

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING ON RANDOLPH WATER CRISIS

Meeting held Monday, September 9, 2019 at Town Council meeting at Town Hall
Hearing with: Water Consultant Helen T. Gordon (spoke to Town Council and took their questions, but no Q&A allowed from the general public)

Notes prepared Mr. Jesse Gordon (please send me any edits or corrections; these notes were transcribed live during the event; the entire event should be posted on RCTV for more details).

General discussion:

- Boil-water order in July came about because a main pump broke. That pump served Randolph and Holbrook, but not Braintree (who have another main pump).
- The "boil-water" order was needed because the broken pump reduced pressure in the water distribution lines, so bacteria could infiltrate (normally, pressure keeps bacteria out),
- Air bubbles (water comes out of the tap looking grey) are in the water pipe system, caused by "air entrapment" due to replacing the broken pump.
- Air in the water is not a "contaminant" (i.e. it is not measured), notes the water consultant.
- The new pump also is stronger than the old pump, and hence stirred up sediment in the existing pipes. It's not new sediment; it has always been in the distribution system; but the new pump is strong enough to push more of it out of people's faucets.
- Maybe it'll be fully operational by 2023 (if all permitting goes smoothly); the low-pressure problems should all be fixed by 2019 repairs.
- Consultant Gordon says there is no safety nor health issues in any of the water supply, except during the boil-water order.

Town Council questions and discussion: (mostly focused on construction process and cost; those are mostly omitted here; see the Community Meeting for the more community-oriented questions on water quality!).

- Water consultants for later phases to be interviewed by TriTown board Sept. 26
- Now at "25%" completion phase; and all three communities have appropriated funds and needed town legislation to amend 1882 laws.
- When at 60%/90%/100%, more reports will become available on construction details (and some reports are required to the Commonwealth too)
- Councilor Clerger asks for timing details of problem fixes and those reports (Answer: "Construction will take two years if the stars align, and should be completed by 2023"); and about water discoloration (Answer: bubbly water and discolored water should be fixed by flushing over the next few months).
- Consultant notes on water color that all old pipes leach sediment: "Even if it's brown, it's safe". But they recommend flushing your tap (run it for a minute) until it's clear.

- Councilor Burgess asks about "standpipe" and construction of water towers for buildings, and about auditing the Tri-Town books. Consultant responds that water storage in distribution system is not part of the Tri-Town system (and hence not part of the major construction project). Town Lawyer and DPW head both note that we get reports from Tri-Town automatically, and may audit the Tri-Town books upon request.