

Town of Falmouth

*Wastewater Treatment Facilities
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Falmouth, Maine 04105*

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August 1, 2012

Mr. James Atwell
9 Ashwood Lane
Falmouth, Maine 04105

Re: Woodland Villas, private sewer system

Dear Mr. Atwell:

I am writing in response to our recent conversation about the possibility of the Town assuming the future operation and maintenance of the private sewer systems within the Woodlands Villas.

While there is some precedent where the Town has absorbed a couple of similar private systems, there is not a specific policy or procedural guide for the process. However, there is language in our ordinance that provides guidance on new private sewer extensions and it appears that Town consideration of accepting private infrastructure has basically followed those guidelines in the past.

If the town were to consider acceptance of the Villas system, I believe that our consideration would include the following.

A decision to accept private infrastructure as part of the municipal system would be up to the Town Council. In reference to private extensions, our ordinance includes that “the property owners, builders or developers may request permission from the town council to construct the sewer extension”, and also that the “council may grant or deny the request as it deems to be in the best interest of the town and may impose such reasonable conditions as it deems necessary to protect the interests of the town”.

Since the Council would gauge if your request is in the best interest of the town, I will stick to the more technical and would expect that the factors that impact “reasonable conditions” would involve what would normally be the case if the sewer were built with the intent that it would be operated and maintained by the Town.

Were this a new extension, the ordinance includes certain prerequisites for acceptance, such as requiring a one year guarantee in the form of a maintenance bond of not less than 10% of the cost of the extension, acceptable access and maintenance easements, and a complete set of as-built plans. We would assure that the system be in good condition, meet current codes, and include any design features in the form of improvements or upgrades that are needed to incorporate the system into the municipal system.

To verify that the system does not have undiscovered problems if this goes forward, I will recommend that the system be independently inspected for defects consisting of pump capacity certification, electrical code compliance, and televised inspection of the gravity sewer. Any final recommendation would depend on the results and agreement that any major defects that are found would be corrected.

Additionally, I will recommend upgrades as a condition of acceptance that includes adding alarm telemetry and backup power at the three Villas' pump stations and backup power at the Town's station on Woodlands Drive to assure compatibility with our operational needs.

Since meeting with you, we made a cursory inspection and found that the overall condition of the private sewer and pump stations seems good. It appears that the stations have been regularly maintained. We also checked the system during a rain event and didn't observe much in the way of infiltration at that time.

As far as moving forward on this, I hope I have laid out the major considerations. With these considerations in mind, perhaps potential costs can be estimated and a preliminary polling of your group may be possible when they meet later this month. Presuming there's a consensus to continue, we would need to have a formal request from an entity authorized to represent your association and we should discuss how to approach the inspection requirements and the logistics of presenting this to the Council.

In the meantime, certainly let me know if any questions come up or you wish to discuss further.

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pete Clark', with a stylized, cursive script.

Pete Clark, Superintendent
Falmouth Wastewater Department

cc: Nathan Poore, Town Manager
Mark Damon, Falmouth Wastewater
File, U67-098