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Discussions continue on I&I, Morgan Farms sewer findings

BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

With a light agenda, discussions at Monday's Lewiston Town Board session continued to focus on inflow and filtration issues. Coming off of two heavy rain events this year – the most recent being a 5-inch deluge in June – affected property owners again visited Town Hall and wanted answers.

Morgan Drive resident Beth Ann Elias of the newly formed Neighborhood Association for Sewer Eradication (NASTE), inquired to Supervisor Steve Broderick and board members on what the town has done about the problem.

"A lot of us were waiting for this board meeting tonight," she said.

Broderick said board members received the group's concerns and are planning to respond by Aug. 30. He said the board was not prepared to discuss the matter at this time.

In response, Elias questioned suspected problems the NASTE group found with earlier pipe installations in the Morgan neighborhood.

"It's come to our attention that, back in the '90s ... the storm sewer pipes were not (installed properly) according to the specifications developed by the engineering firm," she said. "This should be looked into; this could be contributing some of the water leaking into some cracked pipes. It's my understanding that the pipes are (located) above where the specs are, meaning that there is not enough ground that could absorb the water."

Elias added, "I'm hoping that we have answers to quite a few of the questions that we put forth

last (meeting)."

One question involved the status of the backflow preventers option previously offered to affected property owners with flooding issues. The town suggested installing the units as a possible solution to residents contending with raw sewage backups. Past discussions included the town considering looking into assistance to help property owners with their purchase and installation via potential grant programs.

Jeff Ritter, superintendent of the Lewiston Water Pollution Control Center, explained, "First off, the town attorney, the sewer and building department, are still putting together language for a backflow preventer plan. I'd like to clear up some misconceptions about the word 'grant.'"

Ritter explained the town has been considering applying for a grant program whereby it could assist affected property owners who experienced flooding by means of grant-assistance to pay for the purchase and installation of the preventers on their property. Cost for the preventers has been estimated to be in the thousands for such a correction.

"In this case, the town is looking to obtain money from anyone else," Ritter said. "The monies would be granted to the homeowner from the town in order to stop sanitary sewage from chronically entering a home during torrential downpours and significant rain events."

He explained the recent work by the town's sewer department since the flooding incidents, and what crews found.

"We explored the sewer system in the Morgan Farms neighborhood, and we noticed that our sewer mains are in very good condition," Ritter said. "We cleaned and vacuumed them out of debris. Then we put our cameras in the pipe. We noticed that the main was devoid of cracks, so there is no evidence of leaking pipe joints in the main, no roots in the main."

"But we did notice that there was some home laterals that had separated from the main line; that was from roots growing in the areas where the infiltration would be taking place. My opinion is that it would be too costly to dig up the road to get at in this case. So, a backflow preventer would still be recommended (here)."

"We did find a crack in a pipe on Fifth Street that didn't look to be a big leaker."

"I just wanted everyone to know the town sewer department continues to be proactive (on this)."

Councilman Rob Morreale sought clarification on the laterals and if steps are being taken to notify affected homeowners. In response, Ritter said, "Well, we haven't done that, yet."

On a follow-up question from Councilman John Jacoby on whether the affected homeowners can (or should) handle the lateral repair at the leak location themselves, Ritter suggested installing the backflow preventer as a better option.

"Well, the stack (joining the lateral) is made at the street. So, they would have to dig up the street. So, a much better solution to this would (be) if we tried the backflow preventer," Ritter said.

As to whether the town would be applying for any federal or state grants to address the problems, again there was no response.

"Well, the plan was to respond to you by Aug. 30," Broderick reiterated. He said board members and town officials continue to review the matter and plan to discuss it further at the Sept. 9 work session.

On a related matter, Broderick said the town completed survey work on drains in the Oak Hill and Hillside Drive areas affected by flooding, and would discuss this on Sept. 9.

"Basically, we did a drainage study over the last two years (on) Oak Hill and Hillside Drive," he said. "We'll be (going) over this ... to determine the scope of work in the Oakhill subdivision and Hillside Drive. There will be no action taken (tonight). We will be meeting with the engineer (Bob Lannon, principal/vice president of GHD Consulting), Mitch Zahno and Jeff (Ritter); and addressing (it) at the work session in September."

In other news:

•The Town Board unanimously approved Local Law No. 3 of 2024 on solar installations in the town. Details of the law can be found on the town website, www.townoflewiston.us.

•The board approved the Lewiston Police Department adding a new police shift to its work schedule.

"We have a memorandum of understanding with the police department on a new schedule. They created an overlapping officer (shift) from 2 p.m. to 2 a.m.," Broderick said.

Consumer alert: NYS DCP provides targeted back-to-school tips

Submitted by the New York Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection

The New York Department of State's Division of Consumer Protection is providing targeted privacy protection tips for adults and children ahead of the new school year.

Under New York state's education law, if you are a parent of a child in the New York state schools, you have rights regarding the privacy and security of your child's personal information and data. New York state law requires each educational agency to publish a parents' bill of rights for data privacy and security on its website.

"Safety is a top priority for parents when sending their children back to school," Secretary of State Walter T. Mosley said. "With technology being used more and more as a learning tool, New York parents and caregivers should know their rights when it comes to protecting their children's personal information and privacy."

Think about children's privacy

Technology has become a permanent fixture of the education experience. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) issued a policy statement putting educational technology on notice of their obligations to protect children's privacy. In other words, educational technology companies must comply with privacy requirements and can't require parents and schools to agree to the comprehensive surveillance of children for kids to use their learning tools. Thus, parents and guardians need to place close attention to the technology children use, what information is collected and how it is used.

Some important things for parents to know:

- Your child's personal information cannot be sold or released for any commercial purposes.
- If your child is under age 18, you have the right to inspect and review the complete contents of your child's education records.

•If you have questions about student data, please see information available for parents from The New York State Department of Education.

Other ways to pay close attention to your child's personal information:

- Protect documents that contain a child's personal information. Understand where your child's information is stored. Ask how after-school organizations and sports clubs secure their records: Are digital records connected to the internet and, if so, are they encrypted? Are physical records locked in filing cabinets? Who has access?
- Be careful when providing identifying information to after-school activities and sports clubs upon registration. If asked for a Social Security number (SSN), inquire why it is needed and ask to use another identifier. Oftentimes organizations include the SSN request as a formality and it may not

be mandatory.

- Only label books, backpacks and lunches with the student's full name and any other information on the inside! Using initials on the outside is OK, but names, even just first names, on the outside can create an unsafe situation.
- Discuss internet safety tips with children and remind them to be careful about opening attachments and suspicious emails.
- Both parents and students should be careful on all social media platforms: Don't overshare. Any information you post can be seen and utilized by identity thieves. Avoid sharing personal information including full names, addresses, phone numbers, Social Security numbers or even where they go to school. Social media posts often reveal sensitive information unintentionally. Cybercriminals look for content that can reveal answers to security questions used to reset passwords, making accounts vulnerable to identity theft.

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