

**Summary of Neighborhood Meeting at the Weston Municipal Center held on September 21, 2004**  
**Subject: Village Planning and Neighborhood Sentiment for**  
**Public Sanitary Sewer and Water Service in River Bend and Powers Subdivision Areas**

An estimated 100 people attended. A roster signed by 69 attendees, representing 58 properties, is on file.

Purpose of the meeting was to provide some background and technical information from the Village's perspective and obtain input from the residents.

Informal presentation by Village Director of Public Works, Keith Donner. Tim Vergara of Village engineering staff and Mark Thompson of Marathon Technical Services also participated in the discussion.

Background/Reason for Meeting

- Village is routinely asked about plans and/or schedule for providing sanitary sewer and water to developed parts of Village not having these services.
- Village has not stated that its mission is to extend unless there is a need (public health reason) or desire in a neighborhood to extend services.
- Village has had to keep future service to these areas in mind as planning is done for water and sanitary sewer extensions
  - Several planning studies for the Village sanitary sewer system
  - Provisions for crossing of the Eau Claire River on Ryan Street extended
- On subdivision development, current Village policy is for developers to finance all improvements within their subdivision.
  - Developers also finance improvements offsite improvements (between existing Village systems and the development)
    - Example is the Edgewood Subdivision being done by Wanta.
  - When developer finances offsite improvements:
    - The adjacent property owners are not mandated to connect to the improvements.
    - An equivalent assessment is collected by the Village and paid back to the developer if the connection occurs within 10 years from the date of the completion of the installation.
- Exceptions to 100% developer financing occur if the Village undertakes a capacity improvement project. Examples of the Village being opportunistic in this regard have been:
  - The detention pond in the Sandy Meadow Subdivision and larger storm sewer to someday provide drainage in the Powers addition.
  - The project that provided service to the Riverside Addition in 1999/2000, accomplished the first developer extension to the Sandy Meadow subdivisions, and provided the Eau Claire River crossing and interceptor sewer needed for the area for the long term.
  - Development in the Town of Weston east of Kramer Lane could lead to a project in the River Bend area.
- The "react to need/desire" philosophy doesn't give people the certain answer they may be seeking for their own planning.

Technical Background

- Septic system age research
  - Marathon County Zoning responsible for permitting and compliance monitoring.
    - At end of 2003 area had 157 total private systems
    - Record of only 8 replacements
    - Average replacement age 17 years
    - 54 systems (36%) are ≥ 17 years old
    - 19 systems (13%) were installed prior to 1978
    - 12 systems (8%) installed prior to 1974
- This area has generally much newer development and septic systems than the other neighborhoods (Yellow Banks and Callon), which averaged about 24 years old for original systems still in place. Average age of remaining systems in this area is about 15 years old.
- Septic system drain fields rely on native soil or artificially placed soil (mound systems) to distribute wastewater over the area and filter the fine solids. If septic tank is full, excess solids enter drain field and/or drain field piping and soil can clog. Regular septic tank pumping is vital.
- Drain fields/mounds must be above groundwater table by at least 3 ft. (5 ft. in coarse soils)

- Well logs and geological data indicate:
  - In the River Bend area the general groundwater table depth is 10-20 ft.; depth to bedrock 20-40 ft.; sandy loam soil.
  - In the Powers Subdivision the general groundwater table depth is 20-30 ft.; depth to bedrock 30-40 ft.; loamy sand soil
  - Groundwater depth varies by year. A shallower bedrock layer 5-10 ft. deep may be present in the Pine Ridge Estates Subdivision (Schoonover Rd.).

#### Issues/Possible Implications of Data

- Marathon County Zoning does not monitor systems installed prior to 1978 so maintenance including periodic pumping of septic tanks on those systems is strictly up to homeowners.
- Engineering standards were not required for systems installed prior to 1974.
- Water table and private wells could be influenced by private sewage systems, especially those not up on maintenance. Soils in this area are generally sandy and support septic drain fields in natural soil.
- Well testing at Marathon County Health department reviewed by the Village indicated higher nitrate values in Powers and Pine Ridge subdivisions than in River Bend subdivisions. River Bend area has nitrates closer to background levels that would be expected 0-3 mg/l.
- Well tests are sporadic points in time - only tested if home is sold/purchased or if infant is born/added to household.
- If septic systems are having an influence on water table and private wells, indications could be bacteria in wells and higher nitrates. Failed septic system would be detectable by surface evidence, wastewater backup in home, surface water contamination, and/or groundwater contamination.
- Only way to determine condition of septic systems and possible influence on wells is to conduct a sanitary survey of wells and septic systems in area.

#### Village's Perspectives

- Need for service has been seen as inevitable. This area is included in the Village's sewer service boundary. This means that the Rib Mountain Metro Sewerage Plant and the Village's collection system have been built to serve this area. If there is no need/desire for service why should these areas continue to be reserved for future service?
- Private systems have uncertainty as to amount of life remaining. People ask questions about the private systems and prospects of public sewer and water at time of home purchase in these areas.
- Village would prefer a majority of opinion before undertaking a project (though this is Village Board's discretion).

#### Perspectives/Questions from Residents

- Opinions voiced at the meeting were primarily in opposition to a sewer and water project.
- The discussion became focused, for over an hour, on the planned drainage project in the River Bend Area. Many residents questioned whether the planned improvements would solve anything.
- There was a perception that the drainage project was a result of the Edgewood Development. Village staff stated that the project is needed regardless of the subdivision development.
- Village staff also stated that if a more comprehensive drainage project were to be undertaken it would not be done without sewer and water and curb & gutter.
- There was discussion of the drainage situation in the Powers Subdivision, particularly at James Lee and Richards. That also would not be corrected without consideration of other improvements in the subdivision.
- A petition was presented to the Village from the residents in the Powers Subdivision stating no desire for sanitary sewer and water. The petition is signed by 57 individuals representing 32 properties and is on file at the Village of Weston.
- There were a number of questions about how specific lots would be handled for special assessments.
  - It was explained that until detailed estimates and a special assessment report are prepared, it is difficult to address specifics.
  - In general corner lots are special assessed for the long side if using a front footage formula and the lot is not divisible.
  - In projects involving sewer and water the Village has favored an equivalent lot benefit formula. This also takes current and conceivable zoning and lot divisibility into account.
- There was a request to obtain better cost estimates for serving the area.

### Potential Costs of Service

- Costs are estimated for any project on its own.
- A preliminary estimate to serve the areas is being prepared as of February 2005.
- Some more recent historical perspectives are as follows:
  - Sandy Lane Area 2000 - Service to 120 lots on N. side of River ±\$10,700 average assessment for everything with average lot frontage of 118 ft. (\$90.70 per foot average)
  - Brehm's Subdivision 2001 – Service to 49 residential lots on east side of Village - ±\$11,900 average assessment with average 137 ft. of frontage (\$86.90/ft)
- Discussed a (conservative) gross estimate of \$110 to \$120 per foot (\$16,400 per lot) be used for budgetary purposes at meeting. Final rates depend on need for Village to oversize beyond area. Village pays 1/3 of street reconstruction. Storm sewer not special assessed.
- Cost estimates exclude cost on private property for connecting to public systems

### Private System Costs

- In follow-up, Marathon County Zoning provided some data on septic system costs through their grant program. In 2003, the range of average costs for various systems was: mound \$7,780 - \$10,800, conventional \$3,950 - \$6,395 (this was on only a total of 12 systems)
- Also in follow-up, drilling a well of up to 100 feet was estimated to cost in the range of \$4,000 to \$6,000.
- Septic and well costs will vary dependent on the specifics of individual situations (soil type, groundwater depth, rock depth)

### Current Village Policies

- Developer Project
  - Developers finance improvements within subdivisions.
  - Developers also finance off site improvements that may serve existing development.
  - Connection to these are not mandatory and there is 10 a year limitation on paying to connect.
- Village Project
  - Water and sewer extended at same time.
  - Connection to municipal system required within 1 year of project billing.
  - Deferral of connection is not allowed, except in cases where it is physically impractical (distance/elevation).
  - Curb & gutter is put in when a total reconstruct is done.

### Meeting Follow-up

- Mail survey to obtain more complete and formal input as to the desires of the neighborhoods.
- Depending on results prepare preliminary project cost estimates and propose a schedule of improvements