

**THURSDAY OCTOBER 7, 2010  
EASTON PUBLIC MEETING ON SEWERS  
F.L. OLMSTEAD SCHOOL  
101 FOUNDRY STREET  
EASTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

The Easton Board of Selectmen held a 40 minute informational presentation on the long term, Town wide wastewater management planning and the North Easton Village Wastewater Collection System project. This document is a summary of the public questions received and answers given following the presentation. It is intended to capture the intent of the questions and the key points to each response: it is not a verbatim transcription of the discussion.

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**QUESTION:** For the treatment plant, what is the relationship between influent and effluent flow? What do you expect an average family of 4 to put out? The businesses? Does the whole business zone fit?

**ANSWER:** What comes into (influent) the wastewater treatment plant exactly equals what goes out of the plant (effluent) and into the groundwater recharge . Estimation is about 300-330 gpd for the average 4 person family in a residential house (100-110 gpd/bedroom). For businesses, the DEP requires a preset schedule: for instance, a specific number of gallons per seat in a restaurant. In each of the two proposals, some portion of the businesses are included in the 50,000 gpd for the plant. DEP requires conservative estimates. In each option, the shaded parcels equal 50,000 gpd including the Shovel Shop development and the YMCA.

The ability to sewer properties in Easton is, right now, limited by discharge capacity, not treatment capacity. The challenge is the ability to get the treated wastewater (effluent) into the ground without impacting wells, surface water bodies, other property, while still achieving the DEP design standards.

**QUESTION:** Is there additional future capacity at this plant? What are constraints? What will be done with the effluent? How long are these plants designed to last?

**ANSWER:** MassDEP has approved a Draft Groundwater Discharge Permit to recharge 36,000 gpd of wastewater effluent at the Shovel Shop site. The treatment plant will be designed for 50,000 gpd. Future potential increases in treatment capacity may be possible due to improvements in the membrane technology. i.e., more treatment within same footprint and a slight expansion within the plant  
The design life for control systems and membranes at the treatment plant is 20 years. The treatment plant will also need routine operation & maintenance. The design life for sewers is approximately 50 years. A portion of the sewer user bill will go to a capital budget for routine operation and maintenance for the treatment facility.

**QUESTION:** Is the basis of wastewater discharge from a property based on water bill? If we have a sprinkler system are we allowed a separate meter on the sprinkler system.

**ANSWER:** The water meter will most likely be used as the basis for the sewer bill, ultimately the Selectmen will decide. The Selectmen with input from DPW will decide how to adjust for outside water use. Some towns use a discounted amount of flow that went through the water meter, for example 80% of metered water, for the sewer use. Some towns allow a separate meter for irrigation water that is not used in calculating sewer use.

**QUESTION:** Has there been any testing for effluent discharge areas in Town? Is Shovel Shop paying the betterment also?

**ANSWER:** Investigation through the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan will include drilling on

three sites for future discharge areas. We are hoping to do that this fall. So soil borings, perc testing, and groundwater modeling has not been conducted at these three sites. But a draft groundwater discharge permit has been issued for the Shovel Shop site (a fourth site) for the 36,000 gallons per day. That permit is based on soil borings, perc testing, and groundwater modeling already conducted.

Yes, the Shovel Shop development will also be paying betterment charges.

**QUESTION:** When are we deciding on the alternatives for Sewer Option 1 or 2?

**ANSWER:** On Nov 1. the Selectmen will vote on which parcels will be included in the first phase of the sewer plan; either Option 1, Option 2 or a third option that is created through public input..

**QUESTION:** How far on Main street will the first phase of sewer be going? For Option 2, where will the sewer at the rear of the properties on Main St be tying in?

**ANSWER:** The collection system may extend as far as the bridge west of Seaver Street, depending upon capacity. One option shows it stopping at Seaver St (to the west) and Center Street (to the East). The sewer behind the houses on Main street (Option 2) could route through the access/parking lots to the rear of the property. Those buildings currently discharge to septic or tight tanks in that parking area.

**QUESTION:** What is the cost difference between the two alternatives? Is one more expensive than the other?

**ANSWER:** Right now these are conceptual options. We know, from a construction standpoint, that if the sewer is to go down Main Street (Option 1), the cost will be higher due to deeper excavation, excavation through ledge, and potentially an additional pumping station on Main Street west of Seaver Street. Option 2 is a less costly option based upon routing the sewers off of Main street, less anticipated ledge, and the need for one pumping station.

Cost may not be the only consideration. The Selectmen are looking for feedback from residents and business owners as to which Option would benefit the Town more.

**QUESTION:** How is the betterment cost assessed?

**ANSWER:** There will be some betterment workshops this fall to discuss the legal methods of assessing betterments. One method is based on length of property frontage. The second method is based on uniform unit where all 3 bedroom single family homes are assessed 1 unit and pay the same betterment. Properties other than single family homes pay an amount proportional to their contribution.

**QUESTION:** If a residence is currently outside of either sewerage Option for North Easton Village, where do we stand for future expansion?

**ANSWER:** There is limited discharge capacity in the current shovel shop project however, the town is committed to seeking wastewater solutions to all "needs areas". Eventually there will be a design for sewerage more of North Easton Village as other discharge and treatment option become available.

**QUESTION:** Is this a gravity system, and what is the reason gravity was selected? Will there be curb to curb re-pavement?

**ANSWER:** The system is being designed as a conventional gravity system flowing to pumping stations. Low pressure sewers with individual grinder pumps is not being proposed. A gravity system yields the ability for future flows. Low pressure sewers are less flexible in terms of future flows.

The project will include curb to curb overlay.

**QUESTION:** Where did you pull the information of failed septic systems and variances from? Is it safe to assume they were repaired since?

**ANSWER:** The information was provided by the Easton Board of Health records. The map showing repairs and variances is indicative of an area where soil and groundwater conditions may not be conducive to properly operating septic systems. Some systems may have been repaired a while ago and may not now be functioning properly. The other important fact is that most of the variances indicated a reduction in separation to groundwater.

**QUESTION:** Have you looked into the parking lot behind the museum as a discharge area? Have you talked to Brockton about connecting? Isn't the Town's goal to have a larger scale regional solution instead of many small treatment plants?

**ANSWER:** The parking lot for the children's museum is not being considered as a discharge area. Easton's regional planning has been going on for many years. Brockton has may have capacity in their system but the Brockton plant cannot increase its discharge to Salisbury River. If Easton sent wastewater to Brockton to be treated, right now it would have to return to be discharged in Easton which is the challenge. There are advantages and challenges of regional solutions.

The Shovel Shop project keeps "water local". Think of the Taunton River Basin as a bowl. We want to replenish our drinking water wells in Easton. If we connected to Stoughton, for example, which is part of the MWRA system, eventually our bowl would dry up because we are discharging our water resources outside of Easton and the Taunton River Watershed.

The decision to tie into the Brockton plant will be up to the State. They control whether a regional solution with Brockton can occur based on the EPA permit. We hope a regional solution will be one part of the overall solution for Easton's Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan.

**QUESTION:** Would there have been a penalty from DEP if the Town did not vote for the Shovel Shop Plant? What if no there is no alternative, and if we left it as is? Are we forced to hookup to the sewer?

**ANSWER:** The Town is actively searching for alternatives to septic systems in Needs Areas. Many septic systems in Town are failing and this is detrimental to our environment. Many septic systems have variances on their septic designs which allow reduced separation from groundwater which is a concern. The Town wants to protect the areas around our drinking water wells (Zone II groundwater protection areas). The failing septic systems are a public health issue and that is the main driver to find better solutions such as wastewater treatment in Easton.

The Selectmen will decide on voluntary or mandatory hookups to the sewer if it goes by your house. You have to pay the betterment on your property if the sewer goes by your house.

**QUESTION:** Does the capital cost include financing cost? Is the Town proposing bonds?

**ANSWER:** The Town has applied for a State Revolving Fund loan – the State extends a low interest 2% loan over 20 years for these types of projects. Municipalities typically carry another 2% for administrative and legal costs (i.e., 4% total). Under recent stimulus funding, 20% of the loan principal has been forgiven – but we cannot count on this going forward.

**QUESTION:** Will the Betterment be less expensive in Option 2?

**ANSWER:** We are basing the betterment costs on engineering assumptions at this point. Option 1 would require deeper excavation on Main Street, excavation of ledge and two pumping stations. Option 2 will most likely only have one pumping station and is likely to be less expensive, therefore each betterment would also be less in Option 2.

**QUESTION:** At the East end of Option 1 – where will the pump station be going?

**ANSWER:** The first question would be whether Option 1 is chosen by the Selectmen. If it is, then the Town will explore available locations for a pumping station. Pumping stations can be built in the right-of-way and have a very small footprint.

**QUESTION:** Is the Town operating the treatment plant? If it is a private operator, will the rate typically increase?

**ANSWER:** The Town will be the owner and will contract for operations - exactly what we are doing now for the School Campus wastewater treatment plant. Under Massachusetts General Law the Town is required to use public procurement for the operator and the decision will be heavily based on lowest cost. Typically contracts with private operations firms allow for a cost of living increase each year, but exclude large increases in charges.

**QUESTION:** Are you looking at other funding opportunities?

**ANSWER:** We are always looking for grants and low cost loans. This board leaves no stone unturned. Easton does not qualify for grants based on household income. We have focused on researching public health and environmental safety oriented grants. There may also be economic development/sustainability based funding opportunities due to the North Easton Village the business district.

**QUESTION:** How will betterments be assessed for future expansions?

**ANSWER:** The betterment is established once the sewer is installed and the treatment facility is running. The actual betterment is based on the actual final cost of construction. Future sewer expansion projects will have separate betterment costs. The law has provisions to prevent someone joining the sewer collection system later at a reduced price.