



## **EMERALD LAKE VILLAGE DISTRICT MINUTES FROM MAY 18, 2006, WATER MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 am, by ELVD Co-Chair Joseph Statkus. Also present at the meeting were: ELVD Co-Chair Deborah Gilbert, Bernie Lucey and Sarah Pillsbury from DES, Paul Sirois from Tata & Howard, and Joe Damour from Water Systems Operators. The meeting was requested by DES in order to reevaluate the water projects being undertaken by the District, as well as discussing the problem of the level of arsenic in the Mary Rowe well. The water system, which now serves approximately 1,000 people, is considered a large system by the State and, therefore, is covered under different rules.

The State's key concern is the arsenic in the Mary Rowe well. Although the levels fluctuate significantly, on average the level is 20 times the allowable amount and far above any other system in the State. For this reason, it should not be used any more than is absolutely necessary. DES is also concerned about the imbalance between demand and a safe supply, as well as the number of building permits and connection permits that have been issued in the past several years. Even with the moratorium on new service connections, until the Mary Rowe well is connected to the treatment system, the District needs more water right now. With a public water system, the supply should significantly exceed demand. This will not be the case even when the District makes the planned improvements and additions to the system, particularly in light of the fact that the new well could potentially have the same problems as the current wells, such as low capacity and arsenic and/or fluoride. The water supply must also be able to accommodate future building. One alternative to this situation would be to approach the Town of Hillsborough about connecting to their system. The problem is the enormous capital cost, which is estimated at over \$1 million, but it would end the issues with the District water supply. State grants that pay 25% of the overall project cost are available.

Co-Chairs Gilbert and Statkus gave a recap of the water moratorium. They talked about the 40 water permits that the former chairman presented to the Board in order to raise revenue for the District. This was necessary because approximately \$200,000 was expended for the treatment facility, filter system, and purchase of lots for the sanitary radius on the Hummingbird well, all of which were paid out of the operating account, because the articles did not pass at the 2005 Annual Meeting.

Water Systems Operators went through the mailing list of water users to see how many building permits were approved. For 2005, 32 building permits were approved; some of these are already hooked up to the water system. For 2006, there are 28. Two years ago, there were 402 households; there are now 460. There is a potential for at least 525 to 550 households in the District long-term.

Commissioner Statkus went over what the District is doing to alleviate the water problems. The top priority is running the line from the Mary Rowe well to the treatment facility, which should begin in the next week or two. There is also a water ban in place; residents of the village have been notified in a mailing. The information has also been posted around the District.

Commissioner Statkus asked about the feasibility of drilling deeper; however, according to Sarah Pillsbury, there

is little benefit to doing this. Even if it was successful, the fixed tank at the treatment center may not be able to take more water.

According to DES, the District must move as aggressively as possible to address the various water problems. This includes making residents aware of just how serious the arsenic problem is and to let them know that the Board is working to solve the problem as quickly as possible. Regarding a better balance of supply versus demand, in order to meet average daily demand during most of year, approximately 150 gallons per minute would be required.

The Board needs to investigate the feasibility of hooking up to Hillsborough's water supply, including location of the connection and what the closest main can provide. DES suggests that the District buy water from the Town through one meter and that an agreement made with the Town to remit a portion of the hook-up fee to the District when someone connects to the system along the new line. The Board should also continue to pursue the digging of a new well and then compare the cost of supply from the Town versus the risk and long-term issues of having a separate water system for the District. The District also needs plan to install meters in the future, as this is now a State requirement. Implementation is costly and requires a meter reader, a new billing system, and because many houses in the District have shallow mains and/or no cellars, it would require an additional cost to either insulate the pipes or put them below grade. Furthermore, the Town may not be willing to handle the collection if the District installs meters, which would require that the District take over the billing and collection functions. DES recommends a phased program over several years. It might also be advisable to require a meter hookup for new construction, but not install the meter until later.

Sarah Pillsbury will see if she can get maps to show both water distribution systems. DES will help the District expedite the permitting process for drilling a test well, after the application is submitted. The Board should meet with DES in July before the water moratorium is reevaluated. DES will also send a sample of an ordinance that controls the building of private wells. They are also willing to work with the Town on the District's behalf.

There being no further business, Commissioner Statkus adjourned the meeting at 11:53 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nan McCarthy, District Clerk

Approved:

Deborah Gilbert, Co-Chair  
(signature on original)

Joseph Statkus, Co Chair  
(signature on original)

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