

**TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
302 MAIN STREET
OLD SAYBROOK, CT 06475-2369
Cornfield Point Public Education Session
Wednesday, May 13, 2009**

The Town of Old Saybrook Water Pollution Control Authority met on Wednesday, May 13, 2009, in the Old Saybrook Middle School, 60 Sheffield Street, Old Saybrook, CT to conduct a Public Education Session on the Decentralized Wastewater Management District program for the neighborhood of Cornfield Point.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pavel Wilson at 7:00PM.

II. Introduction of WPCA and Staff

Chairman Pavel Wilson, George Gwizd, Nelson Engborg, Mike Evangelisti, Chuck Wehrly, Doris Zumbroski, Don Lucas, WPCA Coordinator, Robbie Marshall, WPCA Info. Specialist, and members of the public were in attendance.

III. Public Information Session for Cornfield Point.

IV. Questions and Answers

Q: How can homeowners be involved in the choice of AT systems? A: There are probably 20 different manufacturers of AT systems. We have traveled to Barnstable County in Massachusetts, the Pinelands in New Jersey, and Anne Arundel County Maryland, not just to look at the systems, but see how they are administered. We have decided against a few systems already, but probably won't have a short list of under 6 until the end of the year; until we determine how reliable they are, the true cost of maintenance and the results they are getting. The Cape has 1400 units in the ground and some have been in for about 5 years. We continue to collect information, but will concentrate on it after the public education sessions and referendum, and determine the best systems with the most reasonable prices.

Q: Will the homeowner have a choice? A: The Town through its engineering consultants will make a recommendation that this is the unit you should install based on your property. They may have a choice of 2 or 3 vendors depending on how we develop the program.

Q: What does "Needs Further Investigation" mean? Will it be done in the summer? Will there be more than one lot done at one time? A: The lots colored in gray mean there is little or no information in the file, so at some point we can contact the septic pumper to determine the size and condition of the tank and leaching. There is enough

WPCA Public Education Session for Cornfield Point: May 13, 2009

congestion in the summer, so we will stay out of the beach areas then. The low lying areas like Chalker Beach, Saybrook Manor, and Indiantown will not be worked on in the spring due to the high groundwater. We will finish one area at a time before we move on to the next one.

Q: Can I conclude that the 5-year pumpout has not been effective in controlling pollution? A: If you pump out your septic system it doesn't have an effect on the quality of the effluent coming out of the leaching system. If you don't pump your tank you'll get carry over into the leach field, which will clog the leach field. But the treatment that occurs in the tank separates the solids from the liquid. If you don't maintain your tank the distance between the solids and liquid gets more and more narrow. If you don't pump out, the flow from the house will push the solids into the leachate and clog the system. Pumpouts extend the life of the system.

Q: How do you determine if you need new leaching? A: The size of the leach fields is determined by the number of bedrooms (by the Public Health Code.) The first step is to find out the number of bedrooms.

Q: What if a property is colored tan? A: Tan properties are outside of the district.

Q: Do the AT systems require electricity? A: Yes. Q: What happens when the power goes out? A: The units have a certain amount of storage capacity like a reserve chamber. Q: Will the power company be made aware of the AS system properties? A: We can make them aware of it; it's not going to make any difference.

Q: What happens to the existing system? A: If you have some code compliant components like a tank or leaching the AT system could be added on or feed into the leaching system.

Q: When will we be contacted to start? A: The program won't begin for Cornfield Point for about 5 years. Once the program is established you can upgrade at any time; if you put an addition on your house, or if your system fails.

Q: My tank was installed in the last 5-years. A: If you give us the "As Built" information we will update your file, and the map.

Q: Are the installers licensed by the Town? A: Any of the installers have to be licensed by the State Department of Health, have insurance, comply with "call before you dig", and in addition have AT system training and certification. The Town will administer the contracts and bid out several lots at a time to save time and money (bulk rate.) For AT systems the Town requires a delegation for permitting from the DEP.

Q: How many feet of leaching do you need? A: What's in the ground is what is in the records. Contractors were required to file an "As Built" on how many feet and what materials the leaching system is made of. The Public Health Code (PHC) requires 495 feet for 3 bedrooms, 660 for 4 bedrooms and an additional 150 feet for 5 bedrooms. The PHC provides ratings for the different types of leaching systems. The information on what is on the property should be in the master property file in Town Hall.

Q: How do you know the depth to groundwater? A: We have groundwater monitoring wells in several locations and when we do septic repair we do a test pit. We may not have information on your lot, but we may have information on one three lots over. The groundwater won't differ that much between lots. We'll probably be doing some exploratory test holes and can use some small equipment at the property line.

Q: On the Frequently Asked Questions there was an answer that read what happened if the Referendum is voted down. The last one said it would go to a second referendum. On this one that line is missing. A: We don't know if the DEP would allow us to go to a second referendum but according to Gina McCarthy's letter if we don't proceed with the program a central treatment plant would be enforced. After the mediated settlement they gave us time to come up with a solution and to take action on the pollution problem.

Q: I noticed there were areas like Fenwick and other low lying areas omitted. A: The history of the areas goes back to the 70's when we had the first engineering studies done. Over the years the areas have been refined by subsequent studies. The borough of Fenwick is a separate municipal entity and was not included in any engineering studies. The reason these areas were selected was because there was documented pollution.

Q: Do we know where the pollution is coming from in Town? A: In 1996 we installed 85 groundwater monitoring wells. We found that there were indicators of pollution. It's not gross pollution, but the DEP still considers it pollution. There was a discussion about stormwater runoff and stormwater management.

Q: Are there other AT systems in town? A: Not town owned or individual. But there are many AT units like; Stop & Shop, Walmart, and Saybrook Convalescent will be installing one. Over 5000 gallons per day is reviewed and permitted by the DEP. Under 5000 is handled by the Department of Health. Less than 2000 is handled by the local Sanitarian. Saybrook Point and Dock & Dine both have AT systems.

Q: When is the 2% loan available? A: Once the referendum passes you would qualify for the 2% loan and Clean Water Fund money. The money is issued to the Town and the Town administers the loan. Right now, the money is not available.

Q: I was under the impression that salt water tests around the town showed no nitrogen except Fenwick. A: There was a discussion on groundwater monitoring wells. We located wells close to septic systems and a distance from the systems. We had some low hits. The hits showed nitrogen, fecal coli form, and ammonia.

Q: Have you calculated the cost per homeowner per sewer system looking at all the people in town rather than a small percentage of people? A: The sewer system would not service the whole town. The whole town is going to be paying one way or the other. The whole town pays for the administration as it has for the Sewer Avoidance program for the last 20-30 years. It will impact everyone in Town whether you're inside or outside of the district. A: An AT system would cost \$28,000, if we put in a sewer treatment plant we would be adding another 600 equivalent dwelling units. So there would be 2500 EDUs serviced by the system. If you divide that out it comes to about \$28,000 a household. However, according to state statutes the maximum amount

charged for a sewer system is determined by a benefit assessment. If that is determined to be \$18,000 then the rest of the amount is paid by the town. If you're a brown colored lot it comes down to spending \$200 every 5-years for a pumpout. It doesn't make any difference if you don't require an upgrade, you will have to hookup.

Q: Are other properties in Town subject to this? Can they keep a cesspool? A: The Public Health Code mandates that you only have to affect a repair when you have a breakout or contaminated well.

Q: So why would the rest of the Town have the right to vote? A: Because the rest of the Town is paying for it as well. It is a \$40 million project, the Town owns about \$10 million of it, for administration, engineering, and remote monitoring.

Q: So why can't the WPCA include the whole town in the district? A: The WWMD is only for areas with a documented pollution problem. You need an engineering study and solution to the problem. The focus areas had a documented problem, an engineering report, and a cost effective solution. We asked the DEP if areas could be added, they said you can, but you're not going to get any Clean Water Funds unless you hire an engineer and go through the whole process.

Q: What happens if we go through all this and it's really them? A: This is what the court has ordered us to do. Through negotiation with the DEP we believe this will solve the problem and address their concerns. This program is acceptable to the DEP. We're still nailing down the fine points of the program.

Q: You said the AT Systems are the only solutions for waterfront lots. A: The DEP has said that waterfront lots require a nitrogen reducing system.

Q: What is the timeframe for telling us what we're going to do? A: We'll probably be discussing this with you in about 4 years; show you what we have for information, look at the lot, and come up with a sketch together. Then we'll put them together in a block and put that block out to bid.

The meeting ended at 9:10PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Old Saybrook Water Pollution Control Authority

Robbie A. Marshall
WPCA Recording Clerk

WPCA Public Education Session for Cornfield Point: May 13, 2009