June 15, 2023

Sewer Expansion – Stony Corners, Stony Corners Circle
Updated Resident Survey – June 2023

Dear Resident;

At the June 8, 2023 meeting of the Avon Water Pollution Control Authority, a presentation was made describing two alternatives for the construction of sanitary sewers in Stony Corners and Stony Corners Circle. All of the residents within the project area were notified by regular mail of the meeting and the presentation. The presentation slides are available for viewing/download at the following web address: *https://www.avonct.gov/engineering-sewer-and-gis-department/pages/sewer-extension-stony-corner-stony-corners-circle*

In an effort to re-gauge interest, the AWPCA has asked that we solicit input from residents for mainline sewer expansion with consideration given to the two design alternatives. We have prepared an online survey which can be accessed by accessing the Town of Avon Website at:
https://www.avonct.gov/engineering-sewer-and-gis-department/pages/sewer-extension-stony-corner-stony-corners-circle
"Mainline Sewer Extension Survey – June 2023"
For those residents that prefer to fill out a survey on paper, we have included the same survey within this letter. We ask residents that prefer the printable form to scan and email their form to: nchambers@avonct.gov or send it to:

Town of Avon Engineering Department
60 West Main Street
Avon, CT 06001

At the end of this document is a **Sewer Extension Fact Sheet** that provides relevant details regarding mainline sewer extensions in Avon to help residents understand basic information concerning mainline sewer extensions here.

It is our hope that we get a good response to the survey as this will likely be the basis for determining whether or not the project in Stony Corners and Stony Corners Circle proceeds to full design, bidding, and construction. We would like to thank you in advance for your time and attention. Residents that provide their email address will receive update emails. Depending on results, the AWPCA will likely conduct a follow-up public information meeting to present the results to residents.

Residents with additional questions are encouraged to contact the Avon Engineering Department at: 860-409-4322.

Sincerely,

Lawrence E. Baril, P.E., GISP
Town Engineer

Background information (see presentation slides for more details):

At the June 8 presentation, residents were informed that the Avon Engineering Department explored two options for the installation of sanitary sewers within the project area:

1. Gravity-based mainline sewers
2. Low pressure Sewers

As the name suggests, gravity sewers are those that flow sewer by gravity from point A to point B. These sewers require pipes be laid in straight lines and slopes from manhole to manhole which typically forces them to be within the roadway. When the Winding Lane project was done, it was designed to accommodate gravity sewers for the remainder of Stony Corners and Stony Corners Circle. Unfortunately, there are two factors that will make the installation of gravity sewers cost prohibitive:

1. Sewer materials and construction costs have increased dramatically since COVID.
2. Because the project area is not high within the DPW pavement management program, the sewer project will need to repair the roads to Town standards.

The net result of this is that the estimated costs for the gravity sewer project would be approximately $1,540,000. In accordance with State law, property owners who benefit from sewer construction are assessed by the WPCA to pay for the sewers via a benefit assessment. Since there are 36 properties within the project area, the benefit assessment would likely be in the neighborhood of $37,000 to $45,000 per residence.

Since this cost is so high, at the Town Engineer's recommendation, the AWPCA requested that we investigate installation of a low-pressure sewer system. This type of sewer system provides several advantages over a gravity system – most notably that because the system is under pressure, it doesn't need to be laid at a specific slope or in straight lines from manhole to manhole. The mainline pipes are much smaller than gravity pipes (3" vs 8") and can therefore be installed outside of the paved roadway in the shoulder. The resulting cost difference to be considered for benefit assessments is much lower; estimated to be approximately $500,000, which would result in an estimated benefit assessment of $14,000 per residence. It is important to note that the low-pressure system requires the use of a pump by each connection to the system.

Mainline Sewer Expansion Survey – June 2023

1. Resident Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

2. Would you like to be contacted by email with future information concerning this?

_____Yes _____No

Email: _____

3. **I/we have read the Sewer Extension Fact Sheet included.**

_____Yes _____No

Comments: _____

_____

4. I/we have viewed the information presented at the June 8 AWPCA meeting.

_____Yes _____No

Comments: _____

_____

5. Please indicate your <u>general</u> opinion regarding the construction of sewers in your neighborhood:

Strongly Approve	Approve	Disapprove	Strongly Disapprove

Comments: _____

_____

6. If the sewer extension requires you to have a pump, will this affect your answer to Question #5?

_____Yes _____No

Comments: _____

_____

7. Do you know your septic system location, configuration, and age of the leaching part of your system?

_____Yes _____No

Comments: _____

_____

8. Do you have any plumbing fixtures in your basement / lowest floor level?

___ Y ____ N If yes, please list them _____

9. Do you have any other comments, questions or concerns you would like addressed?

_____

_____

SEWER EXTENSION FACT SHEET – June 2023

1. **Why would the Town considering bringing sewers to my area?** *There are two primary reasons the Town explores mainline sewer extensions to a neighborhood: the town-wide Sewer Facilities Plan study, and interest presented by residents. The Facilities Plan is a comprehensive document that studied many aspects of operating the sewer collection system in Avon. Among its content is development of priority areas for mainline sewers based on many factors such as ages of septic systems, soil conditions, proximity to existing sewers, depth to groundwater, and septic system failure history. Older developments with tight soils and /or high groundwater tables tend to result in failing septic systems, which not only pose a health risk but also are often very expensive to repair/replace, making public sewers a worthy consideration.*

2. **Are homeowners required to connect if the Town constructs sewers in the street**? *Homeowners are not required to connect to the public sewer*.

3. **Is there going to be any kind of inspection of existing septic systems to determine if they are functioning properly as part of the project?** *No*

4. **What will the sewer cost each property owner?** *Construction of the sewer is paid for by benefitting property owners, known as a Benefit Assessment. This means that each property owner is assessed a share in the cost of the project. The assessment will be determined once construction is completed and all final costs are determined. State law mandates a public hearing process for such assessments which includes an appeal period. The Town has historically allowed property owners to pay down the assessment amount with modest interest over an extended period – typically 10 years.*

5. **What are the factors that go into the cost of the Benefit Assessment?** *The Benefit Assessment is essentially derived as the cost of the design and construction of the sewers divided by the number of benefitting properties. Sewer construction costs are impacted by the environmental challenges encountered during construction, the cost of materials and labor, the length of sewer per residence, and the type of sewer (gravity or low-pressure). The most recent gravity sewer benefit assessments were done for the Winding Lane neighborhood in January of 2019 and were $17,670.64 per residence. The only low-pressure sewer benefit assessment the Town has levied was done in 2018 and was $11,241.88 per residence. In both cases, the AWPCA allowed a 10-year payment program at a non-compounding low interest rate.*

6. **What do you mean by gravity or low-pressure sewer?** *As the name implies, gravity sewers flow the sewage by gravity. These pipes are pitched from high to low so that the sewage flows down-hill through the system. These sewers are generally more expensive to install because they tend to be deeper in the ground and must be pitched in a straight line from manhole to manhole. The primary advantage to this type of system is that they require minimal maintenance. Low pressure sewers flow the sewage by small pumps located at each residence that pump the effluent along a smaller pressure pipe. The advantage of these systems is that they can be installed relatively shallow and follow the ground surface shape. They also require much smaller mainline pipe so materials and installation costs are lower. The primary drawback is that each property being served requires a pump.*

7. **Are there any other administrative costs associated with connecting to the sewer**? *There are 2 other costs associated with connecting to the sewer: a Connection Charge, and a Sewer Permit fee. The current Connection Charge amount is based on the number of bedrooms: 1 and 2*

bedrooms incur a charge of $3400, 3 and 4 bedrooms incur a charge of $4000, larger than 4 bedrooms incur a charge of $4600. The current sewer permit fee is $50. ***It is important to note that these costs are not required to be paid until you are interested in connecting to the sewer.***

8. **Once a property is connected, are there any other costs?** *Yes, there is an annual sewer use fee paid in two installments and based in part by the amount of water that is drained through the sewer system. The* ***average*** *base charge for 2023 is $530.46 per dwelling unit.*

9. **What will it cost to connect each house to the sewer?** *Each house is unique when you consider the route of the sewer lateral which is the way each property connects to the sewer main: the location of the sewer pipe exiting the building, the amount and types of landscaping disturbed, the length of the lateral (distance from the street), the types and amount of restoration to name a few. Property owners that wish to connect to the sewer will contract directly with a licensed sewer contractor and negotiate their own deal. Costs are impacted by distance from the street, impediments to the installation such as ledge, trees, and landscaping, and the restoration required.*

10. **How do you justify the expense of sewers**? *Installation of sewers is not cheap. However, when one compares the cost of sewer construction to septic system repair/replacement, the costs are typically quite favorable. In addition, the argument can be made that public sewers are much more environmentally friendly than individual septic systems. Public sewers also require much less actual space on a property than a septic system, allowing owners more freedom to make use of their property. Finally, many realtors have told us that properties connected to public sewers sell much more readily than those with septic systems due to the uncertainty of the longevity and costs to replace/repair a septic system.*

11. **Where can I go if I have more questions?** *The Engineering section of the Town's website has more information, however residents that have specific questions concerning sewers in Avon are encouraged to contact the Engineering Department by phone at: 860-409-4322.*