

## **SPECIAL MEETING OCTOBER 15, 2007**

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on Monday, October 15, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Pitkin Community Center, Banquet Room, 30 Greenfield Road, Wethersfield, CT.

Present: Councilors Cascio, Drake, Forrest, Kirsche, Kotkin, Montinieri, Walsh, Deputy Mayor Fortunato and Chairperson Adil.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, and Dolores Sassano, Town Clerk

### **PRESENTATION BY THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION - CLEAN WATER PROJECT**

Robert Weimar updated the Town Council on the Clean Water Project. He presented the attached PowerPoint presentation. (attachment 1)



[The Clean Water Project Program Update](#) [748 KB PDF file]

Councilor Kotkin said that looking at all the work, will there be a challenge in finding engineering resources to design this and get the work out to bid.

Robert Weimar said the MDC had some concerns with that and brought on a group of firms so that it is not relying on one firm. There are 10 firms for sewer work and 6 firms for the waste water treatment plant.

Councilor Cascio thanked Mr. Weimar and his staff for attending the meeting. He said that this is an intense project that impacts the Cove. Smoke testing was done in various locations in Town. He asked if smoke testing was done at the high school, Emerson Williams, Mitchell School area, and Pine Acres?

Allan Pelletier from the MDC said that smoke testing was done at some of the schools.

Councilor Cascio said that all four of those locations seem to be connected. Emerson William, Pine Acres, and the High School are all in the Folly Brook area. Mitchell School is part of the Folly Brook corridor, too. These are key areas that could be contributing to the problems in Folly Brook. He said that he doesn't know if the MDC can say that the job has been done if it hasn't gone in and done conclusive testing there.

Robert Weimar said that the field work has just started. The MDC has done the flow monitoring and smoke testing first. A dye test will confirm the smoke test results. Building inspections will also be done. These tests have just started in the Folly Brook area.

Councilor Cascio asked that the MDC note the four areas mentioned.

Robert Weimar said that by spring of next year the MDC will have completed the study to the point where it can start to discuss the specific approaches it would take. In all the Towns, the MDC will be challenged by the Federal and State government to reduce the amount of flow that comes from buildings and other sources. Relying on that alone will not solve the entire problem but it will be a start.

Councilor Cascio said that the levels of water have been higher due to storms or the presence of other things. He asked what the other things were.

Robert Weimar said that is exactly what the MDC is trying to evaluate now. In terms of the general level of ground water and those things that would drive the infiltration rates up, those are things that are typically seasonal and relate to the mean hydrologic cycle and specific activities in the watershed. The only thing the MDC can safely say is that the amount of rainfall getting into the pipes is much higher than the MDC had been aware of.

Councilor Drake asked if the south conveyance land/tunnel was a new idea.

Robert Weimar said that this past year, the MDC brought in a number of consultants from around the country to reevaluate what the MDC had developed. They said that having a tunnel of this type was perhaps a more effective way to address the problems that are occurring in Newington and West Hartford. Conveying the water through the tunnel may be the cheapest way.

Councilor Drake said that it looks like a good idea. He said that the \$800,000,000 referendum did not address how it would be paid for to do what the MDC is doing. Now he is looking at this project and the MDC doesn't even know what storm flows are here. It looks like a pretty substantial amount of work to do.

Robert Weimar said that the MDC believes this tunnel will be less expensive than the original plan which would take flows through the corner of the city and bring them back to the plant. It turns out that because the MDC has the ability to trunk it directly, it can lessen the costs of the improvements within the area.

Councilor Drake said going forward with the engineering studies, the MDC will have a very good idea of the costs against the \$800,000,000.

Robert Weimar said that the approach the MDC has taken with the agreement with the Federal government is to provide a report mid term next year which describes the MDC's approach to the surrounding Towns of Hartford. The reason for that, is the MDC believes there are a number of factors that need to be considered such as how the MDC is going to deal with individual homeowner issues, as well as the existing condition of the sewers throughout the system. Much of this has been programmed in to this. Now, the MDC is going back and is doing a much more thorough assessment and will provide the assessment by next spring to the EPA and next summer have the plan approved and move on from there.

Councilor Drake asked what his feeling on the \$800,000,000.

Robert Weimar said that money was anticipated to take the MDC to a certain point in the abatement process and they are now debating how to best use the \$800,000,000. There have been a number of projects assigned to that money. At this point, because of the tunnel, some projects originally planned for the phase one part of the Hartford program may be changed and the money put into the tunnel because it has a much larger positive impact on abating overflows in Newington, West Hartford and Wethersfield.

Councilor Drake asked if there are people in the Hartford area that can build and connect such a tunnel.

Robert Weimar said there are six to ten firms worldwide. There are a few in the United States that are actively working, most recently in Providence.

Councilor Forrest said he talked about the south tunnel but what is really of issue is the Wethersfield Folly Brook trunkline. Is the MDC still thinking about sewer separation for the area.

Robert Weimar said that at this point the MDC is still evaluating whether separation is still necessary. In Wethersfield, the MDC is looking at some separation.

Councilor Forrest asked what the estimated time line would be. It would seem that Wethersfield is a high priority in this program. When would construction start in the Town of Wethersfield?

Robert Weimar said that the construction will require both the State and Federal governments' approval. The first year of any meaningful construction would be abatement in 2010.

Councilor Forrest asked what kind of communication there would be with residents during the project.

Robert Weimar said that at this point the MDC is working with Hartford to setup something similar to a reverse 911. Another goal would be to provide door to door notification as it does now with the inspection programs.

Councilor Forrest said that a year or so ago, the MDC agreed on a certain amount of safety with the Wethersfield Cove. Will the MDC still be able to meet those goals?

Robert Weimar said that the agreement that the MDC has with the State requires the MDC to eliminate the sewage from getting into Wethersfield Cove. That was predicated initially with the presumption that the overflows were caused by Hartford. Adding the flow from the northend of Wethersfield and the Folly Brook area, the MDC is going to re-evaluate how the MDC does it. The goal of eliminating sewage to the Wethersfield Cove remains the MDC's obligation.

Councilor Forrest said that the MDC also discussed the Wethersfield pump station.

Robert Weimar said that the pump station takes flows from Wethersfield and delivers them to the Rocky Hill plant.

Councilor Forrest asked if this is the station that runs along Dorchester Street by the railroad tracks.

Robert Weimar said that he forgets the name of the street.

Allan Pelletier said the pump station is actually at the Rocky Hill treatment plant. It takes the Old Wethersfield trunk along Middletown Avenue.

Councilor Forrest asked if it would come all the way back to Church Street along the railroad tracks.

Allan Pelletier said yes, it flows from that area.

Councilor Forrest asked if residents of that area can expect to have less of these types of overflows in the future because of this system.

Allan Pelletier said that this will help, but the MDC is investigating other causes, too.

Councilor Kirsche asked about the conveyance that goes from Newington to the plant. About a year ago, the MDC talked about a conduit from the 1800's that needed a lot of attention as part of this project. It seems to follow the same pathway. Is that still something that needs updating if it is not being used as the pathway for the new conveyance. How do the two relate?

Robert Weimar said that the original scope would have taken the flow from the surrounding Towns to the center of Hartford. That is the way it presently runs. By cutting it off and directly sending it to the plant, the MDC then frees up capacity in the center of the city to deal with problems that occur there. The MDC will have to improve the existing 160 year old system, too.

Councilor Drake said the whole idea is to separate storm water from sewer water. Once that is done, will the MDC treat the storm water at all? The idea of not treating the storm water seems like a shortsighted concept. Storm water is not clean water.

Robert Weimar said that this is part of the reason for the Hartford Storm Water Survey. There will be future regulations that will affect the ability to discharge the water directly into open water

Councilor Drake asked if the storm water pipes will go to the plant or just out to the river.

Robert Weimar said that the District at this point does not have within its responsibility the management of storm water. However, the MDC recognizes that it needs to work with the Towns to find the best way to address storm water and sewer water. That discussion will start mid-year once the MDC determines how much of a problem it really has. More than three times what the MDC takes in at the plant overflows to other sources.

Councilor Drake said that 30 years from now, someone will say that the MDC shouldn't have separated the storm and sewer water.

Robert Weimar said that the issue is an important one. The Town currently has a separate system, based on the fact that there is excess storm water getting into the sewers and some people are directing their storm water to the sewers. This needs to be looked at to see if it makes sense to continue to separate them. It is going to be a discussion between the MDC and the regulators as to how much flow will be treated at one sight, or exceed the amount of flow available.

Chairperson Adil thanked the MDC representatives for their presentation and said that the Town Council looks forward to the MDC's next report.

At 7:40 p.m., Councilor Forrest moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Kirsche. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 9-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano  
Town Clerk

*Approved by vote of Council November 19, 2007*

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