

Public Hearing on Waste Water Treatment Plant Fee Increase, held Monday, February 2, 2009 at 7:00pm at the Germantown Town Hall.

Present: Roy Brown, Supervisor
Joan Snyder, Councilwoman
Joel Craig, Councilman
Jeremy Smith, Councilman

Recorded by: Charlene Diehl, Town Clerk

Supervisor Brown opened the meeting and said he would give the report information first so that folks would understand why the fees were increased.

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) inspects the plant every year. Jamie Malcolm is the new inspector and was accompanied this year by Mr. Lis, the previous inspector for 10 years.

There were not a lot of changes between last year and this year. Germantown received a marginal rating, due to corrosion on piping and some things the operator needs to come up to speed on. The town's engineering firm was asked to inspect the plant as well, and Tectonic did the inspection in October.

Supervisor Brown indicated that Germantown is not the only town to receive a marginal rating, and he has been speaking to David Robinson, of the Department of Public Works in Columbia County to come up with solutions to the problems. Mr. Brown indicated that Columbia-Greene Community College is fixing up their sewer treatment plant as well, and Greenport is under consent order and currently working on their plant.

The biggest issue cited was that no large measurable maintenance has been done to the plant and corrosion is a problem. The town is looking into providing a roof as well.

Other issues:

- the Grit Chamber is smaller than it should be, which has been an issue since the plant was completed.
- one pump is running at 50% and the other is not pumping anything
- Pump Station #2 needs a valve replaced
- one holding tank needs repair/replacement

Supervisor Brown said the plant is running at 30-40% capacity now and the town is initiating a program to do house-by-house inspections to ensure that water runoff is done properly, which is a contributing factor to the problem at this point.

Mr. Brown and Councilman Craig sat with the engineers and were advised to check old SEQR documents and declare negative - some stimulus money could be received if moving along quickly which would contain continually rising rates in the Sewer district.

Councilman Smith inquired if the engineers indicated the total cost of bringing the Sewer district up to speed and Councilman Craig said no ballpark estimates were given at the meeting. Mr. Craig was assured by the engineer that the plant is not in imminent danger of breaking down, but this is a wake-up call to the town.

Councilman Smith said no households have been added into the district and there is not a lot of room to extend the district out and add folks in; any costs incurred will have to be borne by those in the Sewer district.

Councilman Craig said that Councilman Smith raised a good point and the town was overly optimistic when the system was put in and the Rezoning Committee will take that into consideration when discussing adding on to the district and that there is no quick fix.

Councilman Smith stated the board will have to start addressing the issue of repairs for Pump Station #2.

Supervisor Brown said when the plant was installed it was done as a 'package', and the plant at the county is almost identical to the one the town has and the county is having the same issues. There is still 10 years to pay on the debt bond and Roy has investigated to see if the bond can be renegotiated. It can but not a zero interest, which is what the town currently has. There is

no large reserve fund for the town to make major repairs from and four grinder pumps have been replaced in the past couple of years.

Public Comment

Brian DuBois, a Maple Avenue resident, said that he was involved in the planning of the plant and asked if the Grit Chamber being too small was a design flaw. Supervisor Brown responded he didn't know and that it is 2.5 times smaller than what is needed. Mr. DuBois said the sewer was put in because of clay conditions in the town and to prevent polluted water from seeping through.

Supervisor Brown indicated he is looking into expanding the district but it will be 1-2 years before other homes can be brought in. He said the town will bring the system where it needs to be and then bring folks in and will look for grant money as well as hoping the stimulus money will be forthcoming.

Councilman Smith indicated he wants another similar meeting when the costs of bringing the plant into line have been received.

Supervisor Brown announced a Public Hearing on the Senior Citizen Exemptions on February 17th at 6:30, right before the town board meeting.

Motion to close the meeting made by Councilwoman Snyder and seconded by Councilman Craig, with all in favor and none opposed.

Respectfully submitted,