

**PUBLIC HEARING OF OCTOBER 17, 2016**

ATTENDANCE

Ten Councillors were present, including President James Walsh and Councillors James Boone, Nathan Boudreau, Ronald Cormier, Scott Graves, Karen Hardern, James Johnson, Marc Morgan, Paul Tassone, and Matthew Vance. Councillor Craig Cormier was absent.

Others in attendance were Mayor Mark Hawke; Robert P. Sims, P.E., CDR|Maguire and OPM for the City's Project; Kevin Olson, Project Designer, Wright-Pierce; Matt LaPointe, Suez Project Manager; Dane Arnold, DPW Director; and, Christopher Coughlin, Assistant City Engineer.

PUBLIC HEARING**#9686**

President James Walsh opened the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chamber, reading aloud the following Hearing Notice:

Notice is hereby given that the City Council will conduct a Public Hearing on Monday, October 17, 2016 at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chamber, Room 219, City Hall, 95 Pleasant Street, Gardner, Massachusetts, to hear testimony concerning the DPW Plan to Upgrade the Dewatering Equipment and Pursuit of a New/Expanded Sludge Landfill (City Council Calendar #9686). Persons interested in this matter are encouraged to attend and to offer testimony.

CITY COUNCIL OF GARDNER
JAMES M. WALSH
Council President

President Walsh called for persons wishing to testify.

Robert Sims presented the following Power Point slides:

Sludge Disposal in the City of Gardner**Background**

- **September 19, 2016 City Council meeting to discuss detailed approach, recent and proposed activities**



PUBLIC HEARING OF OCTOBER 17, 2016

Cost of Options for Dewatering (Table 4-11 & 4-12)

- **Haul Out-of-Town**

1. **Belt Filter Press - \$13,930,000**
2. **Inclined Screw* - \$14,330,000**
3. **Fournier Press - \$16,150,000**
4. **Centrifuge - \$12,820,000**
5. **No Dewatering (Liquid) - \$12,470,000**

* - could require second shift and additional labor not included

Cost of Options for Centrifuge Dewatering (Table 4-13 & 4-14)

- **Sludge Landfill - \$7,510,000**
- **Out-of-Town - \$12,850,000**
- **Liquid out-of-town - \$12,470,000**

Dewatering & Disposal Costs

Dewatering Method	Destination	20-year Cost
Filter Press	Out-of-Town	\$13,930,000
Inclined Screw	Out-of-Town	\$14,330,000
Fournier Press	Out-of-Town	\$16,150,000
Centrifuge	Out-of-Town	\$12,820,000
None (Liquid)	Out-of-Town	\$12,470,000
Centrifuge	Sludge Landfill	\$ 7,510,000



PUBLIC HEARING OF OCTOBER 17, 2016

Composting

- New building and infrastructure required
- Siting at sludge landfill
- Odors more likely and costly to control
- New equipment
- Training required
- Disposal concerns
- Additional testing

Anaerobic Digestion

- Significant Infrastructure
- Siting at the sludge landfill
- Training needed
- Collection and storage of food waste
- Energy discharged to Electric Grid
- Concerns with Viability
- Disposal of material not eliminated, byproduct created

Private Hauling

- Minor infrastructure
- Expensive
- Volatile Pricing
 - - Fuel Costs
 - - Regulation Changes
 - - Disposal Site Availability
 - - Term of Contract

Sludge Landfill

- Minor infrastructure
- Entire site already permitted
- New procedures have greatly reduced odors
- No new equipment
- Lifespan beyond 20-years (35-40)

Customer Base

PUBLIC HEARING OF OCTOBER 17, 2016

- City Maintains 5,600 accounts
- Bills quarterly
- Sewer charge directly related to water use
- Average sewer bill is \$107 per quarter

Cost Impact to Customer

- Private hauler - \$29 per quarter (27%)
- Landfill - \$17 per quarter (16%)

Summary

- Landfilling Saves \$5,300,000 versus next most feasible option
- Equates to 10%-15% in savings for each customer versus other options
- Stabilizes cost for the long run
- Odor concerns reduced
- Use of existing technology (no training)
- Recommend continue the disposal of sludge at the landfill based on cost, pricing volatility and new odor control procedures.

Alan Rousseau, 211 Betty Spring, presented the following testimony:

Gardner Sludge Landfill Expansion Public Hearing Comments – 10/17/16

My name is Alan Rousseau and I reside at 211 Betty Spring Road in Gardner. I am also a property abutter of the Sludge Landfill site. I would like to first thank the Gardner City Council for holding tonight's public hearing on this important issue. I have a handout for the Councilors tonight. The handout includes Gardner Sludge Landfill Site One Mile Radius and two Vicinity Maps

While my wife Sue and I live on the east end of Gardner, our camp in West Gardner is our second home. Most of our deceased relatives have graves at both Notre Dame and St. Johns Cemeteries. We have had to undergo many years of odors that have been emitted from both the Sludge Landfill and the former Solid Waste Landfill. We have a well on the property and are concerned about potential landfill liner leakage in the future. We now have grandchildren and do not want them exposed to landfill odors for the next 40 years. This sludge landfill expansion has major long term impact for residents of Gardner and Templeton. A 40+ year landfill will outlive many of us here today and will impact children, that are yet to be born, that will live in this area in the future. **We are very opposed to the Sludge Landfill Expansion!**

PUBLIC HEARING OF OCTOBER 17, 2016

The good news here is: “**we have options**”. Four options including Composting, Anaerobic Digestion, 3 Haul-Away Options, and Landfilling were presented by CDR Maguire to the City Council on September 19. **In my view however, the CDR Maguire presentation was a bit of a one-sided view of the options.** The CDR Maguire presentation included 4 summary pages on each of the four alternatives. For Composting, Anaerobic Digestion, and Haul-Away, nearly all negative aspects were in the presentation. For Landfilling, only the positive aspects were in the presentation. It felt to me like we were receiving a sales pitch on the Landfill expansion. If the non- landfill options were so bad, then why do 80% of Mass communities use these options?

I have reviewed the options and am recommending the Haul-Away option, for at least the next 3-5 years. The following are the advantages of the Haul-Away option based on a cost/benefit view. The **cost difference** between the Haul-Away and Landfilling options is only \$12/quarter per rate payer. This amounts to less than a dollar per week per rate payer.

The **benefits of the Haul-Away option** are the following. What does \$12/week buy us?

1. **Odors** are totally eliminated (rather than reduced) for the future residents & visitors of Gardner & Templeton. Clean air for the future!! As recent as 9/29/16 (only 10 days after our last meeting), strong odors were again experienced west of the existing landfill. It was very strong and I filed a complaint.
2. **Protects Property Values** of area residents. The home represents a major source of wealth & security for most families.
3. **Saves**, from permanent destruction, 8-10 acres of Gardner’s Wildwood Cemetery Forest which abuts the Cummings Otter River Conservation Area. The Wildwood Forest contains a major portion the Gardner Esker which may be one of the only intact eskers left in our area.
4. **Eliminates** potential sludge import from other communities by a future Gardner administration for additional revenue. This question was raised at the 9/19/16 meeting. According to Dave Boyer, MA DEP, in a 10/7/16 email to me: *“I don’t believe that the regulations prohibit receiving outside sludge due to the fact that there are some communities that receive sludge from other communities. Some communities can use this as a revenue stream but need (or should) take into consideration the life expectancy of the landfill and what will happen when capacity is reached. Again I would have to double check this.”*
5. **Provides flexibility** to migrate to another more environmentally friendly or lower cost option in the near future and we will not be locked into a 70-year commitment to a landfill that includes the post closure capping cost and 30 year maintenance / monitoring period.

PUBLIC HEARING OF OCTOBER 17, 2016

6. **Protects Templeton's Zone II Wellhead Protection Area** and the City of Gardner from any future liability resulting from contamination of the Templeton's water supply should a liner breach occur with this landfill in the future. By the current sludge volumes, 46,440 dry tons of sludge will be produced in a 40 year period (1,161 dt/yr x 40 yr). Thirty years ago, when the property was permitted for a Sludge Landfill, this ZONE II Wellhead Protection Area was not established. Contamination of another communities' public water supply is very serious and could expose Gardner to law suits of millions of dollars. Let's not be penny wise and pound foolish! Hubbardston recently stopped a plan to dump contaminated material from Boston in to Gardner's Zone II Wellhead Protection Area. That was a good example of environmental justice. Let's not become another Flint, Michigan type scenario.

To summarize, there are six good reasons to adopt the Haul-Away option. The Haul-Away option at an incremental cost of only \$12/ quarter per rate payer is a small investment for all of these benefits. The Haul-Away option will bring 46,440 dry tons over a 40 year period to a proper incineration facility where 90% of it will be eliminated vs. dumping it in a Zone II Wellhead Protection Area of a public water supply where it will be forever.

It's now time to end sludge dumping in West Gardner. Let's invest in a Haul-Away option starting in 2018. It's up to this City Council to make the right decision. Let's keep Gardner moving forward.

Gregory Dumas, Chairman, Conservation Commission, presented a letter to the City Council, extracted, as follows:

At their meeting of September 12, 2016 the Conservation Commission briefly discussed the matter of a proposed sludge landfill expansion project located adjacent to and abutting the Cummings Otter River Conservation Area. The Commission members expressed several questions concerning this matter and I submit them on their behalf as follows:

- The Cummings Conservation Area was acquired by the City of Gardner in 2012 with state and Federal funds under the Drinking Water Supply Protection and Forest Legacy Programs, respectively, for the purposes of water supply protection and sustainable forest management. The Conservation Area provides public benefits for forest management, watershed protection, open space recreation (including hiking, hunting and fishing), and conservation and education. It was protected and is actively managed for those purposes. Will this potential project in any way prevent this area from providing these public benefits?
- A glacial esker and an associated trail along its winding ridgeline exist within the Cummings Conservation Area which travels into and through a portion of the sludge landfill parcel. Will this esker and the ridgeline trail be impacted by the proposed project?

PUBLIC HEARING OF OCTOBER 17, 2016

- A recent Recreational Trails Grant received by the City of Gardner Conservation Commission will include improvements to the parking area and trails and the installation of signs, maps, and interpretive kiosks within the Cummings Conservation Area. Will the trails and trailheads located within the proposed sludge landfill expansion area still be publicly accessible under the proposed plan?
- Mass DEP regulated Priority Resources (e.g., Protected Open Space Land, Zone II Wellhead Protection Area, Potential Vernal Pool), Mass Fish and Wildlife Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program designated Bio-map2 Core Habitat of rare species and a Critical Natural Landscape (e.g., Kettlehole Level Bog, Wetland Core Buffer), and several Mass DEP protected Wetland Resource Areas exist both within and nearby proximity of the parcel and proposed project area. Have potential environmental impacts with regard to these resource areas been taken into consideration and will they be affected by this proposed project?

Susan Rousseau, 211 Betty Spring Road, presented Petitions signed by 321 persons, attached.

John Caplis, Chairman of the Templeton Board of Selectmen, expressed concern that a leak or break in the landfill liner would affect Templeton's wells. He suggested that the City consider other options.

Paul Spano, 33 Adams Street, Gardner, stated that walking the Esker Ridge on the Conservation area, the odor from the existing landfill is quite strong and if continues, would render the area useless. He questioned if the entire 37-acre parcel was permitted by DEP.

Robert Sims stated that the Sludge Landfill Permit was issued for the entire 37-acre parcel, but that development plans must be filed with DEP.

Tom Cook, 168 Bridge Street, stated that his property directly abuts the landfill parcel. He said that the Cummings property is a beautiful addition; however, odors emanating from the landfill have negatively impacted the area. He expressed concern for any vertical expansion of the landfill.

Matthew LaPointe, Suez, stated that he has worked in Gardner as the Project Manager for over 9½ years. He said that he has worked diligently to control odors, citing more frequent cover being applied to the landfill. He noted that weather and wind speed affect sludge readings and that Suez has a contingency plan to control odors through the application of certain chemicals, which has yet to be tested.

Ivan Ussach, Millers River Watershed Council, expressed concerns about environmental impact, addressing potential liner failure and potential contamination of the recharge area



PUBLIC HEARING OF OCTOBER 17, 2016

and private wells. He noted that hauling sludge out of the City may be more attractive than the expansion option.

Ronald Davan, Water Superintendent, Templeton Municipal Light and Water, expressed concern that Templeton water wells could be contaminated in the event of a liner breach and that it would be costly to the Town to clean up any contamination.

Dexter Lison, 349 Pleasant Street, Gardner, testified that he is concerned about the cost of the proposed project, citing recent capital projects and the financial impact on Gardner's senior citizens,

Joan Gould, 104 Princeton Street, expressed concern about the watershed area and wells West Street vicinity.

Jim Rousseau, 84 Baptist Common Road, Templeton, expressed concern about the wellhead area near the sludge landfill, as well as odors permeating the cemeteries. He suggested investigating hybrid solutions.

Kirk Dembek, 23 Turner Street, Templeton, supported a hybrid solution.

Tom Rousseau, a former Gardner resident, stated that the landfill is not attractive in Gardner. Gardner should look to bring in business to help with taxes and expenses.

With no other persons presenting themselves, the Hearing was closed at 7:28 P.M. and adjourned.

Accepted by the City Council: *November 7, 2016*