



Wastewater agency gets mixed reviews

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BARNSTABLE — A review committee charged with evaluating the Cape Cod Water Protection Collaborative's effectiveness has reached its verdict: reorganize and refocus.

The review committee, formed by Barnstable County Commissioners in July, found that the collaborative has done well to secure funding opportunities for Cape towns pursuing wastewater management plans, collaborative executive director Andrew Gottlieb told commissioners yesterday at their regular meeting. In particular, the collaborative's sponsorship and support of a zero-interest loan program for municipal wastewater projects was a boon, albeit underutilized, for towns on the Cape, Gottlieb said.

Gottlieb, who served as the non-voting chairman of the nine-member review panel, said the group also praised the collaborative's efforts to raise public awareness of wastewater planning issues.

But the review committee found the four-year-old agency's efforts to promote regionalization lagged behind expectations despite a successful study of potential regional approaches to wastewater planning on the Lower Cape, Gottlieb said.

The review committee recommended that the collaborative's governing board be modified to better reflect a regional approach focused on special and unique water bodies that often span town borders, he said.

"Regionalization apart from having other benefits provides a means by which towns can minimize infrastructure and maximize savings," he said.

The "special places" for the collaborative to focus on would be designated by county commissioners, Gottlieb said.

Instead of the current 19-member board that represents each town and includes a county commissioner, a member-at-large and two ex-officio members, the new governing board would include seven members appointed by the county commissioners, according to the recommendation.

A 15-member municipal advisory panel appointed by commissioners from town-supplied nominations would continue to represent each town's interests under the reorganization plan.

The reorganization plan is open for public comment through Oct. 23. After this initial comment period, the plan must be approved by the county commissioners then passed on as an ordinance to the county Assembly of Delegates, providing further opportunity for public comment.

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