



The Town of Barnstable

Office of Town Manager

367 Main Street, Hyannis, MA 02601

Office: 508.862.4610

Fax: 508.790.6226

www.town.barnstable.ma.us

Citizens' Resource Line: 508.862.4925



Mark S. Ells, Town Manager

mark.ells@town.barnstable.ma.us

M. Andy Clyburn, Assistant Town Manager

andy.clyburn@town.barnstable.ma.us

CONTACT: Lynne M. Poyant
Director of Communications
Lynne.poyant@town.barnstable.ma.us

Town of Barnstable Seeks Input on Proposed Sewer Assessment Ordinance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (February 26, 2021) Clean water and healthy coastal resources are critical to keeping Cape Cod viable as a place to live, work and visit. Water resources are central to quality of life on Cape Cod and in the Town of Barnstable. This week the Town of Barnstable is launching a broad wave of outreach to the town's residents and businesses on a proposed Sewer Assessment ordinance. It is anticipated that outreach efforts will continue through the introduction of the ordinance to Town Council in April 2021.

Like other Cape towns, Barnstable is required to reduce nitrogen pollution in estuaries that is coming primarily from septic systems. To meet this regulatory requirement, the Town has put forward a plan to expand sewer service to 11,800 properties over the next thirty years, and implement a number of other alternative approaches to wastewater treatment. Construction on the first phase of the plan is scheduled to begin this year.

Town officials seek public engagement and input so that residents are fully informed in advance about the Town's plans to cover the cost for the new system.

Town Manager Mark Ells said: "Perhaps no other feature is more important to the quality of life and unique character of our community than the health of our coastal waters, freshwater ponds, and drinking water. Building sewers to reduce the amount of nitrogen pollutants entering our waters is necessary to protect our environment, property values, local economy, and our quality of life."

To date, Town officials have identified roughly half of the financial resources needed to implement the 30-year sewer expansion plan. Town officials are now focused on the remaining funding needed. The proposed ordinance, which has been reviewed by the Town's Comprehensive Finance Advisory Committee, is a key part of the funding plan.

Finance Director Mark Milne says the ordinance would create a sewer assessment that would apply only to properties that will be receiving sewer service. A cap on the sewer assessment of \$17,000 per sewer property is recommended at the start of the program. This amount

-more-

reflects only a quarter of the average estimated cost of sewerage per property. It is also less than the potential increase in property value an owner may benefit from by being connected to public sewer service, according to studies in other communities. The assessment, as well as connection costs with the property owners' permission, can be added to quarterly tax bills over 30 years, allowing for no upfront costs incurred by the property owner. A \$17,000 sewer assessment amortized over 30 years amounts to roughly \$2.67 a day for the impacted property owner.

Ells is vetting the proposal with the public prior to presenting it to the Town Council this spring. "Every citizen has a stake in the health of our waters, and we want to be sure that this ordinance is understood and supported by our community," Ells said.

The next public engagement sessions will be held on March 25th. The town has also launched a new website, [BarnstableWaterResources.com](https://barnstablewaterresources.com), and is reaching out to stakeholders in the community to discuss the proposed ordinance. Comments and questions can be sent to waterresources@town.barnstable.ma.us.

Information about upcoming public forums is provided below.

###

An overview of the sewer assessment ordinance is available at
<https://barnstablewaterresources.com/comprehensive-waste-water-management-plan/finance-funding/>

The full draft sewer assessment ordinance is available at
<https://www.townofbarnstable.us/InTheNews/2020-12-17%20INITIAL%20DRAFT%20Sewer%20Assessment%20Ordinance.pdf>

Citizen engagement forums on the Proposed Sewer Assessment Ordinance will be held on Thursday, March 25 at 10:00 am, 2:00 pm, and 7:00 pm^[1]_[SEP]

To participate via computer use the following link for all three meetings:
<https://zoom.us/j/92047771927> Webinar ID 920 4777 1927
or join by phone 888-475-4499 using the Webinar ID: 920 4777 1927.

All meetings will also be live-streamed on Channel 18 and the Town of Barnstable Facebook page. All sessions will be recorded and posted to the Town of Barnstable website for later viewing.