

AMENIA WASTEWATER COMMITTEE

Background

Amenia residents, businesses, and community leaders have recognized for decades that the Town will not thrive without a municipal wastewater system in the central hamlet. Many septic systems in this area are old and failing. Most do not meet current standards. But most systems cannot be replaced, because the construction of new septic systems is limited by small lots and high groundwater levels.

For this reason, both Amenia's 2007 Comprehensive Plan and the 2008 Hamlet Development Study stated that without a municipal wastewater system, housing and business development in the hamlet would be nearly impossible. Likewise, the Dutchess County Department of Behavior and Community Health has endorsed the "design and construction of a central sewer system for the hamlet to protect public health and to enhance economic opportunities in the hamlet."

Our Town has a long history of investigating the wastewater issue and working to address it. Studies and reports regarding central wastewater systems were prepared in 1995, 2003, 2009, and 2012.

Most recently, the Amenia Wastewater Committee has spent the past two years examining possibilities for a wastewater system in the hamlet. In 2021, the Town Board selected Tighe & Bond Engineering to perform a new sewer feasibility study. These efforts have gained particular urgency with the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021; this law allocated \$11.713 billion dollars over five years for wastewater projects, nearly half of it in the form of grants and forgivable loans available to communities like Amenia.

Benefits

A central wastewater system would provide significant benefits to all of Amenia's residents.

It would:

- replace outdated septic systems
- allow existing businesses to reach their full capacity
- encourage the growth of new small businesses in the hamlet
- allow for multi-use buildings with commercial and residential space
- encourage capital investments, including in much-needed workforce housing
- protect the environment
- promote sustainable community development

Current Work

The Amenia Wastewater Committee has done extensive research into treatment systems and technologies, conducted site visits, spoken with leaders of neighboring towns, and met with engineers and officials at the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority.

The Committee's most important priority has been community engagement. In December 2021, the Committee mailed all Amenia homeowners and business owners a Wastewater Survey, asking for information and feedback about their septic systems, wastewater-related issues they may have personally, issues they know of in the hamlet, and their thoughts on a municipal wastewater system. To ensure as much feedback as possible, the Committee also conducted targeted outreach by phone and e-mail to residential and business property owners in the central hamlet area. Fifty six percent of respondents in the envisioned sewer district said they would connect to a municipal wastewater system.

The Wastewater Committee has been working tirelessly with Tighe and Bond throughout the creation of its detailed sewer feasibility study. The Committee was closely involved in researching potential recovery/return sites, the delineation of the proposed district, and discussions around project need, technology applications, expandability, and sustainability.

Next steps

- Community engagement. Throughout the summer and fall, Wastewater Committee members will contact property owners in the envisioned district to discuss the proposed system. We will write letters, e-mails, and texts and knock on doors.
- Presentation to the Town Board. Tighe and Bond will present its sewer feasibility study to the Town Board.
- Presentation to the community. The Wastewater Committee and Tighe and Bond will hold a joint presentation at Amenia Town Hall to review the results and recommendations of the study, its financial impacts, and next steps. This meeting is intended for all stakeholders in the proposed sewer district.
- Media outreach. Throughout the summer and fall, the Wastewater Committee will engage with local newspapers, radio, and social media to educate and engage the community.

Questions?

Please feel welcome to contact the members of the Wastewater Committee with any questions:

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