

## Woodridge Lake Sewer District Update

On December 18 more than 60 taxpayers attended the Woodridge Lake Sewer District Special Meeting to get updated since the last community meeting held on October 2 and to approve funding for a comprehensive study to analyze the situation. Ken Green, the Chair of the Planning Committee, made a 45-minute presentation followed by a question and answer session. Ken began by reviewing recent activities undertaken with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the current alternatives, the need for a revised Facilities Plan and its Scope of Work and, finally, the costs of completing the effort.

At issue are the unique design of the treatment system and the amount of water being sent to the facility, as well as the installed ridge and furrow leaching beds that keep the treated water from the plant beneath the ground. The 92-acre parcel on which the plant and filter beds sit is located within the Bantam River watershed, which has been classified AA, the state's highest water quality level. A detailed study was conducted in 2005 that concluded with two possible solutions: either upgrade the plant and fields, or construct a pipeline to Torrington's treatment plant. Ken Green noted that Torrington's reply to the study indicated, "They are not too excited about having us."

Contributing to the problem is the inconsistency in the amount of water being sent to the treatment plant. During periods of prolonged rain or winter thaw volume spikes between 55,000 and 300,000 gallons per day, suggesting that a huge amount of surface and groundwater is entering the sewer lines.

"There is a high probability that individual homeowners can reduce inappropriate water from entering the system," Paul Dombrowski, Vice President of Woodard & Curran, the district's consulting engineers, said. "Funding this study will allow us to conduct smoke tests to see if lawn drains are connected to the sewers, and to inspect homes for sump pumps, water softeners, dehumidifiers, or other sources that may be sending water into the lines." The district is planning to begin conducting house-to-house inspections shortly to identify potential sources of excess water entering the system. Taxpayers can be subject to fines of \$100 per day per violation for unauthorized connections under Section 22a-438 of the state statutes.

As part of their work, Woodard & Curran will look at the condition of the main lines, recommend repairs, educate homeowners, and form the foundation for the ultimate plan to fix the capacity problem.

"The study conducted in 2005 presented us with costs between \$6 and 10 million to improve our plant and fields." Ken told the group. "The Torrington option was priced between \$10 and 15 million, an amount certain to grow given the amount of water we are experiencing."

By unanimous vote the taxpayers approved a plan by the district to fund \$253,350 of the \$563,000 program. The balance of \$309,650, or 55 percent of the total cost, will come from the Connecticut Clean Water Fund. Ken advised the attendees to "brace yourselves for an expensive fix." Since the meeting district representatives and Woodard & Curran have had several meetings with the DEP to clarify elements of the plan. Recently we were notified that the DEP has approved the clarified plan and has committed to paying 55 percent of the costs. We are now moving forward with the implementation.

To keep property owners fully informed about the progress of the study and solutions to problems individual homeowners might face, the district launched a new web site: [www.WLSD-Goshen.org](http://www.WLSD-Goshen.org).