

Summary of Neighborhood Meeting at Yellow Banks Park held on August 17, 2004
Subject: Village Planning and Neighborhood Sentiment for
Public Sanitary Sewer and Water Service in Yellow Banks Area

An estimated 100 people attended. A roster signed by 82 of the attendees 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

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.
- The exception has been if the Village undertakes a capacity improvement project.
 - The impending extension of water down Camp Phillips to Boy Scout Camp is an example.
 - Another possibility is an interconnection with Wausau along Northwestern Avenue.
- 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 173 total private systems (excluding 18 on south side of Eau Claire Avenue)
 - Record of only 33 replacements
 - Average replacement age 24.8 years
 - 79 systems (56%) are ≥ 24.8 years old
 - 76 systems (54%) were installed prior to 1978
 - 50 systems (36%) installed prior to 1974
- 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 general groundwater table depth is 20-30 ft. along Eau Claire Avenue, about 10 feet along Mallard Court, etc.; and 10-20 feet on the south side of Northwestern Avenue. A sharp rise in bedrock elevation occurs along Northwestern Avenue. There appears to be a pocket of sand and gravel in the Bessert's Addition (Bruce Drive, Cecil Street, & Joan Drive).

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.
- There is no historical basis to show problems, based on well testing at Marathon County Health department reviewed by Becher-Hoppe Engineers as part of a recent Village planning study for sanitary sewer.
- 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 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 project.
- 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 no desire on the part of attendees, on the day of the meeting, to undertake a sanitary survey (sample wells and look at existing septic systems) in the area.

Potential Costs of Service

- Costs are estimated for any project on its own.
- Preliminary estimate to serve the entire area south of the Eau Claire River (roughly 150 lots) = \$2,100,000. This is approximately \$14,000 per lot, with all costs special assessed. Projects are typically not 100% assessable. Curb & gutter would cost an additional \$9.00 to \$12.00 per running foot.
- 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)
- Recommended a gross estimate of \$100 to \$120 per foot 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

Current Village Policies

- Water and sewer extended at same time.
- Connection to municipal system required within 1 year of project billing (if done as Village project).
- Deferral of connection is not allowed.
- 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