

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR  
THE PEBBLE RIDGE/WOODRIDGE  
NEIGHBORHOOD**


2012 Recommendation to the Board of  
Supervisors

## THE HISTORY


- This issue in this neighborhood has been studied for the past 14 years by 3 committees who all came up with the same recommendation...Public Sewer installation is needed
- The facts in this area are that soils remain poorly draining, sewage can be seen surfacing on properties, several residents have had to put in holding tanks and high levels of fecal coliform continue to pollute our waterways



## EXPERT FINDINGS

- Two reports from Boucher and James outlined the conditions in the field regarding malfunctions and suspected malfunctions. Properties in this neighborhood have been documented with surfacing sewage.
  - The Bucks County Health Department has provided correspondence providing information on malfunctions and the poor soil condition, and stated that the soils in this area are not ideal for septic systems.
- 

## EXPERT FINDINGS

- Delaware Valley College's Agronomy and Environmental Science Department concurred that the soil condition in this area is not suitable for onsite wastewater systems.
  - Conestoga-Rovers has reported to the Board of Supervisors in numerous reports since 2005 that this area of the Township continues to have the highest levels of fecal coliform discharging through our storm sewer system than any other area in the Township.
- 

## RESIDENT FEEDBACK

- Residents we speak to on both sides of the issue express concern about their neighborhood and are ready to know what the future holds.
- Homeowners in this neighborhood have been living in limbo with systems they aren't sure if they should fix or not, waiting to see what will happen with sewers

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The key responsibility of the Board of Supervisors is to protect the health, safety and welfare of the community.
- We believe that it would be protecting the health, safety and welfare of the Pebble Ridge/Woodridge neighborhood and vicinity to install a gravity sewer pipe in the street.

## RECOMMENDATIONS


- Septic Systems aren't cheap either

Type	Construction	Engineering/Permitting	Total Cost
Sand Mound	\$25K	\$10K	\$35K
AB System	\$35K	\$10K	\$45K
Micro Mound	\$35K	\$10K	\$45K

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- We know that residents are concerned about the price of this project.
  - Installing gravity sewer in this neighborhood will eliminate the health and safety issues associated with malfunctioning septic systems.
  - It is a fact that homes with public sewer have a higher worth/resale value.


## TOWNSHIP ASSISTANCE

- At the Township level we can work with our state legislators to help find funding opportunities for the project
  - At the Township level we can help connect residents with banks to provide loans to help finance the project
  - The project will take time, and the staff will work to answer residents questions and help them navigate this project
  - As staff we have successfully navigated several sewer installations in the Township in 2002 and 2004.
- 

## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

Question: How long will it take to design a sewer system?

Answer: From the time of receiving notice to proceed with the design of the sanitary sewer system, it would take approximately nine (9) months to obtain survey information, prepare drawings and specifications, and submit applications for and obtain all necessary permits. This does not include the time needed to advertise and receive bids, nor does it include any construction time.



## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

Question: How much does a typical quarterly sewer bill cost?

Answer: Sewer bills are monthly (not quarterly) and are \$41.07 flat rate per month.



## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

Question: Will the pipe be in the ROW or on private property?

Answer: For the most part, the gravity sewer mains would be located in road right-of-ways. The laterals would be installed from the sewer main to the edge of right-of-way. There would be some sewer main which will need to be installed within private property. Sewer easements would be required for these instances. These easements would be located at the edge of the properties as much as possible. Topographic survey information would be necessary before the sewer alignment can be definitively determined.



## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

Question: How will you compensate residents who are shown to have pipe in the back of their properties?

Answer: The Authority would negotiate with property owners in order to obtain these easements, attempting to come to a mutual agreement on a fair value for the necessary area. Typically, a sanitary sewer easement (permanent) would be 25 feet wide, with a temporary construction easement of at least an additional 10 feet to allow for the initial pipe installation.



## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

Question: I heard there will be a “public cost” and a “private cost”? What does that mean?

Answer: The “public cost” would cover the installation of all sanitary sewer mains (and associated items) within the public right-of-ways and easements. This would include the installation of the sanitary lateral piping for each property, from the sewer main to the edge of the right-of-way/property line. The “public cost” would be determined by the public bidding of this project. The lowest responsible bidder would be awarded the contract, and the final construction cost would then be split among the properties to be connected.

The “private cost” would cover the installation of the sanitary lateral piping (and associated items), from the right-of-way/property line to the residence’s plumbing. It would be the property owner’s responsibility to hire a plumber to install this piping, unless this work is included in the public project costs, which would need to be decided early in the design phase.

The term “and associated items” as used above includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the installation of manholes or fittings, cleanouts, grass restoration and pavement restoration.



## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

Question: I heard the public cost will be approximately \$26,000. How and when will I pay the public cost? And to whom? Is the public portion controlled by the public bid process?

Answer: The “public cost” would be determined by the public bidding of this project. The lowest responsible bidder would be awarded the contract, and the final construction cost would then be split among the EDU’s to be connected. This fee would be paid to the Township. The Township would transfer ownership of the project, after approval by the Township Board of Supervisors. The Township would transfer fee payment or assign liens to BCWSA.



## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

- Question: Can private plumbers be used or do we have to use someone employed by the Authority?

Answer: It would be the property owner’s responsibility to hire a plumber to install this piping. The installation must be in conformance with BCWSA and Township standards, and would be subject to BCWSA inspection.

- Question: Can we get lower pricing if residents seek out a bulk price?

Answer: The residents can seek out a bulk price for the installation of the private laterals or do so individually. It is suggested that participation be 100% to secure the best price.






## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

Question: Do I have to remove my existing system? If so, what do I have to do?

Answer: The PA Department of Environmental Protection requires existing septic tanks to be properly decommissioned. This should be done in accordance with the latest regulations, but generally speaking, this entails the following:

- Remove lid, vent and access collar of the septic tank.
  - Hire properly licensed hauler to pump out contents of the tank, and flush/scrape the walls.
  - Break/drill holes in the bottom of the tank.
  - Fill tank with No. 57 stone (or equal) to 6" below grade.
  - Backfill the remaining 6" with soil and restore surface as necessary.
- 


## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

Question: How long will the project take? Will my yard be torn up? Who will restore my lawn and who pays?

Answer: The construction is expected to last approximately 15 months, with multiple construction crews working at same time in different areas. The work will be limited to the road right-of-ways, except where easements are required for the installation of sanitary sewer mains between properties. All easements will be restored by the Authority's contractor to pre-construction conditions. Note that the easements may include one or more manholes installed for the sanitary sewer mains, with the manhole covers being flush with the ground surface.

Any disturbance caused by the private plumber will be their own responsibility to restore.

If a lawn is disturbed by the public contractor, the public contractor will be responsible to make repairs and or restore the damage areas or items




## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

Question: Will our streets be torn up? Who will fix them? Do I have to pay for the road restoration?

Answer: The streets will be disturbed during construction of the public portion of the project. Permanent restoration of State-owned roads will be performed by the Authority's contractor, and the cost of this restoration has already been included in the public costs.

It was understood that the Township would repave the Township-owned roads after this project was complete. Therefore, this permanent restoration cost was not included in either the public or private costs.


The Authority's contractor will install "temporary" pavement restoration over the trench after each portion of sewer pipe is installed. This will ensure vehicle traffic is not interrupted, until the permanent paving can be completed after all work is complete. Temporary pavement restoration will be both in State and Township owned roadways, and the cost of both is already included in the public costs.



## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

Question: Will the Authority or Township get any grants to lower my cost? Will they provide any loans at no interest?

Answer: This project does not meet the criteria for any current grants that are available to BCWSA. The Authority does not offer loans, but their bank (Uninvest) does have a program for this type of project and BCWSA will work with the residents to help them evaluate the program for possible utilization for financing.



## QUESTIONS FOR BCWSA

Question: Will they have to blast? Who will restore my property? And who will pay for it?

Answer: It is not known at this time if any blasting will be required. The soil and auger borings will have to be completed and analyzed before this is known. If the Authority's contractor does propose any blasting, the contractor will have to obtain all local and state required permits, and perform both a "pre" and "post" blast video survey of all facilities and structures within a certain radius of the blast area. The contractor, at contractor's own cost, would be responsible for any repairs to damages caused by the blasting.



## CONCLUSION

- Staff feel a best permanent solution is the implementation of Public Sewers in order to maintain the integrity of these neighborhoods.
  - The one constant that staff have observed is that the problems have never gotten better, or gone away after 14 years of review
- Recommend Component 3m Planning Module as part of the process to install public sewer in the Pebble Ridge Woodridge Area and its vicinity
  - Allows for public comment and forces us to vet out the alternatives

