

Dave Biziak – Sewer Committee Chair

The Sewer Committee was formed in May 2013 with the goal of re-examining the feasibility, type and cost of a municipal sewer system.

We were to review the prior sewer bond proposal of 2010 and determine what features were right and what were wrong.

Complaints were:

- it would take too long to include all of the city,**
- the cost would be high**
- because many property owners have their taxes frozen, the burden of paying for the bonds would not be shared by the whole populace.**
- equity regarding which parts of the city would be included in the initial project.**

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- Ordinance #608 set our charge – to look into the ‘desirability and feasibility of Granite Shoals investing in the infrastructure to construct a sewer system.’
- Our ongoing discussions were:
 - (1) How much money could the city raise to cover the cost of a sewer system?
 - (2) How large a project could we afford?
 - (3) What type of system should we consider?
 - (4) Which sewer system, if any, would best provide environmental improvements, business growth and increased property value?

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Our first project was to conduct a survey in July 2013 of citizen opinion regarding a sewer system - out of 276 responses:

- Should all of GS be done? 68.5% Yes
- Would you support a partial system at first? 51% Yes
- If your current system was adequate, would you connect? 66% Yes
- Would you pay a fee to connect? 62% Yes
- What is age of your system? (<10yrs) 32%; (11-20yrs) 30%; (21-30yrs) 21%; (>31yrs) 17%

What this survey showed is:

- a majority wanted the whole city to be done
- 51-49 rate on a partial system
- people would connect to it
- 38% of the residents have septic systems more than 20 yrs old.

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We talked to surrounding cities and compared their situations to ours: topography, ground underlay, population size, age of homes, type of system they had, fees, etc. We looked closely at three types of systems – standard grinder; gravity and STEP (septic tank effluent pump).

- A. **Standard grinder** — grinder pump installed at residence, septic tank and field lines disabled. Projected cost - \$3,500 to \$5,000
- B. **Gravity**—requires constant slope to the mainline. *Because of the uneven topography of GS this type was not considered desirable.*
- C. **STEP**—grinder pump installed in residence septic tank, field lines disabled and only effluent (wastewater) is pumped out. Treatment plant is different because no primary sludge treatment is needed.

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Findings were:

- if a sewer system is pursued, we need a complete break from septic tanks, so a **Standard Grinder style plant** is preferred.
- The treatment plant site would best be located on city property.
- The drip irrigation field could be around and along city boundaries including the upcoming Manzano Hike and Bike Trail, city parks and possibly the city airfield.
- The committee determined a need to expand on the questions from the original survey - a new Sewer System Survey was developed and mailed out for today's town hall meeting. Please complete and return by March 7th.
- An engineering study will be required, before a detailed sewer system plan / proposal can be finalized.