



Office of the Inspector General Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Investigation Halts Developer Water & Sewer Plan, October 2004

The town of Rockland and state officials halted special legislation that would have authorized the town to provide water and sewer service to more than 220 acres of Hingham land owned by developer A.W. Perry, Inc., after an investigation by the Office of the Inspector General revealed the developer's benefit in the proposed law.

A.W. Perry, Inc., whose lawyers wrote the legislation, represented it as necessary to allow Rockland to provide water and sewer services for a new Blue Cross and Blue Shield building in Hingham. The proposed building would sit on the border of the two municipalities and would be most easily accessed through Rockland. However, Rockland needed special legislation to supply water and sewer services to the neighboring town.

During an August 2004 public hearing, A. W. Perry's executive vice president told the Rockland Board of Selectmen that the legislation only involved the 32-acre lot slated for the Blue Cross and Blue Shield building. Following that hearing the Rockland Board of Selectmen voted in favor of the bill, clearing the way for state action.

However, an investigation conducted by the Office of the Inspector General found that the proposed legislation would in fact authorize Rockland to provide water and sewer service to more than 220 acres of Hingham land owned by A. W. Perry Inc. The broad authorization would have removed an obstacle and saved A.W. Perry time if the company wanted to develop the land.

The Inspector General brought his findings to the attention of the Massachusetts Legislature, the Governor of the Commonwealth and the Rockland Board of Selectmen. As a result, the Governor vetoed the proposed legislation and the Rockland Board of Selectmen withdrew their support for the bill.

The bill was rewritten to limit the authorization for water and sewer service to the 32-acre Blue Cross and Blue Shield site. The Rockland Board of Selectmen approved the rewritten bill in October 2004. The Massachusetts Legislature and the Governor approved the bill as rewritten.