

An Historical Sketch of the Cold Spring Sewer Line

**Submitted by Henry W. Art
Revised 23 November 2004**

HIGHLIGHT

The 23 April 2003 report of Camp, Dresser, McKee (CDM) to Timothy Kaiser, Williamstown Director of Public Works, states that their study concerns: "The Clark Art Institute proposes to discharge 20,000 gallons per day into the 2.5-inch diameter force main that presently serves only Mt. Greylock Regional High School." The "Clark" would be required to hold sewage in tanks and then be allowed to pump 55 gallons per minute for 6 hours during off-peak hours of 11 p.m. to 5 a.m.

While no mention is made of additional sewage from proposed Sweetwood expansion, the Director of Public Works informed me on 22 November 2004 that the 20,000 gpd is actually 10,000 gallons per day from the Williamstown Art Conservation Center and 10,000 gallons per day expected from new Sweetwood expansion.

BACKGROUND

When the Mount Greylock Regional High School was built in 1960 3.5 miles south of the Town Center, there were no municipal water or sewer services to the property.

Water was (and is) provided from drilled wells on the property, and sewage was processed by piping it to a small "package plant" located east of MGRHS near the banks of the Green River. After a decade of service the package plant was experiencing "difficulties," and by the late 1970s it was failing altogether and dumping relatively untreated sewage into the Green River.

This situation was deemed unacceptable by the Town, the Commonwealth, and the US-EPA. A solution to the problem was sought that would also reduce pollution of Hemlock Brook from commercial and domestic effluents originating in private septic systems along the Route 7 south corridor.

To preserve the rural character of the southern and western entrances into Williamstown, the Planning Board and Selectmen negotiated with the Commonwealth and US-EPA for the Town to construct an "innovative," small diameter, pressurized sewer system that would run from MGRHS to the existing sewer infrastructure near Bee Hill Road and have a capacity of 75,000 gallons per day. The initial sewer project, consisting of a series of 1.5" to 4" pressurized pipes and 15 sewage grinder pumps, commenced in 1982 and was completed in 1985.

In order to prevent the sewer from acting as a stimulus to additional development, access to hook-ups was limited (on a first come, first serve basis up to the capacity of the system) to properties with frontage (200-foot minimum) on Cold Spring Road within a swath extending 500-feet to the east and west of the pipe. This swath was designated as a new Zoning By-law "Rural Residence 3 Zone" and adopted by Town Meeting (2/3 majority) in 1986.

In the first several years the system did not perform up to expectations, and there were numerous complaints about odors and was characterized as a "nightmare" by Director of Public Works. In

October, 1987 the Board of Selectmen placed a moratorium on further hookups pending resolution of capacity problems of the Sewer.

In 1989, the Town received a grant for redesign of problem areas on the system and for replacement of the some of the grinders with 6" gravity flow pipes. In 1989 expansion of Sweetbrook Nursing home was held up by concerns about the taking up of capacity in the system by that institution.

The current system consists of a 2 1/2" pressurized main between Mount Greylock Regional High School and the Sweetwood/Sweetbrook complex where it enters a 6" gravity flow system that connects to a 4" pressurized main at the pumping station near the Captain's Table restaurant. The 4" main connects to an 8" main at the intersection of Bee Hill Road and Cold Spring Road and then into 12," 24," and 42," pipes as sewerage flows to the Hoosac Water Quality District treatment plant on the Hoosic River.

Note:

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