



TOWN OF OAK BLUFFS, MA PLANNING BOARD

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**Public Meeting Notice: Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) –
Public information meeting**

Date / Time: Wednesday October 23rd @ 5:00 PM

**Location: Council on Aging Building
21 Wamsutta Avenue, Oak Bluffs**

As the Chairperson of the Oak Bluffs Planning Board, I encourage advance public thought prior to the **Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) meeting on Wednesday October 23rd @ 5:00 PM.**

There are two key parts of the **Oak Bluffs Master Plan** that relate to this discussion:

- Section 4.1 on water quality (pp 31-36)
- Section 8.2 on waste water disposal (pp 102-103)

Other parts of the Master Plan are also affected.

I suggest review of these sections prior to Wednesday's meeting. The Master Plan can be found on the town website under the Planning Board section. Follow this link:

<https://www.oakbluffsma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3571/OB-Master-Plan-Adopted-on-Apr-25-2019>

Perhaps the **key issue** for Oak Bluffs to consider is **how to allocate a limited resource (sewage capacity) among multiple interests:**

- Reduce nitrogen flowing to coastal estuaries
- Affordable housing
- Economic growth of downtown and other areas
- Relieving septic limitations in areas already designated as Zone II wellhead protection areas
- Key facilities (such as MV Hospital)

These are all laudable goals and I expect that all will be represented at the CWMP meeting. However, there is not enough capacity to meet them all unless Oak Bluffs is willing to consider converting to a **water discharge treatment facility** which is an entirely new conversation.

Overall, I suggest that **increased sewage capacity be planned for by dividing up and allocating capacity to the above mentioned uses** so that Oak Bluffs can meet as many identified municipal needs as possible. If any single use consumes more capacity that means less for the other needs. Downtown will

not be able to adapt without having offsite sewage capacity, so allocating the capacity to housing/water quality could mean that downtown will suffer. **Allocating all the capacity to water quality means we may not be able to address affordable housing.** The competing interests are everywhere!

I suggest the use of a point exercise in order to address this type of resource constraint. This approach would result in the establishment of a suggested percentage of allocation by area of interest.

When there are alternative solutions to address these uses and attain stated goals without using sewage capacity, we should be encouraged or required to adopt such an approach. For example, all septic replacements systems could be encouraged or required to be innovative/alternative systems (nitrogen reduction), leaving more capacity for other needs.

The challenge we face is profound, only together can it be addressed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ewell Hopkins, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Ewell Hopkins, Chairperson
Oak Bluffs Planning Board