

Some Promises, Some Funds

Aug 27 1977

## River Cleanup Report

Governor Licht has promised to support programs to clean up the Blackstone River, the president of the Blackstone River Watershed Commission said last night.

David Rosser said the governor did not mention any action he intends to initiate but merely that he will assist organizations such as the watershed commission in any way he can.

Mr. Rosser, who said he spoke to the governor yesterday afternoon, addressed a meeting of representatives of four citizens groups concerned with the river's pollution last night at the Lincoln Town Hall.

He said his group already has received \$500,000 from Massachusetts to acquire land along the banks of the river to ensure its proper use. The group plans to seek two million dollars from the state of Rhode Island to acquire about 1,200 acres for shoreline parks, he added.

Attending the meeting were representatives of the Committee for the Advancement of Natural Areas in Lincoln (CANAL), the newly formed Lincoln Ecology Action group and the conservation commissions of Lincoln and Cumberland.

A consensus was reached that more pressure must be put on public officials to make them take tougher stands against polluters and that this goal can be better accomplished if the groups cooperate with each other.

"I'm so glad to see so many young people turn out," Mr. Rosser, a 73-year-old retired engineer, said during the course of his talk. Several members of the Ecology Action group, an organization made up predominantly of young people, were

among the 25 spectators at the meeting.

"They're the ones who are going to inherit the earth," he added.

Mr. Rosser presented statistics which he said show that 53 per cent of the flow of the Blackstone River "is absolutely sewage."

His contention that "this is the year to get something done" and his generally favorable view of possible governmental action for pollution abatement was sharply challenged by Mrs. Margaret S. Penderson.

"Did the governor hand you

a check?" she asked. She also disputed Mr. Rosser's claim that the Army Corps of Engineers, of which he once was a member, is working hard for pollution control.

Mrs. Penderson cited the corps' long delay in preparing a watershed study for the Blackstone Valley while parts of it were being filled by industry as an example of its "dirty tricks."

Mr. Rosser said he would get a copy of the study for the group from the engineers who are stationed in Waltham, Mass.