

MARBLEHEAD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION



THE FLOW N' GO

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RESUMP PROGRAM CATCHES RESIDENTS ATTENTION

Last quarter's issue of *The Flow N' Go* introduced readers to the Water and Sewer Commission's new program to have sump pumps that are illegally connected to the sewer system removed. Dubbed **RESUMP**, the project is a public outreach and education program designed to locate and eliminate private sources of unnecessary flow into the sanitary sewer system.

Some of the topics addressed in that issue were how to identify if your sump pump is illegally connected to the sewer system and if it is, what you need to do to make the connection legal.

The newsletter has generated quite a bit of response from residents who are concerned that their sump pump may be illegally connected and who want to have it inspected to avoid being assessed a fine in the future. No fines are currently being assessed.

(Marblehead bylaws provide that, "No person shall discharge surface water or roof drainage ... [or] groundwater or cellar drainage into any particular sewer or connect directly with the underdrain of the common sewer" and provides for a daily fine of \$25.)

In conjunction with the publication of that issue of *The Flow N' Go*, the Commission launched a website dedicated to the Sump Pump Redirection Program—www.resump.org. This site further explains why it is so important that we eliminate all sump pump connections to the sanitary sewer system. It also has a Frequently Asked Questions section that will provide much more information on the program and what a homeowner needs to do.

There is also a link to a segment of the popular PBS series *This Old House* where the

show host helps the homeowners install a dry well in their yard and connect their sump pump to the dry well. This is one way to legally handle sump pump outflow.

A major goal of the outreach program is to inspect all sump pump connections in Marblehead to assure that they are in con-



formance with Town bylaws and State and Federal regulations.

But, you ask, "what does a sump pump look like and what should I be looking for?"

Your questions can be answered by clicking on the 'Contact Us' button located in the orange banner across the bottom of the website. This will bring you to an on-line form that you can use to ask questions and to submit photos to help identify if what you found in your basement is a sump pump connection.

Also on the 'Contact Us' form is a link that you can use to request an inspection. You simply fill out the requested information, answer a few questions and click the 'Submit' button. Someone from the redirection program will get in touch with you to schedule the inspection.

What will the inspector be looking for? On the Sump Pump Inspections request, you can download a PDF of the inspection form. This is the Inspection Survey Form that will be used for the inspection. It covers general property information and a 'Yes' / 'No' check off list for both an internal inspection and an external inspection.

If you have a sump pump connection we encourage you to schedule an inspection to make sure that it is a legal connection and is not connected to the Town's sewer system.

SEE A SEWER LINE FROM THE INSIDE

The RESUMP program is to identify excessive flow into the sewer system. One way to find this is by doing a Closed Circuit Television inspection to see if there is any water coming in.

To see a brief CATV video of a sewer line that has external water flowing into it, go to www.resump.org, click on the Public Sewer Inspections link and scroll down to CATV Inspections. There you will find a video of what a camera would see as it travels along a (clean) sewer service line. (No gross-out scenes here.)

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MARBLEHEAD'S SKYLINE IS FOREVER CHANGED WITH REMOVAL OF LANDMARK

In the past when someone would call the water and sewer office to inquire as to where we are located, we would usually respond with "Do you know where the big blue water tank off of Village Street is located?" (Our office, which is at the end of the garage complex near the water tank, can be hard to find.)

We will no longer be able to use the water tank as a landmark when giving directions. The water tank was decommissioned and taken down this past December.

Erected in 1924, the water tank has served the residents of Marblehead well. It delivered more water pressure when called for and provided a backup water supply in case it was ever needed. But the tank was nearing the end of its useful life and a decision had to be made as to whether the tank should be replaced or if it was no longer needed and could be taken down.

An extensive Water Distribution System Storage Feasibility Study was done in 2015 and the results concluded that, with all of the system upgrades done by the Commission and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) over the years, sufficient redundancy had been built into the distribution system to maintain water pressure and provide a back-up water supply should it ever be needed. Based on the results of the study it was decided that there was no longer a need for a water storage tank in that area of town and the tank did not need to be replaced, likely at a cost of several million dollars.

(The Commission maintains a second water tank, the so-called Burke's Hill Tank, on Tioga Way in the Green Street—Lincoln Avenue area of Town. There are no plans at this time to do away with this tank.)

Once the decision had been made to demolish the tank, attention then turned to what to do with the antennas for the town's emergency communications systems and water and sewer data collection receivers that were attached to the top of the

tank. The solution: erect a communications tower.

Now that we knew in what direction we were heading, the planning and work could begin. After obtaining all necessary permits and authorizations, a communications tower was put up next to the still-existing water tank. This would allow the emergency communications systems to be moved off the water tank and on to the tower without any disruption.



The water tank could now be dismantled. The demolition contract was advertised and a company out of Port Hope, Michigan was the low bidder. They took the tank apart—piece by piece—in less than three days. And it was all done without a hitch. (See photo at left of the mon-
opole going up.)

The area where the water tank was now looks very different. The skyline as viewed while driving down Village Street towards Pleasant Street has changed. Now, for the first time in nearly 100 years, one sees blue sky (at least on a sunny day) where they once saw a tall, round blue metal structure.

Asking someone looking for our office "Do you know where the big silver communications tower off of Village Street is located" just doesn't sound the same.

A Marblehead landmark is gone forever.

Also gone are any concerns that the Commission may have had about water quality and the structural integrity of the tank.

GREASE AND FAT BUILD-UP IN SEWER SYSTEM CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEM

Since the inception of *The Flow N' Go* in 2013, numerous articles have been printed imploring residents, restaurants, and businesses to not to put fat, oil, or grease down any drain. These materials clog the sewer lines and can cause sewer backups and damage to the sewer pump station equipment.

In the October-December, 2013 issue we told customers to not put meat fats, shortening, or oils in their garbage disposals. The April-June, 2018 issue kicked off the *Say 'NO' to FOG* campaign through which people were advised (again) to not put **Fats, Oil or Grease**

down the drain.

The October-December, 2019 issue offered concrete proof of what could happen by showing a picture of a fat-clogged sewer line in Melrose that caused sewer backups in several residences in that town. And the very next issue, January-March, 2020, told how to identify if a sewer service line is clogged and of the potential damages and expenses that the homeowner may incur.

Now, just over a year later, several customers seem to have forgotten the warnings. The sewer department has

once again encountered lines clogged with fat and grease and some homeowners and businesses have experienced sewer backups due to clogged service lines.

A clogged sewer service line is the responsibility of the homeowner to have cleared. They would also be responsible for the cost of any cleanup and damage.

All of this is very preventable—if you heed our warnings. **Do not, under any circumstances, put any type of fats, oils, or grease down your drains.** When cooled, pour them into a bottle or can and put them in with your trash.