

Sewer District Report

In 1989 a Consent Order was entered into between the Woodridge Lake Sewer District and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection permitting us to operate our wastewater collection system, our treatment plant (the Plant) and our in ground disposal fields. Since that time environmental regulations have become more stringent, requiring, at a minimum, an upgrade to our Plant. In addition, the Consent Order permitted the WLSD to treat and dispose of a limit of 100,000 gallons of wastewater a day. Securing an increase in that limit from the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) will be difficult. We are in an AA watershed, CT's highest water quality level.

In 2005, the capital costs of two alternatives to remove the consent order were estimated: (a) \$10 million to pipe our wastewater to the Torrington treatment facility and (b) \$20 million to rebuild the Plant and disposal fields. Since then, the Torrington Sewer District had written the DEP raising a number of issues with the proposed Torrington pipeline. These matters are still in flux and the WLSD is seeking to prepare itself

and its constituents for the possible outcomes as we continue to search for the most affordable, cost effective and environmentally sound result.

Last summer, under a Scope of Work project, funded 55% by a grant from the DEEP, the WLSD, its Planning Committee and our consultant, Woodard and Curran (W&C) began a study and analysis of the capabilities of our current system to guide the way we should precede. The results are beginning to emerge.

1. W&C has completed its analysis of the absorption capacity of our disposal fields. We believe the results are positive, indicating that complete reconstruction of the disposal fields may not be necessary, and instead reconfiguration and rehabilitation of the existing disposal fields may be permitted. W&C is preparing a report to be submitted to DEEP. At this writing, DEEP has not seen our results and until they are fully accepted by DEEP we cannot count on our being able to use our disposal fields as part of an upgraded wastewater treatment system. When this report is finalized and submitted to DEEP, it will be posted on the WLSD website.

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- Also, at this writing, W&C is completing a separate report on their analysis of the flow of wastewater into our collection system. When this report is finalized and submitted to DEEP, it will also be posted on the WLS D website. The flow of sanitary wastewater into our collection system is estimated by W&C at an annual average of 50,000 gallons of wastewater a day. However, Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) into the system results in total daily flows into the collection system ranging from 43,000 gallons per day to 402,000 gallons per day, with an average I&I flow of 55,000 gpd.

It is essential to eliminate as much of the I&I from the collection system as possible, in order to get close to or under the 100,000 gallons per day currently permitted. Also, assuming that we are permitted to continue using our wastewater treatment system we do not want to be required to build a larger upgraded Plant than necessary. As reported in earlier issues of Breezes and in this year's budget letter to taxpayers we (the WLS D Board, our staff and W&C) made a significant start this past year in reducing the I&I gathered in our collection system. W&C now recommends that we establish a goal of eliminating an additional 18,500 to 25,400 gallons per day of I&I from the system.

Last June, a member of the WLS D Board, a member of its Finance Committee, Counsel to the WLS D and W&C met with DEEP to discuss funding for I&I removal. DEEP advised that they have a funded special reserve for "projects to reduce infiltration and inflow entering sanitary sewer systems", to be awarded on a first come first serve basis. The reserve provides a 2% loan to be repaid over 20 years.

DEEP also advised that they have a similar reserve (2% loan for 20 years) for pump station projects to improve emergency readiness and energy efficiency of the pumps, wastewater flow monitoring and controls. The WLS D has eight pumping stations around the lake.

- In August, the DEEP confirmed the availability of the above funding for the WLS D. After review by both the Planning Committee and the WLS D Board, the Board voted to recommend to the taxpayers the funding of both a project to further reduce I&I and a project to upgrade the pump stations. At this time these projects together with

contingency are estimated to cost approximately \$1,000,000 to be funded by DEEP through a 2%, amortizing 20 year loan. Such a loan would cost the WLS D approximately \$60,000 a year. If evenly divided it would cost each property somewhat less than \$100 a year. More detail and more exact estimates will be provided to the taxpayers at a Special Meeting, likely to be held in October, to consider approval of these projects and loan. Taxpayer approval is required for the loan.

Other significant activities underway, or soon to be undertaken by the WLS D, include:

- The Rights of Way (easements) of the WLS D have been largely cleared of trees and other obstacles enabling access to the sewer lines below ground for examination for I&I. Homeowners have been understanding and cooperative during this project.
- W&C will, in the next several months, begin an analysis of the upgrades likely to be required to our wastewater treatment system and the capital and annual costs.
- W&C will also, in the next several months, begin an analysis of what would be involved in transporting our wastewater to Torrington for treatment and the capital and annual costs of such a project, as well as the potential long-term costs to WLS D that are often associated with end-of-pipe inter-municipal connections.

The WLS D will continue to keep homeowners abreast of these projects through Breezes articles, letters to taxpayers, public meetings and postings on our website. We look forward to providing a more detailed review at the upcoming Special Meeting, which is scheduled for October at the Clubhouse. We appreciate everyone's cooperation with these important and unfortunately expensive projects.

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