

MINUTES OF SEWER FEASIBILITY COMMITTEE
September 13, 2017

The Ad Hoc Sewer Feasibility Committee met on Wednesday, September 13, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Terrace Park Community Building. Committee Chair, Mayor Tom Tepe led the meeting. Councilmembers in attendance: John Gaskey, Jeff LeMay, Pax Lindell, Holly Purcell, Judith Lehman, and Regina Sharp. In addition, committee members Joe Alter, Carrie Carothers, David Center, Amy Roe, and Jane Yancey attended. Village Administrator/Chief of Police Gerald Hayhow also attended. Greg Kesterman, Assistant Health Commissioner and Chris Griffith Director, Division of Water Quality from the Hamilton County Public Health attended.

The Mayor thanked all for coming. Mayor reiterated the purpose of the group and the fact that the group has a great deal of work to do and that no decisions will be made without significant public input.

The Mayor, Chief Hayhow, Amy Roe and Marc Michaelson all met with the City of Milford to say that we are exploring sewers and asked if they would be an option to be our sewer district. Told them we are looking for the lowest cost option. Milford was interested, asked for more information and looked into the possibility. Upon further investigation, Milford found it would be over \$27 million to bring it in, which would equate to \$35,000 per home – just to get it to your front yard (not including tap fee, decommissioning your system and getting from your house to the sewer line). In addition, Milford City ordinance says that they would have to annex the territory in order for it to be in their sewer district. Milford is not currently interested. The Milford option was tabled.

Milford was geographically closest and it made sense to go talk to them. If anyone knows of other places besides Milford and MSD we should talk to please let Mayor Tepe know and he will get information.

City of Cincinnati runs the Metropolitan Sewer District, but it is owned by Hamilton County. MSD/Hamilton County sets a cap per household of \$12,000. That price doesn't include line from house to sewer or dry well decommissioning. That is the program Hamilton County has proposed. We will work to negotiate a lower cap. We have not had that formal meeting with MSD. We do know that MSD has offered us the \$12,000 per household incentive.

There is an additional incentive for people who have new systems installed after 2004. There are roughly 100 of these in TP. They would be given a credit of \$5800 below the cap of \$12,000 over 20 years. If it costs less than \$12,000 for your house, you will be charged the lower rate. If it costs more, you will not be charged more. So people with newer systems will pay \$6200 and their tapping fee will be \$500. Decommissioning, if you have a drywell, will be around \$2500. Since we are 800 households we should be able to negotiate lower fees for some of these things. Getting from the house to the sewer line in the street is the thing that will vary significantly and is a onetime fee, not amortized over 20 years.

MSD has very specific rules and regulations as to how sewers are set up. Community has to petition MSD. Board of County Commissioners has the final say. Community is petitioned and

need to have a good majority so if a few change their vote, it wouldn't change the outcome. For example Milford wanted a 75% approval rate.

If a sanitary sewer system comes to Terrace Park state law requires all people to hook up, even with a newer septic system. People with a fully-functional newer system have five years to hook up. Aerator systems have 2 years to hook up. People with drywells or a failing system will have 90 days. MSD runs the pipe down the road, State Law requires you hook up and Hamilton County Board of Health enforces the state law. Sewer assessments happen once a year you have a choice to pay out of pocket or put on your tax bill. So if you have a newer system and if you got an extension on hooking up to the sewer, you would still be assessed.

Mr. Wooten from MSD oversees sewer petition projects. They are always open to community input as well as infrastructure and cost. 800 homes should give TP a large voice in the design. MSD is governed by the County Commissioners so that is another level of governance input.

Petitioning is a long process, then it goes to the County commissioners, then you have the design phase and then back for more county commissioner steps. So likely 5 – 10 years to sewers from the day you say let's go sewers.

Plan plus MSD coming in a certain amount of time and the state will give their blessing. MSD ultimately decides where and how the sewer gets built. HCPH would like to be at the table and will help us through the process with MSD. If a sewer is coming, HCPH can work with us to come up with a solution to help not have to install a new septic when you change your house.

We need to figure out where the sewer is going? How many trees are we going to lose? This somehow needs to go to the village, but we need the above information. Problem is that MSD will not know the specifics of the sewer until we commit to the sewer.

There are two rounds of petitions. The first is a designee who basically goes door to door and gets residents to sign a petition in favor (or not) of sewers. Once we present MSD with this "informal" petition with a majority "yes" signatures, then MSD puts out a certified petition and that's what counts. Local petition process will take 5-6 months to get the word out. Then 60 days after you turn in petition to MSD, they will put out the official petition.

Can get a fairly decent idea on cost—including pipe to house and decommissioning. We need a cost estimate and an idea of environmental impact.

MSD will pay for sewer from Apts to us – they look at it as a capital cost. \$40,000 is the average cost per house and \$12,000 is a gift. Small bore (forced) – less damage, less intrusive. Madeira has a combination of gravity and forced sewer. Forced has the electric for running the pump and thus an extra cost, and if the power goes out that's an issue. Forced main doesn't have to be as deep as the gravity. The decision of forced versus gravity is not HCPH, it's Wooten/MSD who do the engineering.

The estimated annual cost per house is based on water usage of about \$117.35 per quarter 5.87 per ccf after that. Based on that price, residents would pay \$600 – 700 per year in sewer fees. New septic system maintenance is \$1200 a year. Some difference in cost of gravity vs. forced

sewers. Public Health along with MSD could help us lay out and compare these costs. Forced main has less cost initially, but more in upkeep.

8 – 10 years out plenty of people will move, expand their houses, etc. Because of the need for the new septic we are seeing people less interested in buying TP vs. say Mariemont where this isn't an issue. How do we better manage and answer the questions about this as we go through the process for the next 8 – 10 years? What is the possibility that septic technology will advance and prices drop so that it is a better more economical solution? In 22 years, cost has never gone down. Soil, trees, zip code pricing, etc plays in. System is more complicated when a 4br house is built on a small lot. Septic design for Terrace Park is more expensive and more complicated because of the small size of our lots.

Same two lots will be the same cost as Clermont, but those are few and far between. Lots in Hamilton County vary in size and level, etc. HCPH Commissioner verified that pricing is not based on zip code but on the type of lot and soil conditions.

Question – moratorium? If we have a plan/policy then can put a moratorium on installation of new septics? That will have to go before the commission to see. We want a solution so that people are not going to have to put out money for the new system when we are in the process of going to sewers. What do we need to have in place to get the moratorium? Have to have a plan in place to move to sewers and the board has gone through at least one motion to approve the move to design and build. Ultimately it will be up to the Board of Health to say it's OK not to upgrade, but will have staff support and the understanding of the importance of getting 800 homes moving away from these illegal systems. If a system collapses, then you have to obviously fix/upgrade, but they will give you some money back. If you put in a new septic today, you would be 15 years before you have to convert – use of new system and money back.

What was the Madeira communication plan? Do they (HCPH & MSD) work with the community to make an education sheet? Madeira held public meetings with health department and brought MSD in to educate. It should be a little easier here because of the numbers (Madeira was done in bits and pieces – sometimes a street at the time and sometimes a development. The committee asked HCPH to please give examples and contacts so that we can get an idea of what other people did and went through. Most will say being organized with petition (going door to door) is the most important thing. Probably having community meetings where you could get many petition signers at once would be a good idea. Then MSD will send out through certified mail the official petition. Technical questions best addressed by MSD.

One thing to note when talking about the advantages of sewers is that sewers remove a lot of restrictions we've had with septic tanks – like you can't have something in this area of your yard because of the location approximate to the septic.

Next step, continue to meet on the second Wednesday and invite MSD to next meeting and Hamilton County will also attend again. Working on specifying jobs for different people on the committee into sub-committees of sorts.