

TOWN OF SCITUATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

**MUSQUASHCUT AREA SEWER AND WATER PROJECT**

**RESIDENTS' INFORMATIONAL MEETING**

**MINUTES/SUMMARY**

SCITUATE HARBOR COMMUNITY BUILDING, 44 JERICHO ROAD

TUESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2011

7:00 PM

ATTENDEES:	Albert G. Bangert	Director, Department of Public Works
	Kevin Cafferty	Supervisor, DPW-Engineering Division
	Robert P. Rowland	Supervisor, DPW-Sewer Division
	Jim DeBarros	Superintendent, DPW-Water Division
	Steven Pedersen	Project Manager, Weston & Sampson
	Michael Paulin	Project Engineer, Weston & Sampson
	Greg Pion	Resident Representative, Weston & Sampson
	Marcella Albanese	Albanese Brothers, Inc.
	Maria Albanese	Albanese Brothers, Inc.
	Otto Albanese	Albanese Brothers, Inc.

**Mr. Bangert began the meeting with a brief overview of the meeting and introductions of the above listed Attendees.**

**Mr. Pedersen continued the meeting with a description of the project area, including the length of sewer pipe to be installed, the length of water pipe to be installed, the paving process, and the overall schedule. The project will include approximately 15,000 linear feet of gravity sewer, 7,000 linear feet of low-pressure sewer, 4,300 linear feet of force main, and one wastewater pump station. There are approximately 290 properties in the project area, of which approximately 100 will receive individual grinder pump units. The main feeder water mains within the project area, on Hatherly Road and Gannett Road, will also be replaced as part of this project, which involves approximately 8,300 linear feet of 12-inch water main replacement. Upon completion of the pipeline installation, all paved roadways will be pulverized and a full overlay of new pavement will be installed. Based on the contract language, construction on the project will be completed in September 2012, with the exception of final paving, which will occur in Spring 2013.**

**Mr. Pion introduced himself as the Resident Engineer for the project and explained his role as the interface between the Town, the Contractor, and the residents within the project area. He also reminded all attendees to complete and return the building connection form that was**

mailed out, if not already completed, so that the sewer service for each home can be left in the preferred location.

Mr. Pion, Mr. Pedersen, and Mr. Albanese continued by explaining some of the basic aspects of the project construction, including estimated schedule and hours of work. As always, disturbance to the area residents will be minimized as much as possible. Typical construction hours will be 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Typical construction process involves the installation of the mainline pipes in the roadway and the installation of a service lateral to each property, terminating at the property line. Traffic will be detoured whenever possible, and when a detour is not available, traffic will be coordinated with the local police to pass one lane of traffic.

Mr. Rowland explained the process that takes place following the completion of construction on the project. Once the project is completed, each property within the project area will be assessed a Betterment fee. Each property will also receive a mailing that will include a permit application and list of licensed drainlayers (both of which can also be found on the town's website). Upon receipt of these documents, property owners shall obtain price quotes and hire a drainlayer to transfer wastewater flows from the existing septic system to the new sewer stub in the roadway. Once connected, all following quarterly water bills will include an additional sewer use charge. Mr. Rowland reiterated that sump pump connections to the sewer system are not allowed.

Upon completion of the presentation, the floor was opened to questions, most of which are summarized below. If you have further questions, do not hesitate to contact the Scituate DPW (781-545-8731) or Weston & Sampson (Greg Pion, 781-378-2782)

## Questions & Answers

Q. How is the betterment fee calculated?

A. The betterment will be calculated based on the total cost associated with the sewer project (not including water main work) divided by the number of sewer units fronted by the new sewer. A sewer unit is equivalent to a single family home. For the most recent sewer extension projects in town, the betterment fee was approximately \$20,000 per sewer unit.

Q. I live on Hatherly Road and already have an existing connection to the sewer system, will I be required to reconnect and will I have a betterment fee assessed?

A. Properties that are already connected to the existing sewer system will be further investigated on a case-by-case basis, as every situation is unique.

Q. Do you have a list of the 100 homes that will require individual grinder pump units?

A. The properties are shown on the project map (displayed at the meeting) or the sewer plans may be reviewed at the office of the DPW at the Town Offices.

Q. Are all of the properties within the project area required to connect to the sewer system?

A. Based on the regulations, each property will have one year from receipt of the hook-up letter to connect to the sewer system. In past years this timeframe has had some flexibility.

However, based on the limited capacity available at the Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF), if properties are not connected within the first year, there is no guarantee that a connection will be allowed after this period.

- Q. If a property will be subdivided in the future, should we request that an additional sewer service be provided now?
- A. Yes, if you know of a situation where a future lot may be developed, installing a sewer stub to the property line now is much easier than having it installed at a later date.
- Q. What options are available regarding payment of the betterment fee?
- A. Once the betterment fee has been calculated, each fronted property within the project area will receive a betterment bill. This fee can be paid in full within 30 days or can be liened against your property taxes and apportioned over a 20-year period with an interest rate of 4%.
- Q. Does my septic tank have to be filled/abandoned once the property is connected to the new sewer system?
- A. Yes, each existing septic system will be abandoned in accordance with state and local regulations once the property is connected to the new sewer system. The licensed drainlayer hired to complete the sewer connection will complete this work as part of their scope.
- Q. How will installing a sewer stub for a vacant lot affect the appraised value of the land?
- A. This question should be referred to a tax specialist and/or appraiser. Any buildable lot that is fronted by the new sewer will be assessed a betterment fee.
- Q. What happens to the betterment fee if I sell my house?
- A. This question varies based on each individual home/mortgage company. Sometimes they will require the lien be paid in full at the time of sale and at other times they allow it to be passed on.
- Q. Will any improvements be made to the Hatherly Road sluice gate as part of this project?
- A. There are no components of the sluice gate included in this project.
- Q. The building connection form states that sewer services in excess of 100 feet are subject to review by the engineer?
- A. The depth of the sewer in the road was designed based on each home being less than 100 feet from the roadway. Homes with services in excess of this distance are subject to additional review to confirm if gravity service is still feasible.
- Q. Can you provide any additional details on the water main replacement construction?
- A. No temporary water main will be required as part of the project, the existing water main will continue to serve all homes until the new water main has been installed, tested, and approved; at which time all homes will be connected to the new main and the old main will be abandoned in place.
- Q. Will the recent gas main replacement work extend any further on Surfside Road?

- A. There is no gas main improvement work included in this project, this question should be directed to the gas company. Any other improvements to the roadways in the project area should be completed prior to the final paving overlay, after which they will be subject to a moratorium and associated fee.
- Q. How are the storm drains effected by this project, specifically on Surfside Road and Hatherly Road where there have been past drainage problems?
- A. There is no specific storm drain improvement work included in this project, however this issue will be further investigated. The final paving overlay will help to resurface the road and direct drainage to the appropriate locations.
- Q. What if my new sewer service connection must be redirected inside of my house?
- A. The sewer service stub will extend to your property line as part of this project. A licensed drainlayer will be hired to complete the remaining connection. If interior plumbing is required, the drainlayer facilitate this work.
- Q. What is the anticipated construction schedule for the project area?
- A. Construction has commenced on the South end of Hatherly Road, between the existing pump station and Mann Hill Road. Construction will continue North on Hatherly Road to the sluice gate/causeway this Fall. Weather pending and with Town approval, some side road work may be completed during the Winter. Beyond the Winter, the schedule is too uncertain to predict at this time. No service connection work will be required by property owners until all mainline construction has been completed, which is currently anticipated to be September 2012.
- Q. How will the new pump station and individual grinder pump units be affected by power outages?
- A. The new pump station on Musquhicut Avenue will have a natural gas powered stand-by generator installed for back-up power. The individual grinder pump units have adequate storage to continue using water for necessities for a period of several days. Typically, water usage drops significantly during power outages, since the appliances, which account for much of the water we use, are not working.
- Q. Will the town be picking up any of the project cost, as some adjacent communities have done?
- A. No, this project will be paid entirely by the abutters through betterment fees.
- Q. What is the approximate cost of the service connection work by the drainlayer?
- A. This cost varies greatly based on each individual situation and the length of the connection. Property owners should contact a licensed drainlayer to get multiple quotes and possibly even discuss with adjacent or nearby neighbors to work with the same drainlayer and potentially reduce costs.
- Q. What will be the impact to the WWTF by this project, will additional upgrades be required?
- A. At this time, no further improvements to the WWTF are required and there is adequate wastewater capacity for this project. The Town is working to improve the aging existing

sewer system to hopefully reduce extraneous flows, such as sump pump connections and broken pipes that are collecting stormwater and groundwater.

Q. Does the Town have any record of my existing septic system?

A. This question should be directed to the Board of Health office.

Q. What will the individual grinder pump look like installed in my yard?

A. The grinder pump is located almost entirely below grade. The only above grade portion of the grinder pump is the cover, which generally speaking resembles a plastic trash barrel cover. The cover is typically very close to the house and existing septic tank and it can be hidden well with landscaping.

Q. What can I do if I cannot afford the betterment fee?

A. There is a process available to petition for an abatement, on a hardship basis, similar to payment of taxes.

Q. If I just recently installed a new septic system, do I still have to connect to the new sewer?

A. Each property within the project area will be assessed a betterment fee, regardless of the age of their existing septic system. As detailed above, each property will have one year from receipt of the hook-up letter to connect to the sewer system.

Q. Is the betterment fee on our tax bills tax deductible?

A. This question should be referred to a tax specialist, however to our knowledge the fee will be shown as a separate line item that will not be tax deductible.

Q. How close can the grinder pump unit be installed to the house?

A. The grinder pump is typically located within 5 to 10 feet of the house, in the vicinity of the existing septic tank.

Q. Why does the building connection form ask if I have a washing machine in the basement?

A. Based on this information, we can determine what facilities in the house are currently connected to the existing septic system and whether or not there may be any facilities in the basement, which will impact the location and depth of the service connection in the roadway.

Q. Are the water mains being replaced on any other roadways in the project area?

A. The Town would like to replace as much of the existing water main in the project area as possible, depending on the availability of funds. Currently there is only enough funding to replace the main feeder lines on Hatherly Road and Gannett Road.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.