MEETING MINUTES

GROUNDWATER WASTEWATER DISCHARGE CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2025
ROPEWALK ROOM
26 COURT ST • PLYMOUTH, MA 02360

Meeting Called to Order: 6:00 PM

Members Present: Josh Bows, Bill Doyle, Martin Enos, Rose Forbes (Clerk), David Golden (Chair), Hampton Watkins (Vice-Chair)

Members Absent: Mark Champagne

Others in Attendance: Doug Pinard (Town of Plymouth Department of Public Works [DPW]) and members of the public.

MEETING MINUTES

Mr. David Golden asked the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) members if there were any comments on the October 27, 2025 meeting minutes. Hearing none, Mr. Golden asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Martin Enos made a motion to accept the minutes and Mr. Josh Bows seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed six in favor, none against, and one not present.

Substance	Approve October 27, 2025 Meeting Minutes					
Last Name	**First Name**	**Yes**	**No**	**Abstain**	**No Vote**	**Not Present**
Bows	Josh	X				
Champagne	Mark					X
Doyle	Bill	X				
Enos	Martin	X				
Forbes	Rose	X				
Watkins	Hampton	X				
Golden	David	X				
TOTALS		6	0	0	0	1

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Golden asked if there were any comments from the public. There were none.

ENDORSEMENT OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Mr. David Golden asked the CAC to vote on the endorsement of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) and opened up the meeting for discussion. Mr. Hampton Watkins wanted to know what the next steps were after the endorsement vote. Mr. Golden explained if the CAC votes to endorse the DEIR, then the Town can send the DEIR to

the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) for review. If the CAC votes to not endorse the DEIR, then a report will need to be made to the Selectboard. The Selectboard will then decide whether or not to send the DEIR to MassDEP.

Mr. Watkins stated a CAC has been assigned for the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWWMP) and asked if the CWWMP CAC will take up the DEIR as part of their activities. He also asked how our vote factors into the CWWMP CAC's efforts. Mr. Golden responded that the GWDCAC's vote and the Selectboard's decision would not be part of the CWWMP evaluation.

Mr. Watkins stated Mr. Doug Pinard indicated there is an iterative process for the DEIR review within the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) office and asked about the timeframe between the time of DEIR receipt and approval. Mr. Pinard stated there is a two-week comment period with each iteration. Mr. Josh Bows stated the MEPA review process can take a year or longer. Mr. Bows also noted a groundwater discharge permit will also be required which is a separate process that will extend the timeframe. Mr. Pinard concurred.

Mr. Watkins stated he was concerned with financial impacts. Will the decision regarding the DEIR have a positive or negative cost impact? Mr. Pinard stated there are cost savings realized by discharging the treated water to the rapid infiltration beds (RIBs) and not pumping the treated water to the ocean outfall.

Mr. Martin Enos stated he was part of the wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) evaluation in 1984 and 1996 and again in 2025. He noted evaluations conducted by CE McGuire and Camp, Dresser, and McKee indicated that siting the WWTP in its current location would be detrimental to the environment. Mr. Enos stated MassDEP noted the WWTP will increase eutrophication in Russell Mills Pond, which is why he questioned Horsley Witten's assessment of low risk to the Eel River watershed in December 2023. Mr. Enos also stated he has been observing the RIBs and they do not work as advertised. On two separate occasions over a five-week period he noticed the same effluent ponding in the RIBs and not draining. He raised concerns that Horsley Witten's computer model was only run one time. Mr. Enos expressed concern that if the RIBs do not work and standing effluent is present, what impact will that have on local businesses (i.e. odors and health hazards to childcare, brewery, bakery, restaurant). He also reiterated concerns that the Town has not installed monitoring wells between the RIBs and Warren Wells Brook.

Mr. Enos also stated he visited the Kingston WWTP and was given answers to his questions but he felt like he still does not have all the answers to his questions/concerns about the Plymouth WWTP and the treated effluent discharge. He stated other Towns are discharging to the ocean.

Ms. Rose Forbes expressed several concerns. One concern is that the Town never provided a revised DEIR showing the changes that had been made based on the CAC's review. Mr. Golden stated the changes were only grammatical; however, Ms. Forbes said she would appreciate the opportunity to review the revised document. Ms. Forbes also stated the Town never responded to the public comments made during the "listening session" meeting and wanted to know when and how the responses will be provided since there were several comments from the public. Mr. Pinard stated there is no plan to respond to the comments. Ms. Forbes also asked about the results of the pilot test, stating she would like to see those. Mr. Pinard said they are not available. Ms. Forbes also expressed concern that the structural stability of the wind turbine can be compromised by hydraulic impacts of discharging treated effluent to the RIBs at a rate of three million gallons per day (3 MGD). She reminded the Town they did not address the wind turbine in the DEIR nor have they properly assessed the foundation depth. The Town did not share her concern so she asked Mr. Pinard if he wants to see the wind turbine fall over. He replied in the negative. Lastly, Ms. Forbes noted the private wells and trout hatchery downgradient of the WWTP RIBs. A

member of the public who lives on Kingfisher Drive attended the listening session and stated all the residences are on private wells in that area. These private wells number more than what the Town is aware of as Ms. Kendra Martin previously stated there were five residences on private wells located downgradient of the WWTP RIBs. Ms. Forbes reiterated there is perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) contamination above the EPA maximum contaminant level in the WWTP effluent and there are likely more contaminants in the effluent than what the Town is testing for which could pose a health risk to those drinking the groundwater if the effluent is not treated with additional unit operations such as activated carbon. In addition, the Horsley Witten model indicated at least a foot increase in surface water at 3 MGD, which Ms. Forbes stated is a real concern for the trout hatchery.

Mr. Watkins asked what happens if the trout hatchery is impacted by the increased discharge of 3 MGD to the RIBs. The Town did not respond.

Mr. Josh Bows stated it is a question of what is more important and that the WWTP will be useful. He further stated there will be future decisions in the Town of Plymouth that trigger the need for additional wastewater treatment and more capacity. Mr. Bowes felt the DEIR included a good alternatives analyses and stated that ocean disposal is a fantasy beyond the existing ocean outfall.

Mr. Watkins asked if the Town can do better than the required treatment and assess additional unit operations as part of tertiary treatment. Mr. Pinard stated they did conduct a pilot test as a potential tertiary treatment and saw some reductions in phosphorus and nitrogen via total suspended solids reduction. He stated the Town received a federal grant and has appropriated funds up to $9 million with the goal of treating phosphorus.

Mr. Watkins mentioned the estuaries program evaluated the Kingston-Duxbury-Plymouth Harbor and noted the principal contributors of contamination to the harbor are the Jones River and Bluefish River, with the WWTP discharge being a minor contributor. He stated the Town is doing a good job at the WWTP before discharging to the ocean.

Mr. Bill Doyle stated he was horrified by previous WWTP operations but has confidence with the current contracts. He is in favor of advanced treatment and would like to see the use of ozone as a unit operation. He stated the Town will need the capacity at the WWTP and feels the effluent could be treated to a higher standard that would allow for groundwater discharge (i.e. Stage 4 water is drinkable). Mr. Doyle stated he appreciated the public comments but did not see a need to respond to those comments.

Following the CAC members' input, Mr. Golden stated he would abstain from voting because there was a possibility of an even split since one CAC member was absent. Mr. Golden asked each member to vote on the DEIR endorsement; two voted in favor, three voted against, one abstention, and one not present.

Substance	Endorse Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)					
Last Name	**First Name**	**Yes**	**No**	**Abstain**	**No Vote**	**Not Present**
Bows	Josh	X				
Champagne	Mark					X
Doyle	Bill	X				

Enos	Martin		X			
Forbes	Rose		X			
Watkins	Hampton		X			
Golden	David			X		
TOTALS		2	3	1	0	1

Mr. Golden stated the CAC voted to not endorse the DEIR. He stated the CAC mission ended with the vote and will only be reconstituted if the Selectboard decides to go forward with the DEIR. Mr. Golden thanked the CAC and community members for their participation.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rose Forbes, Clerk