

FEBRUARY 22, 2005 SPECIAL MEETING

The Wethersfield Town Council held a special meeting on Tuesday, February 22, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall.

Present: Councilors Adil, Cascio, Czernicki, Forrest, Fortunato, Hemmann, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Karangekis (6:10 p.m.) and Chairperson Morin.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager, MDC Representatives Bob Moore, Mike Petty, and Sally Nyren, and Dolores G. Sassano, Town Clerk.

Chairperson Morin welcomed everyone to the Special Meeting at which a presentation will be given by the MDC Representatives regarding the Long Term Control Plan (LTCP) and input on the sewer backups.

Mr. Moore said that present with him this evening are Bob Weimar and Craig Wagner from CBN who will provide a presentation of the relationship between the LTCP and the Wethersfield Cove. Mr. Moore said that the LTCP was finished in December and was submitted to the DEP. He said that a hearing on a portion of the Plan was held last week and there was great representation from the Town of Wethersfield. Mr. Moore said that the challenge for the future is to blend the LTCP and its relationship with the Wethersfield Cove to come up with an acceptable solution meeting all the needs of the region and the district. Mr. Moore introduced Mr. Weimar to give his presentation of the LTCP and how it can merge with the plan for the Cove.

Mr. Weimar provided an overview of the general concepts and the specific plan for the MDC's abatement of combined sewer overflow (CSO), who participated in the study regarding Wethersfield Cove, the definition of the study for zero discharge into the Cove, the Alternatives selected for further analysis, and the evaluation of how the Wethersfield Cove solution is integrated into the Hartford LTCP. Mr. Weimar said that the primary issues to be addressed include water quality, a top agenda item for the EPA, and areas prone to sewer backup into homes due to the inadequacy of the sewer capacity. Mr. Weimar said that the MDC signed a Consent Order from the Connecticut DEP in October, 2002 which commissioned the study to establish a basis for the overall abatement of combined sewers to mitigate the impacts of sewage discharges. Mr. Weimar said that, theoretically, the goal is elimination of the discharge and the impact of the cost on the public. He said that three points of the Connecticut DEP and United States EPA required discharge abatement are to meet water quality goals, to provide an affordable realistic control level minimizing water quality exceedance, and acceptable control levels of three months to two years (EPA Region 1 requirements) as the frequency of an overflow. Mr. Weimar said that a one-year control has been adopted for the purpose of this study. This means that a discharge is allowed to occur once per year. Mr. Weimar said that no one single Alternative will address the entire problem of overflows. He said that a series of options have been developed to provide a range of cost and a range of control. Mr. Weimar said that the four Alternatives being considered all include some type of separation and he reviewed the evaluation criteria for choosing Alternatives. These include the minimum criteria of water quality, cost, and cost-benefit as well as the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) added criteria of quality of life, health and safety, land use appropriateness, odor/air quality, construction impacts, flooding abatement, greatest good for greatest numbers, and equalized solution for water quality. Mr. Weimar reviewed the lowest cost plan which provides for larger tunnel storage, but no separation to address basement backup and no HWPCF or wet weather treatment improvements. This plan for a 1-year level of control would cost \$425 million. He then reviewed the highest cost plan which separates all combined sewers throughout Hartford, addresses basement backups, eliminates CSO's and provides no Hartford Water Pollution Control Facility (HWPCF) improvements at a total cost for city-wide separation of \$1.1 billion. Mr. Weimar said that the recommended plan of local separation addresses basement backups, new HWPCF headworks, new wet weather treatment, tunnel storage, I/I reduction, and pipe relief at a cost for a 1-year level of control of \$610 million. Mr. Weimar said that the recommended plan represents the lowest cost plan that meets all objectives, offers the ability to phase project components and offers the greatest flexibility. Mr. Weimar proceeded to address the Wethersfield Cove issue including the concern about sewer discharges into the Cove, noticeable "floatables" in the Cove after rain events, bacterial water quality impacts to the Cove, possible negative property value impacts, and the MDC's commitment to action. He said that the MDC has looked at the Cove issues

independently as well as considering marrying these issues with the LTCP. Mr. Weimar reviewed the Wethersfield Cove Study goals and it's objectives of the development of alternatives to "eliminate" CSO discharges to the Cove, the determination of a design basis, the review of control alternatives, the recommended feasible alternatives for further review, and the evaluation of alternative integration with the District's CSO LTCP. Mr. Weimar reviewed the existing Franklin Avenue area sewer system and its predicted storm response. He also reviewed the Wethersfield Cove alternatives, several of which have similarities to the alternatives considered for the city as a whole. The alternatives are as follows: CSO collection and discharge to the Connecticut River; CSO collection and treatment with river discharge; full Franklin Avenue separation; partial separation with CSO treatment; CSO collection and treatment with partial separation; Deep rock tunnel storage. Mr. Weimar said that it is presumed that the 1-year storm event will have to be dealt with and anything beyond this will be dealt with separately. He then reviewed the Wethersfield Cove alternatives analysis selection criteria which include water quality, improvement of aesthetic conditions, reduction of basement flooding, minimizing of construction impacts, permitting process, constructability, phasing, power consumption, long term operations and maintenance, and cost. Mr. Weimar provided a summary of the capital costs of the most pragmatic, affordable Wethersfield Cove CSO Abatement alternatives to be integrated with the LTCP. Mr. Weimar explained that the primary goals and project criteria of "zero discharge" are that it be a stand alone project that accomplishes "zero discharge" for infrequent (18 and 30-year) events; that large flows and volumes result in high project costs; and that potential cost reductions from integration with other city-wide CSO planning efforts are being developed. Mr. Weimar reviewed the Wethersfield Cove solutions combined with and in context with the LTCP and the CSO project implementation prioritization which includes public health, the environment and the management of fiscal impacts. The combined solutions could include a proposed new wet weather facility, a proposed Wethersfield Cove wet weather pump station, a proposed LTCP influent pump station, and a proposed Wethersfield Cove wet weather treatment facility. Mr. Weimar said that LTCP Alternative merging with either Wethersfield Cove Alternative 1 or 2 makes the most sense for the following reasons: it solves the priority public health and environmental problems first; it maintains program flexibility and adjusts to change; it achieves CSO abatement goals as quickly as possible; and it manages fiscal impacts. He reviewed the factors affecting implementation of the LTCP and Cove solutions such as MDC Board approval of the LTCP, DEP/EPA negotiations and approval of the LTCP, availability and type of state funding, city/community support, referendum, prioritization of projects, permitting, design/construction complexities, and obtaining pipeline easements and land area for facilities. In addition, the implementation of the Cove Solutions would be affected by integration of the pumping, prerequisite projects, and funding questions.

Regarding the process for approval, Mr. Moore said that the Wethersfield Cove plan and the LTCP have been presented in detail to the MDC Board as well as the DEP. He said that a public hearing has been held on the LTCP and that the Public Works Board and full Board of the MDC are trying to integrate implementation of a final solution. Mr. Moore said that it is anticipated that there will be a referendum in the 2006 election. Regarding funding, Mr. Moore said that the DEP makes loan monies available through the Clean Water Fund. He said that grant funding of 50% of the project cost is available for the combined sewers project.

Chairperson Morin said that there was a good turnout from the Wethersfield community who attended the MDC public hearing on the LTCP and there was tremendous support urging the MDC to tie in the Wethersfield Cove plan with their LTCP. Chairperson Morin asked Mr. Moore when Wethersfield will know if the LTCP has been approved. Mr. Moore said that the MDC is currently creating a process for approval of the plan. He said that community involvement of both Hartford and Wethersfield will be one of the key factors the Board will consider. Chairperson Morin asked Mr. Moore what progress is being made to remedy the sewage backup into Wethersfield residents' homes and also how the proposed solutions will help them with this problem. Mr. Moore said that the backup in January was related to the Folly Brook interceptor with the primary problem being too much water due to a number of reasons and this will be addressed.

MDC Representative Sally Nyren explained that when investigating the Folly Brook area there was a root mass found in one of the manholes which did not cause a blockage, but could in time. Also found was a pipe discharging clean water into the sewer. Ms. Nyren met with Mrs. Dobruck, Town Engineer Mike Turner, and Staff from the Public Works Department to walk a portion of the Folly Brook interceptor and discovered a number of manholes without solid covers. These will be replaced with solid covers so that rainwater cannot get in. Ms. Nyren said that manhole rehabilitation will be occurring to prevent tree roots from blocking the sewer. She said that there seems to be a problem with water running out of the pipe from the High School concession stand which should be buttoned up. Mr. Turner

has said that he will check this out. Ms. Nyren said that there was clear water running in the bottom of one of the sewers looked into and she finds it interesting that without there being a rainfall or melting snow, so much clean water was getting into the pipe. Ms. Nyren said that she continues to work with the Dobrucks and others on Folly Brook to solve the problem.

MDC Representative Michael Petty stated that the Franklin Avenue interceptor is the only pipe that drains Wethersfield Cove to the Hartford Wastewater Treatment Plant. He said that the Folly Brook trunk drains into the Franklin Avenue interceptor which has sufficient capacity to carry dry weather flow (sanitary sewage flows only). Mr. Petty said that over the years, the Folly Brook interceptor has begun to accumulate storm water for various reasons. He said that once the Franklin Avenue interceptor fills up it backs up into Folly Brook and other pipes as well. He said that the big picture requires that these inflows must be removed from the system and larger pipes need to be installed. This will ultimately be the solution to prevent backups in the Folly Brook area.

Mr. Moore said that, as stated by Ms. Nyren, the MDC is not through dealing with the homeowners or the pipe problem. He anticipates that there will be improvements to the sewer independent of the rest of the CSO project.

Councilor Forrest asked when the DEP will be making a decision on which alternative options are approved. Mr. Moore said that he met with the Deputy Commissioner last week and informed him that a decision is needed as soon as possible. He said that the DEP has been working with the MDC all along on both the LTCP and the Cove plan; therefore the decision should not take long. Councilor Forrest asked if it is possible to have an 18-year storm flow without creating a new plant. Mr. Moore said that this could occur with a direct pipeline to the river.

Councilor Cascio thanked Mr. Moore and his colleagues for attending to the needs of the residents in the Folly Brook area. He asked Mr. Moore when the MDC Board will place this on their agenda for discussion and if he could notify Chairperson Morin of the results. Mr. Moore said that the Town has been notified of the Board meetings and that there will be a Public Works meeting in March and a full Board meeting in April. Councilor Cascio asked when the approval will occur. Mr. Moore said that he hopes approval will be granted some time in April. Councilor Cascio asked Mr. Moore if there have been any current readings taken on the water quality of the Cove. Mr. Moore said that readings are taken and recorded every time there is a small amount of rain. He said that he can provide Councilor Cascio with the information on the readings. Mr. Moore said that the discharge has been reduced significantly; however it still does occur. Councilor Cascio asked what will occur in Wethersfield next with regard to public health. Mr. Moore said that there will be a facility design and a referendum for funding. Councilor Cascio asked Mr. Moore if all the Towns within the MDC have to buy into the proposal. Mr. Moore said that the majority of the voters in all Towns in the district have to buy into the proposal for the referendum. Mr. Moore said that the referendum must be held because under their current Charter the MDC Charter can only finance a project up to \$5 without going to referendum. Councilor Cascio asked what the majority vote needed will be. Mr. Moore said that this depends on the number of electors who come out for the election. Councilor Cascio said that Wethersfield needs to talk with all of the other Towns for support.

Councilor Czernicki left the meeting at this time (7:00).

Councilor Montinieri asked Mr. Moore about the LTCP's report stating that anything over a 1-year level of control would be the responsibility of the Town of Wethersfield to secure funding. She asked if the Town will be expected to secure funding for the 18-year level of control or if it will be built into the referendum dollars. Mr. Moore said that he does not know the answer to this yet as funding options are still being looked into.

Chairperson Morin thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting and stated that the Town appreciates the work that the MDC and CDM have put into finding solutions to rectify the community problems.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:10 p.m., Councilor Adil moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Councilor Cascio.

All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk