process would be permitting by DES, if it appears that it is a viable well source. The DES permitting process could take five or six months. Superintendent Jones continued there's an area that crosses the Bailey Brook streambed. The plan is to put timber matting over that area for the equipment to traverse.

RWD Commissioner Mack noted that it will probably take a day to get the drillers into the property and to set up. The second day the drilling will start, which will take about two days. After that time, it will take a day to break it all down and take the equipment out. There won't be continuous drilling for a week. It will be about two to three days.

It was noted that not all trails will be closed.

RWD Administrator Brian Goetz explained that the pumping will give a sense of what the water quality is in that location. That information will be used to put together a plan for a bigger test before any permitting can happen. The bigger test requires monitoring the wetlands and peripheral wells. All that information has to be vetted before any source goes online. There's a full permitting process with DES, which will require all the essential steps to make sure the source is adequate. For the District itself, it's quite a bit of money, time and effort. The District

will certainly not want to put that kind of investment into something that is not really a feasible long-term option.

Bill Epperson, Select Board Member, 324 West Road, asked if there is any evidence that there's a different aquifer in this area.

RWD Commissioner Mack explained that the whole region is in the same bedrock aquifer. There are indications that it's high yield rock and would be favorable for a well.

Selectman Epperson asked if the water would be just running out faster by having all the wells in the same aquifer.

RWD Commissioner Mack explained that in having all the wells in the same tight packed area, they will drain that area. Right now, the District has all their wells in the same tightly packed area, so this aquifer can't be accessed. He continued there are probably very good conditions throughout the Town, but there's no place to put a well that meets the requirements and setbacks.

Selectman Epperson asked if the proposed treatment plant would mitigate the iron issue out of Cedar Run and this well, if there is an issue with iron.

RWD Superintendent Jones commented that the first step is to do this work in order to understand the quality of the water.

Ritchie White, 30 Lang Road, encouraged the Conservation Commission and Water District to work together to coordinate future purchases of land with the ability of possibly having a well source.

RCC Member Sally King noted that this conservation piece was looked at as a possible future well site during the purchasing process.

Tom King, 535 Wallis Road, commented that RCC has the foresight to negotiate water rights on properties, not just on this property, but others. They have been doing this for well over a decade. He also commented that he's glad the Water District has started moving aggressively to address the water issues, both with treatment and supply. He continued that this isn't a short-term solution to Rye's water issues. There are other entities in town that are pushing to set the stage for increased housing density. He hopes RWD is willing and able to "hold the line," until it can be assured there's enough water supply for existing housing. He would encourage RWD to hold off on some developments until the District can support what the Town has now.

Mr. King pointed out that not everyone understands the difference between Rye Water District and the Town. RWD is not the Town and not everyone is a customer of Rye Water District. With an organization such as the Conservation Commission, tax dollars were used to purchase Brown Farm Lane, which comes from the whole town; however, Rye Water District is a subset of that town. He would caution on the way things are done and with discussions about financial aspects of these kinds of arrangements. It should be obvious to the residents that there is that distinction.

There were no further questions from RCC or the public with regard to the water source investigation at the Brown Lane Farm property.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

- Brian Goetz introduced himself as the new Rye Water District Administrator and spoke about his background working with water systems throughout New Hampshire.
- Rye Water District is now holding their monthly meetings at the Rye Town Hall at 10 Central Road. The meetings are held the first and third Wednesday of the month at 8:30 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:37 p.m., Karen Oliver moved to adjourn the Conservation Commission meeting. Seconded by Paula Mahoney. Vote: 5-0

At 6:37 p.m., Scott Marion moved to adjourn the meeting of the Rye Water District. Seconded by Rosalie Lopresto. Vote: 3-0

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F Ledger