



**Approved  
Town of Ridgefield  
Water Pollution Control Authority**

**WPCA Special Meeting  
May 3, 2017 7:00 p.m.  
66 Prospect Street  
Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877**

WPCA Present:	Amy Siebert, Gary Zawacki, Ron Hill, Kevin Briody, Rudy Marconi
AECOM:	Don Chelton, Jon Pearson, Matt Formica
Diana Van Ness	WPCA Administrator
Diana Gaughran	360 Wilton Road West
Sonia Gaughran	360 Wilton Road West
Monica Brunen	348 Wilton Road West
Cal Brunen	348 Wilton Road West
David Pope	39 Aspen Mill Road
Mack Reid	132 Great Hill Road, Ridgefield Press

**These minutes are a general summary of comments, questions, and discussion at the public hearing and not intended to be a verbatim transcription.**

**Amy Siebert called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.**

**Amy Siebert introduced the panel and presented the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Wastewater Facilities Plan along with Don Chelton, Jon Pearson and Matt Formica (copy attached).**

**Following the presentation, the WPCA asked for questions or comments which are summarized below.**

**Diana Gaughran.** The homes in our general area, which is the Marcadon, Soundview, and Wilton Road West area, have septic problems due to a high water table. Every time we have a rain event, we get puddling in our yards, however, this year has not been as bad as previous years. In previous years, we were pumping our septic tank every 2 months to prevent problems. Our homes are a stone's throw from sewer area and would like to be considered in the sewer area.

**Monica Brunen.** Thank you, it was a very good presentation. As my neighbor Diana noted, our homes are close to sewer area and we would like to see the sewer extended. We are concerned about the cost for extending sewer service. Will the Town help with this cost? We own a house on High Ridge Road and is on sewer and the cost is very reasonable. We are very interested in being connected to the sewer system and included in the area. We have done everything possible to control the water level around our house and it still adversely affects our septic system.

**Cal Brunen.** Is the septage that is taken out of our septic system and discharged into the South Street plant taken into consideration in the upgrade?

**Jon Pearson, AECOM,** Yes, septage has been accounted for in the planning for the upgrade.

**Monica Brunen.** Is the Marcadon, Soundview, and Wilton Road West area being considered to be included in the sewer area, or is this just a dream?



**Diana Gaughran.** I can help clarify this, if you could direct your question to Slide 17. The expansion district marked in red on this map, is an area where sewers could be extended to address the health and septic issues. The question is, in the red area on this map, are our homes at 360 and 348 Wilton Road West part of this area?

**Rudy Marconi,** Yes you are included in one of the two potential expansion areas. The red area on the map includes Soundview, Marcadon, and Wilton Road West to Soundview.

**Amy Siebert.** What we did in this planning for the upgrade was to reserve capacity to serve your area. We are planning a treatment plant upgrade to take flow from your area, if, and when, your area is sewered. This is a separate project. The questions are: How will it be served, by gravity, or will it need pumping due to topography. How do we pay for this? When the proposal to extend sewers to this area was presented approximately 20-25 years ago, the homeowners in the area did not want sewer, and the area residents voted it down. The homeowners will pay for this service. Instead of paying for a new septic system, you would be paying for your area to be sewered.

**Monica Brunen.** The homeowners would have to pay for the sewer extension?

**Amy Siebert.** Yes.

**Monica Brunen.** How much would this cost? \$5,000? \$50,000?

**Kevin Briody.** The last major extension to the sewer district was in the Ramapoo Road area. We received a grant from the State of CT for that project, which contributed approximately ½ the cost. The cost of the Ramapoo Road project was approximately \$4M and we got \$2M from State. I don't recall the cost per household.

**Rudy Marconi.** Each resident has to pay for their individual sewer connection from the house to the street also.

**Diana Gaughran.** The facilities plan accounts for a potential expansion, but the cost presented tonight does not account for the actual cost of extending sewers to our area, and that would be a separate project in consideration. Do we have to bring that up in 2021?

**Kevin Briody.** Extending sewers to address septic issues is always in consideration, what would move it forward would be folks like yourself that would make it happen.

**Diana Gaughran.** If at that time, since we are a stone's throw away from the existing sewer, and the area as a whole does not support moving forward with the extension of sewers to the entire area, can we privately hookup to the sewer? Since we are so close to the existing sewer line, can we privately petition and pay for the connection ourselves? This is a very big concern for our area with the water table, poor soil and health issues.

**Amy Siebert.** It's difficult with the sewer in the street to accept a private extension that only serves one or two properties. You would want the town to take the line over and be responsible for it once completed. We could look at this. It is a reasonable question.

**Kevin Briody.** I can't recall another location, other than the Temple on Peaceable Street, that was outside the sewer area and allowed to connect with a private line.

**Diana Van Ness.** Bob Lowell was not in the sewer district.

**Diana Gaughran.** Bob Lowell, whose house is across the street, privately hooked up to the town sewer. His house is the yellow house and was not in the sewer area, so there is one case where an exception was made. It was a health issue. Back to the budget and cost for the wastewater treatment facilities Upgrade. The biggest concern for the community that is not present for tonight's hearing is the cost and benefit of the project. For me, I'm all for it. I realize that you have to get the phosphorus, nitrogen levels down to meet the regulatory levels. There has been a lot of buzz about this. The question that gets raised is why pay for this? What does it mean to the residents as to why it is needed. I think more has to be said to the community to help drive the message that provides information on why this upgrade is necessary.

**Rudy Marconi.** There are benefits to the Town as a whole from the project. The vitality of the downtown area, the environment, all benefit from a reliable treatment facility.



**David Pope.** I am a resident, but do not live in either sewer district. I work in the wastewater/corrosion business and was curious about the plans for the upgrade. In my business, I work with engineering firms like AECOM, and operations firms like Suez, and would like to get an audience with the WPCA in the future.

**Mack Reid.** I have a question as a resident and not in my role as a reporter for the Press. Based on our previous conversation on the plan to extend a sewer line from Route 7 down Route 35, my concern is the impact on business. The intent of the project is not to expand beyond the current capacity and expand the sewer district except for the two potential areas identified based on septic and health concerns. Once the new sewer line is in the ground it could be used for commercial uses on Route 35. It is not unrealistic to think that all property owners will want to tap into the sewer line. Is this a concern?

**Amy Siebert.** There is a difference between a force main and a gravity line. What is proposed here is a force main. A force main is a line which conveys wastewater under pressure from point A to point B. You do not take an individual property and hookup a sewer connection to a force main. The area the force main would go through is outside the sewered area, and only properties in the sewered area would be allowed to connect to the sewer system.

**Mack Reid.** The force main pipe would be in the ground, and eventually the pressure would mount and someone hypothetically could come in and want to put in a project with 800 units on 10 acres.

**Amy Siebert.** If a project is outside the sewered area, it would not be allowed to connect.

**Rudy Marconi.** The applicant cannot force us to extend the sewered area for 8-30g.

**Kevin Briody.** I don't recall anyone asking to connect to the High School force main.

**Diana Van Ness.** Mamasasco area was interested at one point.

**Rudy Marconi.** That was in the planning stages and the cost was prohibitive.

**Diana Gaughran.** What happens when the funding approval goes to the Town at a referendum vote in 2018 to approve. Is there a chance that it would not pass and we would have to keep living with our antiquated system?

**Amy Siebert.** Hopefully we will not have this situation. There are many regulatory drivers and have condition drivers with the age of the treatment plant. If the voters do not approve the referendum, and we don't voluntarily proceed with the project, the regulators can order us to upgrade our plant. We do not want to put ourselves in that position. It's good for human health and the environment to keep our treatment plant in good condition.

**Diana Gaughran.** What is the population of people on septic vs. sewer? I think you are going to get a lot of no votes without educating the public on why this project is needed. I'm not sure everyone understands the benefit.

**Amy Siebert.** The treatment plant provides a service for everyone in Ridgefield. When I get my septic tank pumped, the septage has a place to be discharged.

**Diana Gaughran.** The septic owners feel they are already paying into the sewer when they pay their septic companies to pump our septage.

**Amy Siebert.** When you pay for your septic tank to be pumped, you are paying for operating/maintenance costs for treating that septage, not the capital cost for the facilities to treat it. People don't always understand that.

**Rudy Marconi.** Every town handles the funding of major treatment plant projects differently. Some communities put the entire cost on the sewer users, some put some of the costs on the taxpayers of the entire town, and some increase the septic fee to have residents with septic systems pay a share. The last time we did this, approximately 10-15% of the costs was funded from the town. As we proceed with the design, we will look at different funding options to decide what makes sense to fund this project.

**Monica Brunen.** What part do the sewer users pay?



**Rudy Marconi.** This is still to be determined, and it would be paid through the sewer use fees. There is an advantage to being in the sewer district when you want to add onto your house.

**Monica Brunen.** I don't want to add anything. We are so close to the sewer district. How many people live in this area, and how much would they have to pay.

**Rudy Marconi.** A study would need to be done to assess how many properties would be served, how it would be served, and develop the estimated cost for the project and the cost per household. That's what a group of homeowners in the Mamanasco area did and they found that it was too expensive, so it did not proceed.

**Gary Zawacki.** Get in touch with your neighbors, see if they have interest and come to our meeting. Get a group together and if there is sufficient interest, perhaps it can be looked at.

**Monica Brunen.** I'm interested in the cost.

**Mack Reid.** Rudy was talking about the cost. What do the sewer user's pay now? The majority of the last upgrade was paid by the sewer users.

**Amy Siebert.** The current fee is \$5,700 for capital cost for a new connection, \$440 sewer use fees for operation and maintenance. This will change as we develop the funding plan for this project.

The hearing was concluded at 9:20 pm. It was noted that additional written comments can be submitted to the WPCA on the draft facilities plan through May 10, 2017 and still be considered as part of the public hearing comments.

Submitted by Diana Van Ness