

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

*Neighborhood Meeting*

*August 5, 2013*

### **Water Wells/Water Supplies**

The majority of the East Side of the community is not served by a public water system. Rather, each home is served by an individual private well that is owned and maintained by the homeowner. Water supply wells can become contaminated with bacteria for several reasons. In 2007, there were nine (9) reports of well contamination. There are two (2) known reports of well contamination in the summer of 2013.

Representatives of the Village of Lakewood have met with numerous state officials to explore grant programs for construction of a public water system in this area. Such a scenario is unlikely, however, and our efforts will therefore be directed toward providing residents with information about resources available to ensure the safety of your drinking water. Toward that end, please be advised:

- That reduced-fee water testing is being offered by the McHenry County Department of Health in August (see flyer). Sampling kits will be available for distribution at the neighborhood meeting and at Village Hall during regular business hours.
- Unused water wells can create a direct pathway for contaminants to reach groundwater. In order to make it easier for McHenry County residents to properly seal unused or abandoned water wells, the McHenry County Community Foundation is sponsoring a water well sealing rebate program (see flyer).
- The McHenry County Department of Health has a great deal of technical assistance to offer. Please do not hesitate to contact them at (815) 334-4585.

### **Sanitary Sewer**

The East Side is served by a public sanitary sewer system, which is funded by your bi-monthly utility bill. Treatment of the sewage is provided by the City of Crystal Lake via an intergovernmental agreement (currently expired and under negotiation), but the operation and maintenance of the sanitary sewer pipes/system is the responsibility of the Village of Lakewood. Therefore, a surcharge to pay for the operation and maintenance of the system is added to the bill generated by the City of Crystal Lake. The attached spreadsheet depicts this difference for the past five (5) years. A detailed account of expenses in the East Sewer Fund is available via the annual audit, which is available on the Village of Lakewood's website.

***Can we post Exhibit C from the 2007 Study on the Village of Lakewood's website?*** The entire 2007 Study has been uploaded to the website.

***Did the sanitary sewer lining increase the likelihood of storm sewer back ups?*** Perhaps. As less groundwater (inflow and infiltration) is allowed to seep into the sanitary sewer pipes, it takes longer for it to dissipate or it seeks other openings (i.e. the storm sewer pipe). However, the decreased inflow and infiltration into the sanitary sewer pipes allowed for greater capacity of sewage in the pipes and lessened the number of reported sewage back ups.

***Why does the sanitary sewer system surcharge?*** There is more water/effluent going into the system than is going out.

***Is there still significant inflow?*** There is likely still inflow into the sanitary sewer system from the service main that begins at the Village's pipe at the street and goes into each home. This service main is the responsibility of each homeowner to maintain.

***Are illegally connected sump pumps causing back ups?*** Illegally connected sump pumps add additional flow to the sanitary sewer and potentially contribute to the sanitary sewer surcharging. After the 2007 event, the Village of Lakewood undertook a program to identify and disconnect illegal connections. The reality is, however, that this is a never ending cycle as residents can reconnect at any time.

***Why has the sanitary sewer main on the 400 block of Meridian not been relined?*** Meridian Lane is the boundary between the Village of Lakewood and the City of Crystal Lake. Historical records are unclear about who bears responsibility for the maintenance of said pipe. To date, the City of Crystal Lake has been non-responsive to our request to reline the pipe and pay on a prorated basis. This issue is being considered as a part of ongoing negotiations.

## **Groundwater/Storm water**

Throughout the Village of Lakewood, there is no dedicated funding source for storm water improvements. In other words, these projects compete for revenues in the General Fund with Police, Fire, roads, etc. As an aside, the total of property taxes paid to the Village of Lakewood on your tax bill does not cover the cost of providing Police and Fire Protection.

During the past few years, the Village of Lakewood has undertaken a program to rehabilitate the storm water pipe along Broadway in order to regain its capacity. The first step in this process was to televise the pipe (to show areas in need of repair) and to clean the pipe to the greatest extent possible. This step was recently completed. Bid documents will soon be prepared to begin the first year of a multi year program of repairs that will increase capacity and improve flow. It is important to note that these improvements will improve the flooding conditions but will not completely solve the problem. To date, the City of Crystal Lake has been non-responsive to our request to help fund this project on a prorated basis.

***Is a permit required to install an infiltration trench?*** No, as long as it is installed on the resident's property, but homeowners should be wary of the location of infiltration trenches near their wells.

***The swales along Huntley Road don't seem to flow anywhere. Why?*** The swales were engineered to hold the water until it can seep into dry wells because there is not a defined outlet for the storm water.

***Why does water back up from storm sewer manholes?*** There is more water going into the system than is going out. ***Why are there fish in ponding water in the 400 blocks of Wiltshire and Meridian?*** The fish come from the creek and can swim upstream. It is not an indication that the storm sewer is not flowing or flowing in the wrong direction.

***Are we pumping as much as we can from Riverside?*** There is a delicate balance between moving the water from our neighborhood and negatively impacting properties downstream. Any additional pumping will require a permit from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. (an expensive and lengthy process) which may not be approved. Staff believes that as much pumping as can be approved is being done.

***Is the berm in "Pencil Park" at the correct elevation?*** Staff is not aware of any significant breaches of the berm along Pencil Park. When small occurrences have been brought to our attention, the berm has been repaired or raised. Please help and let us know if you see water flowing over the berm along Pencil Park. ***Is there pavement under the path?*** Good question, and there are no records from the time that gravel was spread along the path. We are currently working to determine if there is pavement under the path.

***Can the Broadway median be used for increased storage?*** Perhaps. It is also possible that another publicly owned property (Pencil Park) can be used for additional storage. Staff has asked the Village Engineer (Baxter & Woodman) to prepare a proposal to study this option.

***Has the Wedgewood Subdivision or the recent changes on the north shore of Crystal Lake exacerbated the problems on the East Side?*** There is no easy answer to this question, but the Village of Lakewood is preparing a letter to the City of Crystal Lake asking for additional information.

## **Next Steps**

- The Village of Lakewood will send a letter to the City of Crystal Lake seeking additional information about the Wedgewood Subdivision and the north shore improvements. We will again request financial support for relining the sanitary sewer on Meridian Lane and the improvements to the Broadway storm sewer pipe.
- The Board of Trustees will consider a staff proposal for a cost sharing program for individual back up prevention systems at its meeting on August 13. If approved,

information will be sent directly to homeowners with a history of issues and made available generally via the newsletter and website.

- The Village's Storm Water Engineer, Mark Phipps, will be available (at no cost) to meet with residents on site to recommend private improvements to mitigate storm water. Please contact Mark Phipps at (815) 459-1260 to schedule an appointment.
- The Board of Trustees will consider a proposal from Baxter & Woodman to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of better utilizing the Broadway median and Pencil Park for storage.
- Continue the multi year program to rehabilitate the Broadway storm sewer pipe.
- Continue to seek grant funds.

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