

WEST SENECA SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER
4620 Seneca Street
West Seneca NY 14224

PUBLIC HEARING
Sewer Improvements
March 26, 2012

Supervisor Meegan called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Meegan read the Fire Prevention Code instructing the public where to exit in case of a fire or an emergency.

Motion by Supervisor Meegan, seconded by Councilman Hart, that proofs of publication and posting of legal notice: "OF A PUBLIC HEARING TO HEAR ALL INTERESTED PARTIES AND CITIZENS FOR OR AGAINST" be received and filed.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Motion Carried

Motion by Supervisor Meegan, seconded by Councilman Hart, to open the public hearing.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Motion Carried

Town Engineer Richard Henry gave a power point presentation on the condition of the sanitary sewers in West Seneca and the proposed improvements.

Following the presentation residents offered the following comments, suggestions and questions with responses from Mr. Henry as indicated.

- Suggested cleaning up problem with downspouts and sump pumps first.
- Questioned the definition of an average homeowner? Mr. Henry responded that an average home has 75' frontage, \$62000 assessed value, and usage of 60,000 gallons of water per year.
- Commented that when Fairfax, Marlow, Innes were widened the residents didn't want it, but the town told them they had to have it because there were grants involved. Very small pipes from the sewers were installed and no one cleans or flushes the pipes. Mr. Henry stated that sanitary sewer systems are cleaned every five years.
- Questioned what percentage of overflow is storm water that could be abated by the town now. Mr. Henry responded that none is storm water other than a couple streets adjacent to the city line.
- Commented on the Developmental Center and stated that the state owes the town the proper sewer after using it for many years and the town should go after that. Questioned if there will be a public hearing for each of the ten phases. Mr. Henry stated there will be a public hearing for each phase, but they are trying to rectify the 356 million gallon problem now with this project and he hoped it will be the only phase.

- Questioned if the town will be turning the sewers over to Erie County, noting that the town will have to spend \$60 to \$70 million to meet the county's specifications? Mr. Henry responded that the town may decide to go in that direction but he does not know how Erie County will react to that or what they will want. He was asked to come up with a recommended program for improvements and there are ten phases.
- Questioned if there are situations where manhole covers are being lifted off? Mr. Henry responded that there are situations like this.
- Questioned what homeowners need to do and what they should expect? Mr. Henry stated that homeowners should look at their roof drains, gutter drains, sumps pumps, etc. and ensure they are not connected to the sanitary sewer system.
- Questioned if laterals will be addressed when streets are repaired. Mr. Henry stated that laterals are the responsibility of the homeowner and the town has started conversations to create a revolving loan fund to help homeowners.
- Questioned if downspouts and sumps pumps can be connected to storm sewers. Mr. Henry advised that they can be connected to the storm sewer system.
- Questioned if sliplining decreases the size of the sewer and what happens to water that is infiltrating the line. Mr. Henry responded that sliplining prevents water from infiltrating and it ends up in the creek as clean water.
- Questioned if there are any outside towns that West Seneca receives sewer water from. Mr. Henry responded that Orchard Park and Elma discharge into the town's system. Anyone that contributes pays and will pay their fair share. West Seneca has a limit on taps – 152 allowable (Queens Landing, Princeton Estates, Hazel Court) without any mitigation. They are limiting the quantity for other towns, but not reducing their existing flows.
- Questioned what the town pays in fines for dumping into the creek. Mr. Henry responded that the town pays no fines as long as they endeavor to comply with the consent order.
- Questioned if it will take another 10 years for her basement not to be flooded with raw sewage? Mr. Henry responded that it could take longer than 10 years.
- Questioned what percentage of West Seneca flows into Buffalo Sewer? Mr. Henry responded that everything in Districts 5, 13, & 20 flows into Buffalo Sewer and they also have a big problem.
- Questioned why only certain homeowners have to pay for this when the town designed the sewers. Mr. Henry responded that the sanitary sewer is a special use district which means "he who pays must benefit and he who benefits must pay."
- Questioned the need for all the special districts and suggested combining them for possible savings.

- Suggested identifying available grant funding before deciding how much it will cost the taxpayers. Supervisor Meegan advised that they have reached out to Senator Gillibrand and Congressman Higgins and gone to the dormitory in Washington DC under the Clean Water Act. They are working extremely hard on this and working to consolidate all the districts. Mr. Henry stated there is funding under the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund but they have to have a project. West Seneca is on the list for 2013 funding and October 1, 2012 is when the town becomes eligible. This is administered through the DEC and it allows for a subsidized interest rate for any project deemed eligible. The town is instantly eligible due to the consent order.
- Commented that the problem dates back long before this Town Board administration, but sewer problems were never recorded in the past. Further commented that this Town Board is acting on the problem and Mr. Henry is the bad news bearer.
- Questioned what a smoke test is? Mr. Henry stated they will be smoke testing and dye testing in two areas of the town starting in June. Notices will be sent to all the residents of those areas to inform them of the testing. A section of sewer is plugged off, smoke is blown into the line, and the smoke may come up through the ground, basement drains, or roof spouts. The smoke is not harmful to people, but it will identify a problem and the town can help the residents fix the problem.
- Questioned if there will be a referendum, what will happen if it's voted down, and if only the three districts will vote? Town Attorney Shawn Martin stated there could be a referendum and only the three districts involved will vote.
- Questioned the life expectancy of sliplining. Mr. Henry responded that they try to design it for a life of 30 years.
- Questioned the length of the bond. Mr. Henry advised it is a 30 year bond.
- Questioned how long it will take to complete Phase I, II and III and how much it will cost to complete all ten phases? Mr. Henry stated that Phase I is done, Phase II & III will be done this year and he did not know the cost of all ten phases.
- Commented that if a house was built to code a long time ago and the drain goes to the sanitary sewer it should not have to be changed. Mr. Henry stated that it's not right for a drain to go to the sanitary sewer and it is causing problems.
- Questioned if the town has a storm sewer system and how it is related to this? Mr. Henry stated that the storm sewer in many parts of the town is in good working order and roof drains and sump pumps can be connected to it.
- Questioned why they should fix connections if they are not a problem? Mr. Henry responded that the town does not have the resources to check every house and they hope people will do it voluntarily. They will work with everyone for a realistic and workable solution. He further noted that 65 illegal connections were found in Phase I and 58 people voluntarily corrected the problem.

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- Questioned if any state or county politicians are helping. Mr. Henry stated that they met with both state and county representatives and no promises were made, but they are aware of and understand the problems.
- Questioned if a standpipe could help people right now? Mr. Henry responded that a standpipe could work but water will seek its own level and he thought it was better to use check valves.

Motion by Supervisor Meegan, seconded by Councilman Hart, to close the public hearing at 7:00 P.M.

Ayes: All

Noes: None

Motion Carried



JACQUELINE A FELSER, TOWN CLERK