

**TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK  
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY  
302 MAIN STREET  
OLD SAYBROOK, CT 06475-2369  
Fenwood Public Education Session  
Wednesday, April 1, 2009**

The Town of Old Saybrook Water Pollution Control Authority met on Wednesday, April 1, 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 Fenwood.

**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, Elsa Payne, Mike Evangelisti, Chuck Wehrly, Don Lucas, WPCA Coordinator, Robbie Marshall, WPCA Info. Specialist, and members of the public were in attendance.

**III. Public Information Session for Fenwood**

**IV. Questions and Answers**

Q: How will the engineering design work on the individual properties; do they need to hire someone? A: The Town is picking up 25% of the costs of the systems by way of administration and engineering. That will be part of the bid process.

Q: A lot of these lots will require fill and separating distances. Will a lot of detailed surveying be required? A: No. The Health Department has the authority to waive the separation distances from property lines. The only distance they cannot waive is the distance between the septic system and drinking well. 95% of the properties have public water.

The Chairman described the program's funding break down, by Town, Clean Water Fund and homeowner as well as estimated costs.

Q: What will the vote be about? A: The vote will be held in August and be on the Facilities Plan and Wastewater Management District and funding.

Q: What happens if we turn it down? A: As we've said "doing nothing is not an option", we would be taken back to court and the DEP would pursue the installation of a central plant and sewers.

Q: There is a map on the website of the focus areas, it is less than 50% of South of 195 and I don't understand why the other areas are not included. A: This has been ongoing for over 20 years. There was a drive by done by the DEP and the areas were designated by the DEP. Q: What are the criteria? A: The original areas were determined by the frequency of septic repairs and the depth to groundwater. As other studies were done, criteria were added. The areas were agreed to in the Stipulated Judgment and Mediated Settlement. They were refined and negotiated over the years and the focus areas we have now are the best we can offer the Town to satisfy the DEP.

Q: What were the specific problems identified in Fenwood? A: We don't have this information. The person who provided it for the engineering studies is no longer here. But there were studies done over the years and Fenwood wound up being included. There were 85 test wells being sampled over several years, and while they did not yield results of gross pollution they had hits of nitrogen, ammonia, and fecal coli form, and indications of human activity. So there are studies as well as scientific evidence.

Q: \$600-\$800 for AT system maintenance is pretty high based on Putnam County New York. A: The DEP feels that it is low. We have been up to Barnstable County and will visit other areas with these systems to get as good a data as possible. A: There are no AT systems in CT so the DEP will require monitoring and sampling of effluent after they are installed.

Q: Did the DEP physically come out to Old Saybrook and take hundreds of tests? A: After the DEP determined that Old Saybrook was polluting based on septic system information, depth to groundwater, density, and soils they took the issue to the Supreme Court. Once the Commissioner of DEP says a Town is polluting and orders them to abate the pollution, everything else becomes moot. A: There was a further explanation on the 85 micro wells and groundwater sampling. It was discontinued because there was no further reason to keep paying for the testing. There was a discussion on the pump out program which helps but does not remedy the problem.

There was an explanation of 2-compartment tanks; how they work and why the State requires them. There is a tremendous amount of undersized tanks out there.

Q: Is there any chance that the criteria will change after we do this? A: No they are turning the authority over to us. Q: How long will they last? A: There are systems in the ground that are over 50 years old, depending on how you maintain them, they can last 25 years.

Q: It seems to me that the sewer plant would last a lifetime. A: They always need upgrading, the parts wear out; the capital costs are large.

Q: The only people that are here are the ones that are going to be paying. A: Everyone is going to be paying, but if you're on the sewer treatment plant you're going to be paying more.

Q: Are the figures for now or 7 years from now? A: These are today's dollars. A: We are starting next year and it will take about 7 or 8 years.

There was a discussion on the different costs per system and the purchase of components in bulk.

Q: Who is going to be responsible for installing these tanks; the homeowner? A: There was an explanation of the bidding and bulk buying process; negotiation with installers to realize the savings. Q: How about if you're a licensed contractor? A: The only way you can qualify for the 25% Clean Water Fund is to be part of the bidding process. The funds come from the federal government and are administered by the DEP and given to the Town; not to individuals.

Q: Are we voting on something or has it already been decided? A: We'll be voting on it. There was continued discussion on homeowners installing systems on their own properties.

There will be continued public meetings and public hearings before the vote. Q: And the whole town will vote on this? A: Yes. It affects the whole town. Everyone in town is going to pay something, if it's a sewer plant everyone will be paying for it. Everyone pays for the 25%. A: The Town is going to administer the money; the homeowner will pay the money back to the town.

Q: Are the commercial properties involved in this? So we're doing all the polluting and not them. A: Any system that produces over 5000 gallons per day, is regulated by DEP. There are criteria they have to meet, so the large wastewater generators are all currently under DEP permits. A: A lot of those places have holding tanks that are required to be pumped.

Q: Is it possible to get a representative from DEP to the meetings? A: We will have the DEP at the public hearings. They appeared at the August 18, 2008 session.

Q: There are some areas that are not included on this map. A: The areas were determined over the years by the DEP.

Q: Is there a point in time when the systems installed would meet the new guidelines? A: Yes. That was about 6 months ago. The separation to groundwater is 24 inches, the dry wells are no more than 4 feet high, and the 2-compartment tanks have been available since 1988. The Health Department is aware of the upgrade standards so that if you have to do a repair now, they will make sure it meets the guidelines so it won't have to be done again. The brown lots have been updated in the last 8-10 years; they have a 2-compartment tank and the separation distance is 24 inches.

There was a discussion about using a T pipe to prevent solids from escaping, instead of using a 2-compartment tank.

Q: When will the determination be made on the gray lots? A: Some of the lots are gray because we are not absolutely certain about the depth to groundwater. We will do this later on, but if a contractor is out there we can ask them for a soil sample. If we

have an idea of how deep the groundwater and the dry well is, we can change the classification.

This is a big undertaking for the Town, but we have every belief that it will be successful. When the program is in place, the DEP can use it as a model for other areas in the State. All the other states have AT systems (except Connecticut.)

Q: The feeling of the public is no one is going to buy this. A: We have been under the gun since the 80's, but April 15, 2008 we received a letter from the head of the DEP water bureau. The letter warned the Town to move the program forward or be subject to installation of a central plant and sewers.

Q: What happens if it is voted down? A: The DEP goes back to the judge and says we gave them an opportunity to implement a decentralized wastewater management program, the Town rejected it, please issue an order to put a sewer plant in and send them the bill. A: The court said that Old Saybrook is a nuisance polluter which means that you know you're polluting but won't do anything about it. Because of that decision we were fined over \$185,000. That fine is still on the shelf. If this is turned down they could reinforce that along with daily fines.

Q: What is the first area? A: Saybrook Acres.

Q: When is Fenwood? A: It's the last one.

**The meeting ended at 9:00PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Old Saybrook Water Pollution Control Authority

*Robbie A. Marshall*  
WPCA Recording Clerk

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