

To: Board of Public Works
From: Wellhead Protection Committee
Date: November 9, 2009
Re: Zone I Sand Pit Protection

As you know, the WPC is charged with developing strategies needed to protect our water supply in accordance with the Massachusetts DEP's Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) report (attached). This 2002 report identifies potential sources of contamination within water supply areas and recommends action to improve protection of our water resources. Source protection helps to ensure drinking water quality and reduce future costs for treatment.

The sand pit is located within both the Zones I and II of the Happy Hollow wells. On average, the Happy Hollow wells historically have provided about half the town's drinking water. As you can see from the photos, the sand pit is easily accessed from the road leading to the lacrosse field and the Happy Hollow wells. It is apparently being used by ATV's, paint-ballers, and by students and others as a cut through to and from the high school.

Massachusetts drinking water regulations (310 CMR 22.00) require the water supplier, to the extent possible, to own or control the Zone I, a 400 foot radius around the wellheads. If the land within the Zone I of the wells were owned or controlled by the Water Division, inappropriate non-water supply activities could be more effectively prohibited and enforced, thereby reducing contamination risks.

When development of the upland portion of the Stonebridge parcel for a Habitat for Humanity house was initially proposed earlier this year, the WPC discussed with both Don Millette and Don Ouellette the desirability of transferring ownership and control of the Zone I portion of the sand pit, a part of the Stonebridge parcel that could not be developed, also because of its topography, to the Water Division. It was our hope and understanding during the summer that this proposal would be included in a warrant article submitted for STM this fall.

The WPC would like to encourage the Board to proceed with securing protection of the Zone I of the Happy Hollow wells with a warrant article at spring TM. The Highway Superintendent, the Water Superintendent and the DPW Director support this protective strategy.

We recommend that Board members take a few minutes to informally visit this parcel on your own to see how the topography itself helps define a logical and advantageous plan for the town. The parcel number is 37-032 in case you would like to look it up on the town's GIS website.

We understand that the deadline for submitting warrant articles has been moved to January 15, 2010, so there is time for such a housekeeping article. We believe it should be accomplished either in conjunction with a warrant article related to land transfer within the Stonebridge housing proposal or as an individual article to protect the Zone I, standing on its own merits.