

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT FACING THE ISSUES

Thank you for being here this morning to learn about this very important subject. Water, Water Pollution and Management of our Wastewater may not be an exciting topic, but it is clearly one that we should take seriously. Our availability to water may someday become one of the most important issues we face. Equally important is finding the right solution for our wastewater. So, I applaud you for taking the time to be here.

Who is the Task Force?

The Task Force members are:

- **Kurt Zemba**, Chairman. Kurt is a former Selectman, currently serves on the Open Space Commission, and has served on many boards and commissions in our community, including the Regional Board of Education. He has a background in Corporate consulting, management and strategic planning, and is also a Moderator, with expertise in elections and parliamentary procedures.
- **Robert McCarthy**, who also serves on our Planning Commission, is an engineer with a focus on water resources and environmental consulting.
- **Douglas Wilkinson**, with a degree in accounting and over 40 years of management experience and project management
- **Dr. Frank Chan**, an engineer with an impressive career working for the Naval Submarine Forces in several high position capacities, and winner of **two** Navy Meritorious Civilian Service Awards
- **Richard Prendergast**, who has an Industrial Engineering education, and has served on the WPCA in Clinton, whose mission was sewer avoidance
- **Donna Bednar**, with a Masters in Biology and over 12 years of experience in the biotech/pharmaceutical industry

- **Dr. Ernest Lorda**, with a Masters in Engineering, a PhD in Biological Oceanography, and 25 years experience working on environmental issues in Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River
- **Tom Risom**, who also serves on our Zoning Commission, is an engineer and former Old Lyme WPCA Chair
- **Dimitri Tolchinski**, owner of Dimitri's Plumbing HVAC, with a Masters in Mechanical Engineering, and experience as Engineer/Designer of Nuclear Power Stations, Currently Old Lyme WPCA Chairman

As you can see, this group comes with impressive credentials and is well prepared to address this complex issue. I want to thank them all for their time and effort on this project

I would also like to thank the Selectmen, **Mary Jo Nosal and Skip Sibley**, who also spent a great deal of time focusing on this project, and supporting it each step of the way.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge **Mr. Kurt Zemba**, whose tireless efforts kept us all on task, and well prepared to bring this to the community.

So, Why Are We Conducting This Study?

I think it's important to know where we've been, to understand how we are at this point today.

Starting in the early 1980's, the CT DEP (now the D E E P) began their effort to get Shoreline Communities to install sewers, making the case that there are many small lots along the shoreline that cannot possibly handle the wastewater needs without polluting Long Island Sound.

Old Lyme, like so many small towns along the shore, resisted this "strong arm of the state" to control our future, believing it was not in our best interests.

Thus, the Old Lyme WPCA was formed in the early 1990's.

Per allowance by state statute, they were formed with a mission of **sewer avoidance**.

Many actions were taken to support this sewer avoidance and guarantee that we were not polluting the Sound.

Monitoring wells gave us regular data on the condition of the groundwater, and a pump out schedule was adopted, requiring pump outs within a regular period of time.

When systems failed, our Sanitarian worked with homeowners to repair quickly and efficiently.

This continued for many years, and then two critical things happened:

- **Point 'o Woods** went through the process with the DEP to install sewers connected to the New London Wastewater Treatment Facility. As a Chartered Beach Association, they were free to form their own WPCA and work directly with CT DEP.
- Then, the Town of Old Lyme tried to pass an **ordinance** that would require all cesspools and substandard systems to be upgraded within a specific time frame. Unfortunately, this caused panic for many homeowners on small lots with no room to upgrade. It also prompted two more Chartered Beach Associations to begin the process of working with the CT DEEP to do their initial study, resulting in Consent orders for both Beaches.

We are now faced with **three** Chartered Beach Associations who will be hooked up to New London, and a fourth has begun the RFQ process for their own study.

The Town of Old Lyme strongly believes that there is a better solution for our small community.

We are now working with the CT DEEP to conduct a study for a Community System that will keep our water in town, will be environmentally friendly and will be a model for other communities in Connecticut.

And most of the cost of the study is eligible for 55% reimbursement through the Clean Water Fund (CWF).

What Will the Feasibility Study Do?

Through the study:

- We will secure Grand Funding – the cost of this is included in the funds requested, though this cost is not eligible for reimbursement
- We will identify appropriate land for wastewater effluent – we have begun this process, but any land we identify must be tested to know for sure if it will work for the plan.
- WE will determine the feasibility of a Community based solution
- And determine the Wastewater Needs in Project Areas. The areas are identified in one of the handouts – but basically from Old Lyme Shores, east to White Sand Beach. There are areas north of Rt. 156 to the railroad that are included in the study, as well. As mentioned earlier, some areas have already done studies and determined that there is a need. Other areas must be evaluated as well.
- We will Evaluate Local Wastewater Treatment Alternatives; Evaluate Local Wastewater Collection Alternatives; And Confirm a Regional Wastewater Management Alternative – in any study funded by the Clean Water Fund, we are required to look at all our options to be sure we make the best choice for our community.
- And finally, the firm will Develop a Recommended Plan and Implementation Schedule

Time is of the essence as soil testing must begin in April, and our goal is to work together with the Beach Associations to find the best solution for the entire Shoreline Area.

What are the Benefits of this Action to the Community?

IT IS IN KEEPING WITH SEWER AVOIDANCE:

- We will **not** be connected to a centralized waste water treatment facility, located three towns away, the cost of which is controlled by others and paid by users.
- Our wastewater will be handled in the best way possible – utilizing soil and time to filter whenever possible.
- And it means that our water can be recycled and reused within our borders, and this is always better for the environment.
- Our groundwater stays within the community, recharging what we use in our daily lives.
- Most experts agree that water is one of our most valuable assets and will come at a premium in time.

IT'S A LOCAL SOLUTION vs. A REGIONAL SOLUTION:

- Giving us more control over costs and essential decisions for our community.
- Also, we will not be as prone to future Capital expenses not under our control.
- When the New London Facility expands, and we believe it must in the future as it was built in the 70's, we will not be expected to pay for the Capital expenses of that expansion.
- Federal dollars for Centralized systems are drying up, so this will be costly to the communities that utilize the facility.
- Both the local solution and the regional solution involve conveyance of the wastewater **away** from the high density areas.
- Both solutions protect and preserve water quality

DECREASED WATER POLLUTION:

- We will not be adding to the pollution of Long Island Sound, either through our densely populated shoreline areas, or by sending our waste to a treatment facility that ultimately dumps into a river, which flows into Long Island Sound.
- This is a benefit to everyone in our community, in fact a benefit to our society.

WE WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AVAILABLE FUNDING:

- We have already started the paper work for eligible reimbursements through the Clean Water Fund.
- This helps keep our costs down for everyone.

WE WILL BE A MODEL FOR OTHER COMMUNITIES:

- As I mentioned earlier, there are many small communities, both along the shore and inland, that are facing wastewater management issues.
- Old Lyme will be a model for these communities in addressing their wastewater needs locally.

IT CAN BE A PHASED-IN APPROACH:

- Implementation of the recommended plan can be phased in, as needs of neighborhoods are evaluated and understood.
- It is likely that not ALL households will be required to hook up, if they already have a 100% compliant system, but the study will help determine this as well.
- **Without** a local solution, a Consent Order to hook up to sewers is likely in the future. The cost of that infrastructure could impact everyone's tax bill.

Old Lyme is a unique community with small town charm, and we feel a community solution will preserve what we all love about Old Lyme.