

➤ **Article 32: Treat Weed – Billington Sea**

8/31/16

Michael Leary, Petitioner, presented Article 32. Mr. Leary is representing the Billington Sea Association, a 501(c)3 non-profit founded for the Betterment of Billington Sea and Town Brook. Residents own 55% of the property around Billington Sea and the Town owns 45%. In 2011, Town Meeting appropriated 45% of the cost to treat weeds at Billington Sea and the Billington Sea Association raised 55% of the cost. The weeds were treated successfully in 2012 using a product called Sonar. Sonar is a benign product that is used to treat weeds in lakes, ponds and even reservoirs. The Association would like to do the same treatment this fall as the weeds and algae are again spreading out of control. This article asks Town Meeting to appropriate 45% of the cost of treatment which totals \$13,500.

Questions:

- Is this going to be a recurring cost every 5 years? (S Sheridan) Yes. The Association is going to be researching alternate funding methods in the future like grants through Makepeace and other sources.
- You mentioned Billington Sea is in the last stages of its life? (K Canty) Yes, but it won't be gone in our lifetime.
- Have you discussed this article with any Town employees? (H Salerno) Yes, David Gould, Director of Marine & Environmental, is in favor of this article.
- Were the weeds a surprise? Why wasn't this brought into the budget? (H Helm) This was a bad weed year. We want to get this funding in place now for next year, to be ready to go when the permits are received.
- It sounds as though you have not raised all of the funds for the 55% that the property owners will cover. What happens if you do not raise those funds? (H Salerno) We have plenty of time and are certain we can raise the funds. If for some reason we do not, we will not take the \$13,500 town share.

Kevin Leary, property owner on Billington Sea, shared that Billington Sea has economic impact beyond the pond and stream. There have been several studies on this subject. It supports birds and fish and feeds the harbor. Fishing is a large industry in town for residents and tourists. Weeds can harm this industry and have huge economic consequences.

Dale Simpson also lives on the pond. The weeds are traveling to other areas of the pond. Ducks are coming in and staying to feed on the weeds and their fecal matter is everywhere. This is a safety concern and therefore the weeds need to be treated.

**Harry Helm made a motion to recommend Article 32 to Town Meeting. Betty Cavacco, second. The motion carries unanimously (13-0-0).**