

Sagamore Avenue Sewer Extension Public Meeting – December 9, 2019

Audience questions and answers were interspersed with the presentation.

Q. In the public interest, the Environmental Association Facebook page had high quality data on Sagamore Creek. Also the Conservation Law Foundation.

A. Yes, data is still being collected as part of the ongoing creek water quality assessment.

Q. What keeps the system from backing up into my cellar?

A. The low pressure system maintains pressure that prevents a backup. There is a double check-valve at the curbstop and also in the pump on the discharge side.

Q. Based on current estimates, the low pressure system costs each of the 91 households \$6,600. The gravity system costs \$8,500 per household. So for \$170,000 we could get the gravity system.

A. The cost would actually be greater than \$4 million for the pumping stations and gravity pipelines.

Q. What is the cost to the homeowner for the lateral pipe connection?

A. That will vary depending on the length of the pipe and path needed, whether ledge can be avoided or not, etc. Each case will be individual.

Q. Won't the pump be affected by salt and electrolysis?

A. No. The pump is coated steel and these systems are frequently installed in low lying flat coastal communities.

Q. What about a vacuum system like the one on Plum Island rather than push pressure?

A. The vacume system can have gasket issues. The E-One is the best available option evaluated at this time.

Q. For those who delay in connecting, will the access fee be higher in the future?

A. You're right that there is no requirement to tie-in now. The City Council will set the policy on those that elect to tie in at a later time.

Q. Currier Cove adopted a low pressure system that had problems. I understand there are 2 alternatives?

A. There are two types of low pressure: a centrifugal pump for higher capacity commercial applications and a slower-turning semi-positive displacement pump like the one proposed for this project.

Q. Sewer/water fees are expected to rise 4% annually. What is the projection for 5 years from now? The total cost is the lateral connector and \$860 for the sewer bill (5 units/month)?

A. The rate is projected to rise 4% per year. Rate 5 years out has not yet been set.

Q. The capacity of this proposed system is for 85-90 homes. What if a developer adds a need for significantly more capacity?

A. There is not much developable land in the area and development would be influenced by zoning and other land use rules.

Q. Would this system accommodate development if it did happen?

A. There is flexibility in the design. It is sized for build-out.

Q. What is the proposed cost to tie in now?

A. The City Council will set that policy as well as options for deferred tie-in.

Q. Isn't there a cost to remove my existing septic tank?

A. Sometimes. In some cases it may be possible to place the pump in the existing tank.

Q. The pump needs replacing every 10-15 years? What will that cost?

A. The estimate is a 15 year lifespan depending on use. The cost would be to disconnect and reconnect plus the pump itself (\$2,700).

Q. Is the Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Plant ready to handle this additional capacity?

A. Yes

Q. How long is the warranty on the pump?

A. One year

Q. Each household will have to meet with the contractor?

A. Yes. Staff will go house to house to understand how each septic discharge works, the best location for the pump, the installation impact on the property. Then we can have an initial discussion with each homeowner based on the data, and put it all in the plan. Additionally confirmation will take place – options for routing, etc. The bid process then incorporates all those individual impacts to get a comprehensive estimate for the construction.

Q. Who defines, when reviewing existing septic systems what "functional septic" means?

A. Historically, we have not inspected each system. The City adopted the pre-1985, State statute for the sewer ordinance.

Q. I have concerns about the blasting releasing radon gas.

A. The City has looked into radon concerns and will provide testing prior to blasting as well as testing after blasting at the request of the homeowner. Costs associated with testing will be addressed by the City Council.

Q. What about maintenance? If the pump fails at 3 AM will there be a central number to call?

A. The City will supply a call system to a local vendor. The City Council will set the policy as to who pays for maintenance in this project. Currently maintenance is a private responsibility.

Q. How many will be on the sewer line on Sagamore Ave?

A. 90

Q. How many are on the sewer line city-wide?

A. We'll have to get back to you with that number.

Q. The cost differential for low pressure vs. a gravity pumping station is just \$170,000. Why can't the City find that money?

A. The cost is \$170,000 in homeowner expense plus \$4.4 million (requiring a 20 year bond with interest) additional cost to the City for the pumping station and land acquisition.

Q. But there's no back up problem with a gravity system.

A. If the pumping station doesn't work, or fails, gravity systems will back up too.

Q. Details on the pump grinder?

A. See manufacturer's specifications.