

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING
COMMITTEE OF LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS
ROCK RIVER WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT
MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2014**

A Public Hearing of the Committee of Local Improvements of the Rock River Water Reclamation District was called to order on Monday, January 27, 2014, at 5:15 p.m. at the District offices, 3501 Kishwaukee Street, Rockford, Illinois.

The following members of the Board of Trustees were present:

	Donald Massier	President
	Donald Kerestes	Clerk/Treasurer
	Elmer Jones	Trustee
	Rick Pollack	Trustee
Absent:	Lloyd Hawks	Vice President

Staff present: Steven Graceffa, District Director; Dana Carroll, Engineering Manager; Larry McFall, Plant Operations Manager; Frank Papke, Business Manager; Michael Robertson, Information & Technology Services Supervisor; Kathy Burfield, Engineering Coordinator; and Deborah Lyons, Executive Services Coordinator.

Others present: William Howard, Attorney for the District; Sarah Johnson, Wallace E. Johnson, Jr., Betty Warneke, and Tom Mulholland, residents of the Queen Oaks Drive project; Tyler Nelson, City of Rockford; Lynne Strathman, Winnebago County Board, District 1; and Jonathan Eash, resident of the Fuller Creek project.

President Massier stated the meeting was being recorded and was being held to allow comments and questions about Queen Oaks Drive Special Assessment No. 115.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated the total estimated project cost is \$1,088,867.19. The Property Benefit Share is \$317,561.00 (approximately 29% of the project cost); Public Benefit Share is \$771,306.19 (approximately 71%). The project consists of 2,588 LF of 24" sewer; and 7 manholes. Estimated cost per lot is \$21,777.00. Fifty sanitary services would be included in the project, or 50 parcels served. The assessment per river view service is \$5,774 and \$6,705 for river front property. The Plant Buy-in Fee in effect for this project is \$1,266/ERU. There are no basin or payback fees for the area. The project area is contiguous to existing District corporate boundary and will be annexed upon Board approval of the project. The sewer project is being constructed in conjunction with the Village of Machesney Park's roadway project. An Intergovernmental Agreement is in place; District will not replace roads. An informational meeting was held November 19, 2013. Due to time constraints for both Village and District projects, a Survey in Lieu of Petition was presented at the meeting for attending property owners to sign either for or against the project. Twenty-six property owners were in attendance; the vote was Yes – 20 (77%), No – 6 (23%). Notification of this vote was included with the written notice of the Informational Meeting which was sent to all property owners. A connection fee payment

agreement is available to the property owners at 5% interest over 10 years, which runs concurrent with the special assessment payment program. One property owner has asked to be removed from the project, and staff expects one more such request.

Wallace Johnson asked when the project will start. They have been waiting for this project since 1990.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated the special assessment process takes three or four months to get through court. If the project is approved tonight, that will start the process. The District will expedite it. We want to get it in ahead of the Village's road project. Staff estimates sewer construction would start in April and the roadway construction to start probably in July.

Betty Warneke asked when the water table rises, will the sewer will be affected?

Engineering Manager Carroll stated no; our sewer is tested when it's constructed to verify it is water tight. The services will be installed shallower, so that if a basement floods, it can not get into the sewer.

Betty Warneke stated their septic is in the front of the house and asked if this will affect them any differently.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated your cost will probably be a little less when you hire the plumber.

A resident asked for clarification of the costs.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated the assessment for river front property was set at \$6,705, payable over 10 years, plus the plant buy-in fee of \$1,266. The parcel owner can pay it off before any interest is charged. If you take advantage of the payment plan, you will get a bill once a year in early January and it will be due then. There are two components to what you will have to pay. The first is the assessment for laying the mainline sewer in the street and the stub to your property line. The other part is a connection fee to pay for plant capacity which is \$1,266. The assessment is automatically on a payment plan at 5% interest. For the connection fee, you can sign up for the payment plan right away, or you can pay that off at the time you connect. Some people do not want to connect until their septic system goes bad, so they would choose to not pay the connection fee until the time they connect. If they don't live there that long, that passes to the next owner. When you are ready, you will hire a plumber to connect your house to the stub.

Wallace Johnson mentioned that they could save money on plumber costs if they hire one plumber to connect multiple residences in the neighborhood about the same time.

Lynne Strathman asked where the easement is going to be for the main trunk line.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated there is no easement; the sewer will be in the street.

Lynne Strathman asked at what point are the property owners responsible for the \$6,705.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated the assessment is billed once a year. It becomes a legal assessment once the court approves the project. At the time it goes to court for confirmation, if the judge confirms the role, the assessment is liened against the property.

Lynne Strathman asked if the \$1,266 begins when they ask to hook up.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated the connection fee is due at the time they hook up. The District offers a payment plan that they can sign up for right away (when the assessment starts).

Lynne Strathman asked if the \$6,705 is eligible for the payment plan.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated that is automatically a payment plan unless they choose to pay it up front.

Lynne Strathman stated Dana said those with septic lower, you said so that the flooding doesn't go into the sewer pipes.

President Massier stated the sewer pipe will be on such a level that it will be above the basement floor. It has nothing to do with where their septic is located.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated in this area, the area does flood, so the District will not allow people to have connections underneath their basement, because if the basement floods, that water goes automatically into the sewer.

Lynne Strathman stated she was confused, because when staff spoke to property owners in Winnebago, that if anything the sewage won't go into the creek but the creek water will leak into the sewer. So I'm confused why there are two different facts on the water and sewage getting into and out of the pipe.

President Massier stated in most houses, the sewer pipe is underneath the basement because you have a floor drain.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated the District works very hard not to have any water in the sewer except what belongs there, and to keep the wastewater in the sewer pipe. The pipes are tested for water tightness when they are constructed; that keeps the sewage in and the ground water out. In a case like Queen Oaks where the street can flood, we have to look at that as a special condition and we don't allow services to be so deep that they could go in the basement and if the basement floods we could be flooded that way. So we will make the sewer pipe come in higher up. For people on a septic system now, the pipe goes into the house above the basement floor, just a couple feet below the first floor. We will insist these homes be connected to the sewer just below the first floor so that any basement flooding cannot flood the sewer.

A resident asked if the roads are going to be fixed at the same time.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated the Village is doing the roadway reconstruction. So you will have curb and gutters, storm sewers, and a brand new road. The Village is paying for that.

A resident asked what the homeowners have to do with the septic tank.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated the plumbing code requires the old tank be collapsed and filled with sand. It is part of what the plumber does.

Attorney Howard asked if the homeowner does not hook up right away, does the \$1,266 stay the same.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated that can be changed by the Board, but staff is unaware of any plans to change that cost at this time.

A resident asked if anyone does not hook up right away, does the \$6,705 go up.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated no, that cost is set.

President Massier stated you pay for the sewer when it goes down the street. People who have a good septic tank may not want to hook up right away, but the Health Department will not allow you to fix your septic once the sewer is available to you.

Engineering Manager Carroll stated staff has very high hopes that the entire project will get done in 2014. Based on what the Board hears and knows, they could vote later to authorize the project, which is the first step of many. It has to go to Court. When it does, you will all receive a notice of the court hearing date so you can be there if you choose to.

President Massier stated the Board has never turned down a project where the majority of the people want it, that is, the majority of the people that responded. We do not solicit these projects, but when people come to us, we approve it.

There being no additional comments or questions from the public, the meeting adjourned at 5:34 P.M.

Clerk