

Article 5. Road Building Materials

Board of Overseers Position

8/7/2021

Concern surrounding the use of reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP) was initially brought to the Planning Board in April of 2019 by an island property owner. The Board of Overseers was made aware of the concern surrounding possible water contamination to the island aquifer. Road care, safety and maintenance, are under the purview of the Board of Overseers, who heard this concern and proceeded to investigate the material as well as other material options.

The Board of Overseers in cooperation with the Planning Board held an island meeting in August 2019 to discuss concerns about the use of RAP to maintain island roads. No additional RAP has been purchased since the concern was raised, and stockpiled RAP has only been used for emergency road repairs on the slick slopes and muddy washout where safety was a concern.

The Board of Overseers conducted water testing on three public wells in September of 2020 with Carol White from C.A. White & Associates. All results showed no contamination of PAH compounds (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons) which was the main concern brought to the Board.

The Board of Overseers created a Roads Committee to investigate RAP and other road materials that would provide options for our island, inviting concerned islanders to participate with Board members to look into and understand the options. The committee did not move forward due to lack of interest by community members, but the Board continued in good faith to complete its research and testing.

The Board of Overseers started the soil testing process in September of 2020, contacting ESS Laboratory and getting a third-party sample collector in place for execution when COVID restrictions allowed. Samples could not be pulled until May 2021. Samples were collected by Chris Baldwin, District Engineer, Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District at three heavy runoff points around the island and followed the chain of custody to ESS Laboratory for testing. Lab results were sent by the Board in mid-July to Eric Hamlin, Environmental Specialist, Division of Solid Materials Management, Maine Department of Environmental Protection for review. No DEP concerns were raised based on the results which were noted as "unremarkable". The DEP is legally obligated to report levels of contamination that exceed acceptable limits regardless of circumstances. The ME DEP contact also stated that the State of Maine had deemed this material an inert fill years ago. The contents of RAP are not water soluble.

The Board of Overseers makes all of its decisions with the health and safety of Islanders, the environment and visitors in mind. The decision to utilize RAP on road maintenance was looked at closely during its initial use over 20 years ago. The material has proven to significantly help against road washout and maintain road safety for vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian usage. It helps ensure that emergency vehicles can get around the island without incident and in a timely fashion. Its benefits can be clearly seen on the steep hills and close shore roads where erosion is a constant issue.