

Written by David Still II

Stewart's Creek, take two at council Aug. 6

As the Barnstable Town Council takes another look at funding the second half of the Stewart's Creek sewer project in Hyannis for \$3.2 million, it will do so with the knowledge that its actions are being watched.

On July 23, the town received a request from the Conservation Law Foundation for a meeting to discuss "the town's progress towards developing a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan (CWMP) that will meet the nitrogen targets in the Massachusetts Estuaries Plan."

The letter was signed by CLF staff attorney Cynthia Liebman, who was on the Cape May 9 as part of a CLF-sponsored forum on wastewater pollution on Cape Cod.

In a phone interview July 30, Liebman said that CLF has been reviewing "a lot of publicly available information" about wastewater planning management and the meeting is in the interest of answering questions raised in that process.

"You could go as far to say significant questions," Liebman told the *Patriot*.

Barnstable was one of four Cape communities to receive letters and requests for meetings with the CLF. Liebman said that there is "some immediacy" to the meeting with Barnstable, as the town is at a critical point in its decision-making with respect to wastewater projects.

On Tuesday, Town Manager John Klimm said that he was working to get a meeting scheduled, but knew no more than was explained in the letter.

The July 21 letter asked for meetings in the coming two weeks, and Liebman is hopeful that they can be scheduled by mid-August.

The town council will again take up the second phase of the Stewart's Creek sewer project at its Aug. 6 meeting. Funding for that project, as well as a \$44 million sewer expansion project for the Wequaquet area in Centerville, was turned down by the council June 25. The CLF letter references those votes.

Phase I residents become aware their deal is done

Since the initial defeat of the Phase II Stewart's Creek funding at the end of June, residents in the first phase of that project have come to realize it's already been approved.

The council approved the \$3.9 million first phase of that project on April 16 as part of the 2010 Capital Improvements Plan. That vote went largely unnoticed by the residents whose properties will be assessed to pay for it.

In an e-mail exchange, DPW Director Mark Ells said that the Stewart's Creek project was always thought of as a single project in two phases. Asked whether the approved Phase I can be done in the absence of Phase II should it fail a second time, Ells said that there's no answer at this time.

At the July 28 meeting of the Greater Hyannis Civic Association, a number of residents expressed surprise that their properties were included in that approved first phase. In a July 29 phone conversation with a resident who owns multiple properties in the area, the lack of notification to residents of the earlier vote was concerning.

Ells indicated that the town had worked with some community groups and had discussed the project on Channel 18 programming and in town council workshops.

When the town council moved quickly to consider authorizing the second phase of the sewer project to

qualify for federal stimulus funds, it sent postcards to property owners in both phases of the project.

That created some confusion for those living in the Phase I area, as they thought there was an opportunity to be heard, according to the multiple property owner. She added that she supports the project, but wished there had been greater outreach and explanation that it was coming to a vote.

The town council will take up funding the second phase of the Stewart's Creek sewerage Aug. 6. It is among the first items on the agenda after preliminary business and one set of appointments. The meeting was moved to the Knight Lecture Hall at Barnstable High School to handle the expected crowd for this and the Craigville DCPC hearing.