



TOWN OF OLD LYME

WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY

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November 10, 2011

To: Leaders and Land Use Officials of the Town of Old Lyme,
Members of Committees, Commissions and Boards.

Re: Informational Presentation on Community Sewage Systems

On December 6, 2011 the Old Lyme Water Pollution Control Authority will be sponsoring an informational presentation on community sewage systems. The presentation will be held at the Town Hall at 7:00 P.M.

Your attendance would be greatly appreciated, as this topic will have an impact on the Town of Old Lyme, as well as town boards and commissions beyond the Water Pollution Control Authority.

The topic of community sewage systems pertains to a common sewage system that may serve two or more residences in separate structures, which are not connected, to a municipal sewer. A community sewage system presents an alternative to the conventional municipal sewer system, which is connected to a sewage treatment plant and discharges treated wastewater to a river.

Either of these options may be considered as a solution to existing surface water and ground water sewage pollution problems in Old Lyme, and to serve a cluster of homes with failing septic systems that cannot be repaired on individual lots due to poor soil conditions and severe lot size restrictions.

Poor soil conditions would include having very shallow depths to groundwater for extended periods of the year, shallow soil cover over bedrock, or tight soils with very slow percolation rates. Severe lot size restrictions pertain to lots that are so small that there physically is not enough room to accommodate a properly size health code compliant leachfield system area.

The Old Lyme Water Pollution Control Authority would appreciate your input and feedback on this topic as we move forward with studying wastewater management options for the Town, with a goal of protecting the quality of our surface water and ground water resources.

Dimitri Tolchinski, Chairman
Old Lyme Water Pollution Control Authority

WHY DO WE NEED TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY SEPTIC SYSTEMS?

As a resident of the Town Of Old Lyme for 27 years, a member of the Open Space Committee for over 10 years, and a member of WPCA for 14 years, I have come to the conclusion that if we don't try to make it possible to have a community septic system soon, we will be mandated to build sewers.

I will explain why.

As far as I can remember, and even before my time in the area, R-10 and C-10 zones have had problems with high ground water tables and inadequately small lot sizes, which make it difficult to support any septic system.

The State health code at that time, and even now, does not require upgrading non-compliant, polluting ground water cesspools and septic tanks without bottoms. If the existing septic systems are submerged in ground water it is okay by the State's health code, unless it is leaking out to above the surface.

The Connecticut State Health Department doesn't like for the WPCA to get involved. They are not considering correcting their policy.

The WPCA has been informed of many problems in our Town that should be corrected. Homeowners cannot correct many of these problems on their own. In many cases their wastewater goes down and does not come up above the surface because their cesspools are submerged in ground water, or they do not have bottoms and the tides take care of their wastewater. These properties have no land available to install even fifty percent-compliant septic system. State health codes allow the Town Health Director to approve repairs of these systems.

I have been criticizing Ron Rose for doing this, because homeowners are spending money for all of these repairs, but their septic systems are still not in compliance. I call it a Band-Aid approach.

But I should admit that Ron Rose has been doing his job according to State health code requirements.

The State DEEP has a completely different approach to the problems that exist in our Town. They do not tolerate any water pollution, period.

They understand that it is not up to the homeowner's choice or within the homeowner's ability to solve these problems. The State DEEP would approve 2 choices: community septic systems, or public sewers.

As of now, 420 houses in Old Lyme- Point of Woods already have sewers. Old Lyme Shores and Old Colony Beach have finished their studies and could have sewers also. It might happen that all the Beaches and Roger Lake would need to have sewers too.

Therefore, if we offer community septic systems instead of sewers, it will benefit our entire Town.

Dimitri Tolchinski
Chairman
WPCA Town of Old Lyme