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DECEMBER 9, 2003 SPECIAL MEETING

The Wethersfield Town Council held a meeting on December 9, 2003 at 6:30 p.m. in the Resource Room of the Webb Building.

Present: Councilors Adil, Czernicki, Fortunato, Hemmann, Montinieri, Deputy Mayor Karangekis and Chairperson Morin.

Absent: Councilor Cascio and Councilor Forrest.

Also present: Bonnie Therrien, Town Manager; Representatives from the Metropolitan District Commission Robert Moore, Michael Petti, Renee Poirier, Matt Nozzolio, Michael Curley, and Lebert Thomas; MDC Commissioners Martin Courneen and John McAuliffe; CDM Representative Craig Wagner; Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Representative Bill Hogan; Peter Gross, Fuss & O'Neil; Richard Smith, Robinson & Cole; Representatives from the WINA Group, and Tammy J. Ohanesian, Assistant Town Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Chairperson Morin who introduced Mr. Richard Smith from Robinson & Cole who presented a time line of events relating to the Wethersfield Cove and the MDC. These events included the renewal of the DEP discharge permit, the permit renewal of the MDC facility and a dye study of the Cove. Chairperson Morin asked Mr. Smith to provide to each Councilor a time line of milestone events.

Chairperson Morin introduced Mr. Peter Gross from Fuss & O'Neil who explained that the primary goal of the Cove issue is to improve the water quality in it. He explained that Combined Sewage Overflows (CSO's) in Hartford impact the Franklin Avenue drainage area which empties into Folly Brook and then into the Cove. Mr. Gross outlined five alternatives being considered as solutions. They are as follows:

- A. Sewer separation projects outlined by the MDC which will separate storm water and sewage at a cost of \$20.6+ million.
- B. Storage of overflow from four of the remaining seven overflow points. This would require the installation of a 3.6 million gallon tank that will contain the CSO's until later treatment. This tank would be able to handle a one-year storm event at a cost of \$17.3 million.
- C. Storage of overflow from six of the remaining seven overflow points. This would require the installation of two tanks and would be able to accommodate both five-year and ten-year storms at a cost of \$25.7 million. Both this alternative and alternative C would present siting issues.
- D. This alternative would provide for an extensive study of the water quality in the Cove. This study would give a better understanding of the Cove watershed. The cost for this alternative is unknown, but is expected to be significant.
- E. Installation of CSO piping to completely bypass the Cove and go directly into the Connecticut River at a cost of \$50-\$60 million.

Councilor Montinieri asked what the frequency of the pumping of the storage tanks will be and also where it is pumped and who incurs the cost. Mr. Gross said that the pumping will take place several times (3-4) per year. He said that a 4.1 million gallon tank can be pumped out in 18-24 hours and goes to the MDC Treatment Center for treatment. Mr. Gross said that the MDC incurs the cost as part of their operational budget.

Councilor Czernicki asked if it is a realistic expectation that there will be swimming in the Cove in two years. Mr. Gross said that this is not a realistic expectation.

Councilor Montinieri asked when the MDC's Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP) will be completed. Mr. Gross and Mr.

Petti both said that it will be complete at the end of 2004. Councilor Montinieri asked if the LTCP will address the Wethersfield Cove. Mr. Petti said that it will in that the areas that the plan targets affect the CSO's that are going into the Cove.

Mr. Mike Petti gave a presentation of the MDC's projects concerning the Cove and CSO's in the Hartford area. He said that the Connecticut River, the Wethersfield Cove and the MDC Treatment Plant are all connected to each other. He said that in central Connecticut, only Hartford continues to have CSO's. Mr. Petti distributed a Franklin Avenue CSO timeline indicating key dates and phases to that system. The timeline shows that in 1872 the Franklin Avenue Combined System was built. In 1961, the MDC passed an ordinance requiring all new sewers to be separated and since then there have been no CSO's installed. In 1990, the Phase I Connecticut River Cleanup Program \$80 million referendum was approved by voters and work on Franklin Avenue CSO's began. In 1994, the National CSO Control Policy was developed providing guidance on how to deal with CSO's and was codified in 2000. In 2002, the MDC implemented CSO alarms which are monitored 24 hours per day/ seven days per week. It is anticipated that the MDC will complete Phase II of the mid-Franklin Avenue separation project in 2005. Mr. Petti said that since the beginning of the program in 1990, \$27.4 million has been spent by the MDC on construction projects to abate CSO's. Currently 74% of CSO's have been removed and the 2004 additional modifications are expected to bring that number up to 87% at a total cost of \$32-\$33 million for the project. In order for 99% of CSO's to be removed, the cost would be an additional \$40-\$50 million. The LCTP covers many projects in Hartford. The MDC has a consent order to preserve water quality in the Park River, the Connecticut River, and the Wethersfield Cove. He said that the project is at an important juncture and all the options need to be explored including a water quality study at the Cove.

Councilor Adil asked if the MDC would cover the Cove's watershed study. Mr. Petti said that the MDC has a LTCP costing upwards of \$1 million to improve the CSO's in Hartford. He is not sure that the MDC would take part in the watershed study, but that part of the \$10 million received from the Connecticut Legislation could be used toward it. Councilor Adil asked how many gallons of water make a 10-year storm. Mr. Petti said that a 10-year storm equates to approximately 4.7 inches of water, of which less than 5% would be sanitary sewage. Mr. Moore commented that the amount of sanitary flow stays constant; the change is in the amount of storm water into the pipes. Mr. Petti said that during dry weather, all sewage is captured and sent to the treatment plant. Councilor Adil asked if there are any changes that can be made to make the tank solution more desirable. Mr. Petti said that the MDC has not outright rejected the tank storage, but does not know if off-line storage will provide a benefit to the Cove. The MDC is aware that off-line storage will pose cost and siting issues; whereas continued separation will not cause siting issues.

Mr. Hogan stated that Alternative D needs to be looked at very seriously in order to provide adequate information to make a decision.

Councilor Hemmann said that she appreciates the idea of Alternative D, but feels that it does not address or improve the problem in the Cove. She is concerned that even with the closing of Overflow F5 there will still be CSO's into the Cove. Mr. Petti clarified that there may occasionally be overflows from the eight active points that lead to F5 but that the overflows will be storm water without sewage.

Councilor Czernicki asked how long it would be before the Town realizes a benefit from the on-line storage Alternative and if there will be permit issues. Mr. Petti said that it will take one to two years to evaluate the information and that the permits aren't really an issue. There may need to be reviews by the Wetlands Commission, the DEP, and possibly even the Army Corps of Engineers. The issue will be finding appropriate real estate which usually leads to a tough political situation.

Mr. Moore said that the site required for the tank is approximately 1.5 times the size of a baseball field and is six to eight feet deep.

Councilor Czernicki asked if there are currently tanks in other communities in Connecticut. Mr. Hogan said that New Haven has just received permission to dig for a tank under a schoolyard and a recreation field is scheduled to be built on top of the site. Councilor Czernicki asked what the capacity of the tank is. Mr. Hogan said that the tank capacity is 3-4 million gallons. Councilor Czernicki asked if the legal action between the Town of Wethersfield and the MDC proceeds, what will happen to the projects currently underway. Mr. Moore said that litigation would be independent of

current projects and would not hinder the MDC moving along with their agenda of projects. Mr. Petti said that Phase I will still be completed next year. He said that the MDC's LTCP would continue throughout Hartford and the other areas being worked on will dictate what to do in the Franklin Avenue area. Mr. Smith stated that although the MDC has schedules and mandates that will not be affected by litigation, the general effect of such litigation will result in a discontinuation of communication as it has occurred in the past. Mr. Moore said that the dialog with the Town of Wethersfield will definitely change as will the focus on Wethersfield issues.

Councilor Fortunato asked if the LTCP's goal is a 100% cleanup of the Cove. Mr. Petti said that one would need to define what "100% cleanup" is. If it means the absence of solids and floatables including disinfection, then the answer is yes. If it means taking a Class C body of water, which the Cove is defined as, and changing it to a Class B designation, the answer is no; however in all of its work, the MDC can in no way impede the Town's ability to improve the Cove to a Class B designation. Councilor Fortunato asked if the MDC will be satisfied with the 87% reduction in CSO's or if the goal is a 100% reduction. Mr. Petti said that the MDC is striving for a 100% reduction in a one-year storm scenario. Mr. Petti referred to the term TMDL which means total maximum daily load. He said that every body of water can assimilate some amount of pollution. The TMDL looks at water bodies to determine how much pollution it can handle. The Cove cannot assimilate over a certain amount and it is this amount that needs to be attacked and removed. Councilor Fortunato asked Mr. Petti what the anticipated outcome of Alternative D is. Mr. Petti said that the additional analysis provided by Alternative D will provide greater information for the other Alternatives. Mr. Moore said that there are a number of ways to measure the benefits.

Councilor Czernicki left the meeting at this time (8:32 p.m.)

Councilor Montinieri asked if the TMDL of the Cove is known at this time. Mr. Petti said that it is not. Councilor Montinieri asked if the thirty-six overflows are permitted into the Cove. Mr. Petti said that the MDC has a permit from the DEP allowing sewage to flow into the Cove. The LTCP will be developed to improve the water quality of the Park River, the Connecticut River, and the Wethersfield Cove. Mr. Petti again stressed that the LTCP must make sure not to impede the water quality of the Cove. The LTCP will benefit the Cove, but it is indeterminable by how much. The MDC cannot only look at the discharge points, but rather take a holistic approach and look at the big picture to determine steps to be taken.

Councilor Hemmann asked if the entire Connecticut River is designated as a Class C. Mr. Hogan said that only certain points have that designation and that there is a map of the river illustrating this. Councilor Hemmann asked if a copy of the map could be provided to Council members. Mr. Hogan said that he would see to this.

Chairperson Morin asked Mr. Hogan if the existing CSO permit is current. Mr. Hogan said that it is an old permit that continues to be in effect. Chairperson Morin asked how many other bodies of water in Connecticut that flush every 14-16 days have CSO's in them. Mr. Hogan said that the Cove is a unique circumstance. Chairperson Morin said that he appreciates the holistic approach and stated that his main goal is to have no raw sewage emptying into the Cove. Chairperson Morin asked how the Hockanum River outfall was treated.

Mr. Moore said that the CSO's were relocated. Chairperson Morin asked if there are any other water bodies suffering the outfall of CSO's. Mr. Hogan said that there are and cited the Park River, the Connecticut River in the Middletown area, and the Connecticut River in the Springfield area. Chairperson Morin asked why the EPA and the DEP are not fighting for water quality in the Cove. He said that he is not satisfied with the solution to the one-year storm. This is not acceptable. Mr. Hogan said that the LTCP will come up with further recommendations. He said that the DEP is fighting for water quality as it is following the national policy for such and that one must realize that there are other locations in Connecticut that also need to be resolved. Mr. Hogan said that the MDC has not reached the end point of the Cove solution. Chairperson Morin stressed again that his goal is for no more raw sewage emptying into the Wethersfield Cove.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien spoke for the WINA Group saying that their goal is to have 0% discharge into the Cove. She said that the SCA Engineering Group working with the WINA Group is requesting a model for zero discharge. The Town Manager said that the Council needs to agree on the benefit level toward which they are striving. The Council needs to determine a target and work toward it.

Councilor Fortunato asked what will be included in the 2004 plan, where the MDC is in making recommendations, and what information still needs to be provided by the Town. Mr. Petti said that one year from now the LTCP will be determined. During the Spring and Summer of 2004 discussions will be held regarding the next steps for Wethersfield. He said that other plans in Hartford must be seen to before returning to the Franklin Avenue area. Mr. Moore said that the LTCP will be very expensive for Wethersfield. He said that the Town Council will need to look at the financing and budgeting of it over the next two to three years. Mr. Moore said that the LTCP will put control on floatables and solids and will ultimately benefit the Cove.

Town Manager Bonnie Therrien said that the development of the LTCP will take another year, then another six months to go to the DEP. After this, the Plan will take another three years to go through the voting process. If approved, permits need to be secured and then the work can begin. This whole process will take many years.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:00 p.m., Councilor Montinieri moved "**TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**" seconded by Deputy Mayor Karangekis. All Councilors present, including the Chairperson voted AYE. The motion passed 6-0-0.

Dolores G. Sassano
Town Clerk