

Sewer District Update

In January, Frank Gomes, a taxpayer of the Woodridge Lake Sewer District (WLSD) and a member of the Board of the Woodridge Lake Property Owners Association (WLPOA) began attending the monthly meetings of the Board of the WLSD, as liaison from the WLPOA. Under CT state law the Woodridge Lake Sewer Authority and the WLSD Board are public agencies with separate legal responsibilities than the WLPOA. Nevertheless, the Board welcomes Frank to fully participate in the Board's deliberations and looks forward to an ever closer collaboration with the WLPOA.

The WLSD has learned that the staff of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Preservation (DEEP) has completed a critical portion of its review of the WLSD's proposed new Facilities Plan for the replacement of the WLSD's 40 year old sewage treatment plant. The WLSD's new Facilities Plan proposes the replacement of the treatment plant, on-site, adjacent to the existing treatment plant. The other alternative under consideration is building a pipeline and pumping stations to send our wastewater to Torrington. The WLSD believes its proposed Facilities Plan to be environmentally sound and by far the least expensive alternative for the WLSD taxpayers. Our environmental lawyers of the firm of Shipman & Goodwin have requested a meeting for the WLSD with the executives of DEEP, before DEEP makes a final determination on our proposed Facilities Plan. Under CT law, DEEP must review and approve our proposed Facilities Plan.

Last year the United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development (USDA-RD) advised the WLSD that we were likely eligible for at least some USDA funding for the implementation of the WLSD's proposed new Facilities Plan. Funding would consist of a 40 year loan and a partial grant for the project. Although the interest rate on a USDA loan will be higher than a DEEP loan, the 40 year term will likely make the annual cost of servicing a USDA loan considerably lower, for the portion of the project funded by USDA-RD. The WLSD pre-

pared and submitted an application to the USDA-RD for funding for the implementation of the Facilities Plan.

The USDA-RD has now advised the WLSD that we are, in fact, eligible for USDA funding and the project is now on the USDA-RD's list for funding. At this time it is not clear, how much funding the USDA-RD will make available for the project and USDA-RD approval of funding will only become final, when we bid the project in accordance with USDA regulations. Lastly, we have been advised that under USDA rules, USDA-RD will fund the implementation of the Facilities Plan, only if our proposed on-site replacement of the treatment plant (and not the Torrington alternative) is approved by DEEP.

In 2012 the taxpayers of the WLSD approved a \$980,000 project to reduce the inflow and infiltration (I/I) into our sewer system and a project to upgrade our pumping stations as part of the new Facilities Plan. DEEP agreed to fund these projects through a 2%, 20 year loan. When we learned that the USDA-RD might provide us with a 40 year loan and a grant for implementing at least a portion of the Facilities Plan, the Board decided to delay the implementation of these projects. Subject to the availability of funds and USDA requirements, the USDA-RD has indicated they might fund the I/I and pump station projects regardless of the final decision by DEEP (on site or Torrington), since these projects will be necessary whichever alternative DEEP chooses. The Board of the WLSD has determined to pursue the USDA-RD loan and grant for these two important projects.

As the Board learns more about DEEP's decision on our Facilities Plan and on the exact terms of loans and grants from both USDA-RD and DEEP (which we would like to combine) we will keep the taxpayers informed. Once we understand the details of what implementing the new Facilities Plan will cost the taxpayers, the Board plans to hold public meeting(s), likely this spring and summer, to explain all of this to the taxpayers, in more detail.