

Little Pond Sewer Service Area (LPSSA) Project - Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 8/17/17

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Q: When will I be able to connect to the sewer system?

A: Town has completed installation of public sewer mains in the roads and sewer service laterals from the sewer mains to the property line at the street to serve each property in the service area. Before beginning to connect to the sewer system, property owners or their representatives must apply for and receive a LPSSA combined Permit.

For the Falmouth Heights portion of the LPSSA, the deadline for connection to the sewer system has been extended. The final date for connection of Falmouth Heights properties to the sewer is now no later than November 30, 2017. In the week of June 1, a **letter** was sent to owners of property in the Falmouth Heights portion of the LPSSA providing notice of this deadline, and notice that they may be assessed a fine of \$50 per day for every day after that.

A **Letter** was mailed in April 2017 announcing the availability of sewers in the Maravista, Teaticket and abutting areas. Those in Maravista/Teaticket are requested to connect by April 2018.

COST TO PROPERTY OWNERS

Q: I own property in the Little Pond Sewer Service Area. What will this project cost me?

A: There are four categories of costs associated with this project for property owners in the service area:

- 1) Betterment – Please see questions and answers below regarding the betterment.
- 2) Connection of building to the sewer lateral at the property line and abandonment of the septic system or cesspool - These costs will need to be determined based on consultation with a plumber.
- 3) Sewer Charges – After the building is connected to the sewer, the property will begin to be charged for sewer on the water/sewer bill, based on water use (there is not a separate meter for sewage leaving the property). The sewer rate is currently \$6.70 per hundred cubic feet (748 gallons).

Q: How much is the Betterment?

A: The Estimated Betterment Cost for one Sewer Equivalent Unit (SEU) is \$16,201.43, as voted at the Board of Selectmen's Betterment Hearing held on July 13, 2015. All single family residential lots (approximately 88% of all properties in the service area) were assigned one SEU. Twenty-seven properties were assigned more than one SEU. The final betterment cost will be determined based on actual final project costs after construction is completed. However, the final betterment value cannot exceed the value voted at the Betterment Hearing in 2015. Betterments are added to real property tax bills and may be paid in full or apportioned in installments over 30 years, at the owner's option.

Q: When will the first betterment payment be due?

A: The initial betterment payment is expected to be due in 2018 or 2019, with the actual due date to be determined by project completion. Betterments are added to the real property tax bills and may be paid in full or apportioned in installments at the owner's option.

Q: Can I get a separate water meter for my irrigation water use so I do not have to pay a sewer bill for irrigation water?

A: The Town's policy is not to have separate water meters for irrigation and other water. This would increase town costs for meter reading and for bill production, and would reduce incentives for water conservation in sewer areas. However, you could investigate the possibility of installing a private well for irrigation on your property.

In February 2017 the Board of Health revised their irrigation well requirement for properties served by Town Sewer. Section 3 (B) (4) "for a lot served by Town Sewer irrigation wells may be located 10 feet from a lot line, provided that only subsurface irrigation is used. Please refer to the Falmouth Board of Health – Water Well Regulations for more information.

LPSSA SEWER CONNECTION PERMIT – COMBINED PERMIT

Q: When and how do I apply for a sewer connection permit and related permits, and what will it cost?

A: *Sewer connection on a property shall not begin until a Combined Permit has been issued for that property.* The Town has developed a streamlined online permit application process which allows property owners or their authorized representatives to complete one application (and pay a single \$50 fee) for all Town permits required for a sewer connection in the LPSSA.

Completion of an online application will ultimately result in the issuance of a Combined Permit which will serve as the Sewer Connection Permit, Plumbing Permit, Trench Permit, Electrical Permit (if a grinder pump is required), Septic System Abandonment Permit, and Conservation Commission permit (where a Determination of Applicability was made for the property).

It is recommended that the application be completed by the property owner's selected plumber, or by whoever is most familiar with the details of the connection plan.

The Town is accepting permit applications for The Little Pond Sewer Service area.

For more information on the Combined Permit Process please visit the Town's website (www.falmouthmass.us) and click on Government > Wastewater Division > Little Pond Sewer Service Area Project > Combined Permit Process.

Q: What about Commercial Prosperities?

A: For commercial and multi-unit residential properties, the normal Town permitting processes for any construction project will apply. A sewer connection permit application must be completed at the Department of Public Works, along with a proposed plan for the work and payment of the fee (\$200 for

commercial, \$50/unit for multi-family). *An engineered sewer connection plan will be required for all but the simplest commercial and multi-family sewer connections.*

All other permits that are required for the commercial or multi-family sewer connection (for example, plumbing, electrical, trench, septic abandonment) must be acquired individually as they normally would be. All inspections normally required to initiate use of the sewer connection and close out those permits must be completed as well.

These connections are larger and more complex. The intention of the Board of Selectmen was to provide the combined permit (with its reduced fee of \$50) for residential properties only.

GRINDER PUMPS/LOW PRESSURE CONNECTIONS

Q: Do I need a grinder pump?

A: About half of the properties will connect to the sewer via gravity, and the other half will connect via low pressure. Those properties that abut a low pressure sewer main will be required to have a grinder pump.

Please review the Sewer Collection Map that is posted under Little Pond Sewer Service Area Information Link at the top of the Town's website (<http://www.falmouthmass.us>). The map shows the gravity portion of the Little Pond Sewer Service Area in green color, and the low pressure portion in tan color. A large hard copy of this map can also be found at the Department of Public Works Building 416 Gifford Street as well as Falmouth Town Hall. Project design plans are available for viewing at the Department of Public Works building at 416 Gifford Street.

Q: If I need a grinder pump, do I need to pay for it?

No. The Town engaged in a competitive bid process in order to procure high quality, standardized pump systems with a five-year warranty. Environment One Corporation (E/One) was the successful bidder in that process. The Town will provide one E/One grinder pump unit to each single-family residential property that requires a grinder pump, at no charge. Owners of non-residential properties and of multi-family residential properties will need to work with an engineering firm to design a connection plan for their property; pumps needed for these connections will not be provided by the Town.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PIPES AND PUMPS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Q: Who is responsible for installation and maintenance of sewer pipes and pumps on private property?

A: Installation of all sewer connection infrastructure (pipes, pumps, etc.) on private property will be the responsibility of each property owner.

With regards to the maintenance of the grinder pump unit. The property owner will own the pump unit and will be responsible for installation of the pump unit. The Board of Selectmen voted a policy in May 2016, stating that the Town will:

- Provide a one-time partial reimbursement for grinder pump installation cost (value to be determined),
- Provide for maintenance of the pumps (though maintenance required due to improper use/abuse of pump unit will be charged back to the property owner),
- Provide emergency pump-out service during a temporary power outage, and
- Replace the pumps (if no evidence of abuse/improper use) when they reach the end of their useful service life.

SEPTIC TANK ABANDONMENT

Q: What happens to my septic tank after I connect to the Town Sewer System?

A: Under Title 5 of the State Environmental Code, 310 CMR 15.354: Abandonment of Systems, when a building is connected to a municipal sewer, the existing septic system must be formally abandoned by filling certain components with clean sand or other suitable material. Typically a septic tank is abandoned by pumping it empty, punching a hole in the floor of the tank, then filling the tank with clean fill (or other material acceptable to the Health Department). Block cesspools and leaching chambers or leaching pits made of any material can be pumped dry and filled with sand. Leaching chambers made of concrete or plastic with an overall height of less than two feet and simple pipe and stone components, such as beds, fields or trenches, can be abandoned in place with no destruction or filling required.

Please review the Falmouth Health Department Septic System Abandonment in the Little Pond Sewer Service Area document for complete instructions regarding Septic System Abandonment in the Little Pond Sewer Service Area

REQUIREMENT TO CONNECT IF IN SERVICE AREA / DESIRE TO CONNECT IF NOT

Q: Am I required to connect to the sewer system?

A: Yes, per Falmouth Town Code Chapter 180 Section 6 titled "Connection to Sewer Required."

Q: I'm not included in the Sewer Area, is there any way I can be?

A: At the present time, no changes are being considered to the existing, State-approved Little Pond Sewer Service Area. However at a future date, after the project has been completed, the Board of Selectmen *may* consider the possibility of allowing connections beyond the original sewer service area. If you submit a written request to the Board of Selectmen, it will be placed on file in anticipation of this possibility.