

COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Workshop
January 27, 2009

LOCATION

Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on January 27, 2009. President Klair called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. President Klair announced that the meeting would consist of a workshop on waste water treatment issues that the Town of Oxford is facing.

PRESENT

Commissioners present were James Klair, Peter Dunbar and Timothy Kearns. Town Attorney David Thompson, Attorney Brynja Booth and a Star Democrat representative were in attendance. Others in attendance were Tom Duncan and Corey Pack, Talbot County Council, Ray Clarke, Talbot County Engineer, Stacy Dahlstrom, John Trax, and Tom Hughes, Talbot County Planning, Hugh Gruden and Geoff Oxenham, Easton Utilities, Talbot Bone, Director of Engineer Easton Utilities, Sharon VanEmburch, Easton Town Attorney, Jeff Sturdevant, Stearns & Wheler, Lenny Gold, Town Consultant and several members of Talbot County Advisory Board. There were approximately thirty (30) residents in attendance.

WORKSHOP

President Klair stated that several years ago the Commissioners recognized that upgrades would have to be done at the wastewater treatment plant. The town put out bids to hire an engineering firm to look into options. Stearns & Wheler were hired as the town's engineers and in April 2007 they produced a final report that has been discussed at Commissioners Meetings and has been available in the Town Office for review. One option that the town has is installing a transmission line to Easton Utilities. In order for the Town of Oxford to be eligible for any grant money for installing a line to Easton Utilities, this option must be in the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan. The Commissioners have met with Easton County Council, Easton Utilities and the Town of Easton to discuss the option to build a line to Easton Utilities. The workshop tonight is to inform the public of options that are available for the upgrades to Oxford's wastewater treatment plant. President Klair stated that many people are interested in gathering more information, Maryland Department of the Environment, EPA and the Oxford residents. Some feel that if the wastewater discharge were removed from Town Creek then the creek will no longer be an endangered body of water. Easton Utilities has one of the top ten (10) facilities in the country and is under utilized. The town does not want to open development on the Oxford Road.

A power point presentation was given and the key speakers for the evening were Hugh Grunden, Chief Executive Officer of Easton Utilities, Jeff Sturdevant, Stearns & Wheler, Peter Dunbar, Town Commissioner and David Thompson, Town Attorney.

There are several options available to the town and they are one (1) do nothing which is not a viable option, (2) upgrade the current plant at an estimated cost of \$2.7 million to remove more phosphorus, (3) build a new Biological Nutrient Removal plant for about \$8.9 million (The BNR facility could eventually be upgraded to an Enhanced Nutrient Removal facility, which is what Easton Utilities operates), (4) the town could skip the BNR and build an ENR plant for about \$12.3 million, and (5) build a 10-mile long pipe from Oxford, down Almshouse Road, across U.S. Route

50 and along Manadier Road to the Easton Utilities Enhanced Nutrient Removal waste water plant.

Other important facts that were brought out are (1) treating Oxford effluent in Easton significantly reduces pollutants in the Choptank (2) preliminary design selected is the most efficient route to run a line to Easton Utilities, (3) Cost Comparison of Options, Oxford putting in an ENR system and running to Easton are comparable, (4) Easton's state-of-the-art facility has capacity and ability to serve Oxford. The access to the new force main would be restricted to the Town of Oxford. In order for any funding support the option to run a line to Easton Utilities must be put in Talbot County Water and Sewer Comprehensive Plan.

Concerns from the audience were: would relocating the discharge pipe from Town Creek really help or hinder the flushing of the creek, cost of the project, the life of the system, what is the time frame for this type of project, wouldn't sizing of the pipe limit connections, operating cost, how often would an upgrade be needed and what will this upgrade cost on customers bill.

In ending the workshop, President Klair pointed out that the options discussed tonight are the result of more than two year's worth of research and discussion with expert wastewater engineers. The town is in the fact finding stage only. The town now has some solid choices and the basis on which to make informed decisions. The discussion tonight regarding running a transmission line to Easton Utilities is not in any way a final decision, it was intended to be an informational meeting for the public and to put this option into Talbot Counties Comprehensive Plan in order for the Town of Oxford to be eligible for funding.

Respectfully submitted,

Lillian Lord
Town Clerk