

Excavation of Material Study Committee

January 26, 2016 Minutes

Prepared by: Lee Hartmann

These minutes are not verbatim – they are staff’s interpretation of what took place at the meeting. – Open Meeting Law – Section III.

Committee Members in attendance: Brian Wick, Edward Angley, Russ Appleyard, Marc Garrett, Betsy Hall, David Malaguti and Jack Risso.

Staff Member: Lee Hartmann

Ms. Hall opened the meeting.

Minutes

Mr. Angley moved to accept the minutes of January 11, 2016. Mr. Malaguti seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Ms. Hall welcomed Mr. Peter Fletcher, Soil Scientist and Ms. Maggie Payne, Resource Soil Scientist to the meeting.

Mr. Fletcher described the various components of soil and how soils are identified. He said that:

- It’s the living skin of our planet Earth.
- The soil is composed of sand, silt, clay and partially decomposed organic matter.
- In soil science, the soil starts at the ground surface and typically extends down 6 feet.
- Underlying the soil are unweathered geologic sediments and bedrock.
- There are more living things in a handful of soil than people living in the World

He said that New England soils are relatively young, formed between 14,000 and 15,000 years ago. The majority of Plymouth’s soils are Carver or Plymouth-Carver sandy soils.

Mr. Garrett asked about soils and aquifers.

Mr. Fletcher said that organic matter in soils is a great medium for treating and filtering water. Plant roots also trap and filter water. In course sandy soils there is some filtering but very little treatment occurring.

Ms. Hall asked about the difference in water treatment between say 10 feet of sandy soil and 20 feet.

Mr. Fletcher said the most important factor is the topsoil. Replacing the topsoil after gravel is removed will help keep the soil biologically active and help filter and treat water. Establishing standards for how topsoil and subsoil is stockpiled and re-applied to a site is most important.

Mr. Malaguti asked about depth to groundwater and if 5 feet was adequate.

Mr. Fletcher said that 5 feet is used most often because most New England states set that depth as a safe standard for the separation between the bottom of a septic system and the groundwater. The five foot separation is a conservative number.

Ms. Hall asked about tree removal and should we be requiring gravel operators to leave chipped trees on site.

Mr. Fletcher said that the topsoil is more important but additional organic matter could help.

Ms. Payne suggested using the Natural Resource Conservation Services standards.

The Committee agreed to invite Mr. Conner, ZBA Chair to the next meeting as a guest speaker.

The committee agreed to hold its next meeting on Monday, February 1st at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lee Hartmann, AICP
Director of Planning & Development

Approved: February 1, 2016