

TOWN OF MAYNARD

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

TO PLAY OFF THE POPULAR SHAKESPEAREAN QUOTE “TO SELL OR NOT TO SELL, THAT IS THE QUESTION”

Of course, we are talking about whether the BOS should be able to approve the sale of sewer to entities outside of Maynard, without the say of the people. This would include, but not limited to, surrounding towns, developers and businesses.

Why is this question being asked and why is it an article in a Special Town Meeting?

During our research and questions about Powder Mill Place, it looked like the Town was ready to approve selling sewer to the 180 units in Acton as well supplying for the 74 units located in Maynard. This was included in the LIP application and repeated in both Maynard and Acton BOS meetings. If that is the case or not, it still raised the question of selling sewer, which is one of our most valuable and important resources. So, we dug into the information available, talked to former DPW heads and longtime residents involved in town affairs to see if sewer was an issue that needed to be looked at closer. What we found is if the BOS decides to set the precedent of selling sewer, it could cost the tax payers of Maynard dearly for many years to come.

Let's be clear we are not only talking about Powder Mill Place. With other developers already lining up to ask, like 3 Main in Acton, **this is a decision that will have years of consequences if not done correctly**. Recent examples like Parker Street have shown significant damage in the current sewer lines. In that case, the cost to repair those lines far exceeded the negotiated amount the developer contributed. The State helped to lessen the blow with a \$3M grant; we doubt they will do it again. So, we need to look even closer to the current infrastructure as well as the capacity, to see if it really makes sense to be the business of selling sewer.

Now let's talk about capacity. Capacity is **not** determined by how much the sewer plant can process on a daily basis. Rather it is determined by the State's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The Town is granted a predetermined number of gallons a day of processed effluent that can be discharged into the Assabet River. Currently the State allows 1.4M gallons per day, including peak flows to be legally discharged. Peak flow today is just over 1M gallons per day, which is 71% of our State-allowable amount. Best engineering practice is to always provide for a 10% buffer from 100% therefore, the current 1M gallons per day represents 79% of the maximum we should be planning for.

That means we have about 21% available capacity remaining. Since the State is unlikely to increase our discharge amount, our sewer planning must consider that 21% and how we use this valuable resource. From our point of view, we should consider this remaining capacity with a look to the next **50** years.

Providing sewer to Maynard-based developments gains the Town both sewer revenue and tax revenue. Providing sewer to other towns gains us sewer revenue but the property tax revenue goes to the other town. Some people think that Maynard is fully built-out, so we don't need the available sewer capacity.

Some thoughts on that include:

- There are 37 underdeveloped acres at the former Stratus property just off Powder Mill Road.
- Mill & Main is 50% occupied and they are entitled to sewer services if/when they become fully occupied.
- 129 Parker street is not yet in current usage numbers.
- The redevelopment of the former Gruber Bros. building is not included, neither is the redevelopment on Summer Street
- Many of the buildings along Powder Mill Road are underdeveloped river front properties.

In general, redevelopment is happening and while that is a good thing it would **not** be good if we had no remaining sewer capacity when needed.

Looking at repair costs:

We have 47 miles of sewer pipes in Maynard, and the DPW estimates the full replacement cost of plant and pipes as \$125-\$150M. Replacing a mile of pipe costs \$1.4M. So, while we do need significant money to restore our 102-year-old system, we should not easily sell-away our sewer capability without a detailed plan and thoughtful consideration of long-term future needs within the Town.

Reminder – Special Town Meeting called by the Citizens Petition to address the sale of sewer services.

DATE	PLACE	TIME
November 8 th	Fowler Middle School	7:00 PM
	~~~~	

Please plan to attend so you can let town leaders know how you feel.