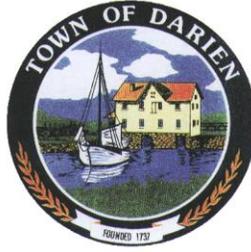


TOWN OF DARIEN SEWER COMMISSION  
2 RENSRAW ROAD - TOWN HALL  
DARIEN, CT 06820-5397  
TELEPHONE (203) 656-7382



ROBERT A. RIITH, CHAIRMAN  
CRAIG J. FLAHERTY, P.E.  
ROCCO GENOVESE  
M. REESE HUTCHISON III  
PETER VAN WINKLE, ESQ.

**TOWN OF DARIEN SEWER COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES, PROPOSED SEWER EXTENSION  
PORTION OF SETTLERS TRAIL AND CLOCKS LANE  
7:30 PM, Tuesday, July 26, 2016 Auditorium, Darien Town Hall  
2 Renshaw Road, Darien, CT 06820**

Attendance: Peter Van Winkle;  
Reese Hutchison;  
Rocco Genovese.

Absent: Robert Riith, Chairman;  
Craig Flaherty.

Staff: Ed Gentile, Director Department of Public Works;  
Darren Oustafine, Assistant Director.

Others: Paul Harris;  
Lauren Chisholm;  
Beth Camp;  
David Snow.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Van Winkle opened the public hearing to order at 7:37 p. m.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Mr. Darren Oustafine, the Assistant Director of Public Works, came forward to give the staff presentation portion of the public hearing. He stated that the commission would not conduct business at the meeting, and that no decision would be made that night. He stated that the commission may act upon the topic as soon as their next regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, August 2, 2016 at 4:30 p. m. in room 206 of the town hall building.

He stated that a notice of this public hearing was sent out to affected property owners and an information letter was included in that mailing to explain the process, the type of sewer, estimated costs, and benefit of having a sewer. He stated that, in addition, a formal letter

explaining the project was sent out to affected property owners on April 7, 2016. The letter asked for an indication of support for or against the project. To date, ten of the eleven affected property owners indicated that they are in favor of the project.

The proposed sewer is a low pressure sewer system. The staff has performed a conceptual layout of the proposed sewer, and estimated costs of installing the sewer are based on assumptions and similar recently completed projects. To date, staff has not commissioned any formal studies, preliminary designs, land surveys or easement procurements and the Darien Sewer Commission has not formally decided to proceed with the project.

Mr. Oustafine stated that Mr. Paul Harris owns three of the properties within the project area and has been instrumental in initiating this project by addressing the DSC repeatedly. Mr. Harris has also functioned as a liaison between affected residents and the DSC. Mr. Oustafine stated that Settlers Trail is a public road and will not require easements. Clocks Lane is a private road and will require easements.

He stated that the Town of Darien does not have jurisdiction over the potable water distribution system and any water main extensions or services are not a part of the sanitary sewer extension contemplated in this public hearing. Upon completion of construction, the roadway will be completely repaved unless it is prohibited.

After completion of the project and prior to assessing property owners, a second public hearing will be held concerning sewer assessments. The DSC has the authority to mandate connection to the sewer systems, but, to date, has not used that authority. If the DSC decides to move forward with the project, construction could begin this autumn.

Ms. Lauren Chisholm came forward and asked if the paving of the road will be in addition to the assessment. Mr. Oustafine, stated that it is included and that payments could be made all at once or over twenty years.

Mr. Paul Harris came forward in favor of the proposal. He stated that he has addressed the commission repeatedly in the past months with the aim of eliminating financial concerns. Upon approval of the project, staff of the town of Darien will take control of the project. The Town Council will have to assist with the easement considerations. Where the easements will be located has not been determined. Upon completion of the project, the road will be completely repaved.

For the record, Mr. Harris read three letters of support for the project.

The first letter was from Mr. Ryan Tie of 10 Clocks Lane. Mr. Tie wrote that he felt the project's benefits would out-weigh its cost and he and his wife, Stacey, would be pleased to see it go forward.

The second letter was from Mr. Greg and Andrea Romano of 11 Clocks Lane. They wrote that the water systems are outdated. The approval of the project would eliminate the need to replace costly septic systems as they age, and allow for additional yard space where leaching fields exist today.

The third letter was from Mr. Earl Mix of 4 Wild Rose Lane. He wrote that the project would mitigate the environmental risks of having an old and substandard septic system. It would also maintain and enhance the overall character of the town.

Mr. Harris noted that he has had discussions with Ms. Chisholm regarding her financial concerns with the project.

Mr. David Snow came forward in favor of the project. He stated that if the project is not approved, homeowners would put in engineered systems and the opportunity to install this sewer line will be gone.

Mrs. Beth Camp came forward in favor of the project. She stated that the stars have aligned and we should take this opportunity to put in the line. If it is not done, it prevents additions and enhancements later on.

Ms. Lauren Chisholm came forward to state that she purchased her home "as is," and the low overhead was an important consideration in her purchasing decision. Her home is a small unique cottage of 1,100 square feet. She does not have funds available to cover the increased expenses that the new sewer line would cause. She stated that she understands that her neighbors see benefits to the project, but they bought their houses knowing about the deficiencies in the septic systems.

Ms. Chisholm referenced the letter that the DSC sent to her outlining the benefits of having the sewer line. She stated that of the eight reasons listed, none of them applied to her home. She stated that it was not possible to determine any change in her property value that would result from the installation of the sewer line.

Ms. Chisholm stated that the assessed value of her home is incorrect and questioned the town's ability to correctly arrive at the appraised value of her home. She stated that she did not

think Mr. Harris and Mr. Snow made offers to her in good faith. She had zero confidence that she will ever get paid, and felt uncomfortable entering a twenty year agreement.

Mr. Van Winkle stated that the financial discussions between the parties was outside of what the commission should be hearing. The public hearing is concerned with, from an environmental standpoint, the proposal's benefit to the town.

Mr. Van Winkle asked Ms. Chisholm if she supported or opposed the project.

Ms. Chisholm stated that she opposes the project.

Mr. Oustafine stated that the road is half on Ms. Chisholm's property. If she denied access, the sewer would have to be pushed west. Mr. Van Winkle asked if the width of road will be changed. Mr. Oustafine stated that the road will remain at the same width as it is now.

Mr. Harris stated that every real estate broker he spoke to said that the project will increase Ms. Chisholm's property value. He stated that the contractor that installed Ms. Chisholm's septic tank said the tank is not acceptable. He also said he doesn't believe Ms. Chisholm could deny paving of the road.

Mr. Van Winkle asked if any other members of the public wished to come forward to speak in favor or in opposition to the project.

Hearing none, he closed the public hearing at 8:52 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Blaney

Telesco Secretarial Services

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