



Board of Aldermen Shelton, Connecticut

Public Hearing – Brookwood Lane Water Main Extension April 22, 2004

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Alderman Anglace opened the Public Hearing at approximately 7 p.m., immediately following the meeting of the Aldermanic Finance Committee.

ROLL CALL

Aldermanic President John F. Anglace, Jr. - present
Alderman John "Jack" Finn - present
Alderman Stanley Kudej - present
Alderman Joseph Lanzi - present
Alderman Diane M. Marangelo - present
Alderman Nancy Minotti - present
Alderman Kenneth Olin - absent
Alderman John P. Papa – present

Corporation Counsel Tom Welch

LEGAL NOTICE - CITY OF SHELTON – published

LEGAL NOTICE
CITY OF SHELTON

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN WILL CONDUCT A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FOLLOWING:

PROPOSED WATER MAIN ASSESSMENTS BROOKWOOD LANE WATER MAIN EXTENSION

SAID PUBLIC HEARING SHALL BE CONDUCTED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 2004 AT 7 P.M. IN THE AUDITORIUM AT CITY HALL, 54 HILL STREET, SHELTON.

ALL PERSONS WHO HAVE AN INTEREST THEREIN MAY APPEAR AND BE HEARD IN RELATION HERETO.

1. **Proposed Water Main Assessments – Water Main Extension – Brookwood Lane, Douglas Court and Alice Court**

Alderman Anglace stated, for the record, the public notice was published in the Connecticut Post on April 15, 2004. The purpose of calling the City Engineer is that he can explain the process of what happens with this project all the way through, and then explain the proposed assessments.

Bob Kulacz, City Engineer

Good evening. My name is Bob Kulacz, I'm the City Engineer. Our office oversees the extension of water mains that occur in the City of Shelton through the City Ordinances 471, 473 and 478. Our office received a copy of a petition to extend public water on Brookwood Lane for the remaining 13 houses. We also took the liberty of including the remaining four houses in the neighborhood – the four houses on Douglas Court and the one house on Alice Court to be part of the project. In the event that the homeowners on Douglas Court and Alice Court do not wish to participate, they don't have to, and it will not affect the Brookwood Lane part of the project. If everyone wants to participate, that can happen as well.

The purpose of the meeting tonight is to answer your questions. The Board of Aldermen wants to hear your reasons for asking for public water. We have to contract with the Aquarion Water Company to have a water main installed; we have to pay them up front. They install the water main. We then go out to bid and have a contractor install the water service line from the water main to your front lawn. From that point on, that is the cost of the water project, and your assessment. The home owner is responsible for extending the water line from the curb box to your home, and doing the internal plumbing.

We also oversee the project and the cost estimate, we tabulate the costs of the project and prepare the assessments. Everybody shares equally; anyone who benefits from the installation if this project goes forward will be subject to the water main assessment whether you connect or not.

If you do connect, if this project goes forward and you connect you also get a rebate - the City gets a rebate from the Water Company in the amount of \$838. That is for everybody who connects to the water. When the City receives that money back it's applied to your account.

If you choose to hook up in the future, within 10 years, that money is returned to the City and placed in your account to your remaining balance on the water main assessment. The City allows an assessment payback period of 10 years and in the mailing that we sent to you we have a typical payback period of 10 years, and it shows what the annual payments will be.

We have three cost estimates that we included in the mailing to the residents. One was for the 13 homes on Brookwood Lane. The second one was for 17 homes, which included the four homes on Douglas Court. The third one is for 18 homes, which included the one home on Alice Court.

The project costs – the assessments are roughly the same, it's a little bit more including Alice Court. The reason for that is there is only one house that is going to be served for the extra 245 feet of water main that has to be put in, and that's how it balances out.

Our office, that's basically a summary of the project and what happens. From this date, the Board of Aldermen has 60 days to decide whether or not to fund this project. They're going to want to hear from you the pros and cons. For the record, I gave to the clerk, we received one letter dated April 10, 2004 from the resident at 26 Brookwood Lane. She is not in favor of the project, because basically she has no need for public water and doesn't want to undertake the payment for the project. A copy of that was given to the clerk. At this point, I'm going to take a seat and the Aldermen will call you up to make your comments known to the Board. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace asked, can you clarify for me the number of homes on Brookwood?

Mr. Kulacz replied, the number of homes on Brookwood are 13. There are four homes on Douglas Court, one house on Alice Court and the homes that are being served on Brookwood are numbered 1 through 26, but we're excluding #25. The numbering is not quite even. Number 25 already has access to public water as you can see on the map.

Alderman Anglace asked, why did you break this out to three separate projects with separate calculations, as opposed to one project with everybody sharing in the cost?

Mr. Kulacz replied, the petition that came in was solely signed by the residents of Brookwood Lane, but since there are only five houses remaining, four on Douglas Court and one on Alice Court, I just took the liberty of including them to see if they want to be part of the project.

Like I said, they don't have to participate if they're not interested, because they wouldn't affect the Brookwood part of the project. I don't think it would be fair to pass them by when given the opportunity to jump in on the project, when the road would have to be torn up in the future, on Brookwood Lane, after the road is resurfaced, to add those extensions onto those side streets. So we included that as part of the mailing.

Alderman Anglace stated, in effect, if the one home on Alice Court was not interested, then that one home would not have to participate. And if the four homes on Douglas – if the majority isn't interested - they would not have to participate. Brookwood Lane would be a majority decision between 13 homeowners.

Mr. Kulacz replied, that is correct.

Alderman Anglace stated, this is intended to be a public information session. It's an important decision. We want you to go out of here with all the information you need to know to make that decision. We would like to know when you come to the podium, what your address is and what number and what street, and yes or no, you want it or don't want it. If we don't get a clear indication tonight, we'll have the City Engineer poll everybody with a ballot, so that we are sure. If we only hear from three of the people on Brookwood, that is not an indication good enough for us to proceed. We'll have him, to be sure, send out and do a poll so that we know where everybody stands. We have done that before. So whatever you would like to know, step up to the podium, raise your hand, we'll call on you, give us your name and address and ask your questions, and we hope we can answer them.

Ted Bartram, 6 Brookwood Lane

My mailing address is 6 Brookwood Lane. Our house actually faces on Alice Court, which changed the whole figure on Brookwood Lane. I don't classify my house as being – the only reason we have a Brookwood address is that when we move in 40 years ago, the Post Office wouldn't give us a number, so everybody used their lot number. At that time, Alice Court wasn't completely finished, so they were just running on Brookwood Lane.

I, myself, I am against it for the simple reason that I have a well that is 136 foot deep and it gives beautiful water and I've been there for 40 years, I replaced my pump once, it cost me \$450. This sounds like a pretty expensive proposition to me.

I talked to the hydraulic company and I talked to one of the servicemen down there, and I asked approximately what would it cost to hook up from the street to the house. He said to be safe, to figure between \$3,000 and \$5,000, and that your yearly cost would be \$400. To me, it doesn't sound like it's a good proposition, but I know that some people on the street are having problems with their well. I feel sorry for them, but I'm a retired person living on a fixed income and it sounds like a lot of money to me. Thank you.

My address is put down as 6 Brookwood Lane, but actually Alice Court is the front of the house.

Wes Hobby, 9 Brookwood Lane

Good evening. I have lived at 9 Brookwood Lane for the last 27 years. Like my good neighbor, Ted, over there, we've had well water for that time and never have had any trouble with it. It has never run dry, it has never gone down to a trickle, it is always working beautifully. As much as I sympathize with people who may or may not have trouble, I'm not really sure what their troubles are, I really think, I'm another retired person living on the fixed income, the pension, to hit me with another \$9,000 to \$10,000 over 10 years for water that I don't need and don't want, I really think is kind of unfair. For the record, I am opposed to it.

Alderman Anglace thanked Mr. Hobby.

Agnes Rioux, 10 Brookwood Lane

I'm like Ted, I actually live on Alice Court, because my house – I'm 10 Brookwood Lane but the front of my house faces Alice Court. So I'm really an Alice Court person. We were very interested in having water because we have several problems. The water is great, I mean, there is nothing wrong with it, but it's the pressure. We have minimal pressure and when my kids come, it's like, you have to take turns taking showers because the pressure isn't strong enough. Same thing with washing clothes, you have to kind of check as far as the pump is going. The pump goes constantly. So we do have a pressure problem. Other than that we don't have any problem with the water itself.

One question my husband wanted. If it's affordable, we would like it, but there again, I'm retired, he's retired, and we don't have that much income coming in. If it's an exorbitant amount, as much as we would like City water, we just can't do it. My husband wanted to know the initial cost of installation, but you kind of went through that, right? I have a copy of that.

Another thing he said was, can we still use our well water if we have City water?

Alderman Anglace stated, if City water goes down the street and goes up to Alice Court, you do not have to hook in. You would still be assessed, but you don't have to hook in. So you would save only the hookup charges.

If you wanted to hook in to the City water and you want to keep your well going at the same time, that is a personal thing. We don't force you to close your well. If you want to use it for other purposes you could. It wouldn't involve us at all.

Mrs. Rioux continued, our house faces Alice Court. If we can't afford it, we don't have to be assessed, do we?

Alderman Anglace asked, you're number 10?

Mrs. Rioux replied, we're number 10, but actually our house faces Alice Court.

Alderman Anglace stated, you're 10 Brookwood Lane, you're not Alice Court. So 10 Brookwood Lane is in with the other – with the petition – with the 13 people.

Mrs. Rioux stated, it's the same as Ted. When the roads were first, they couldn't give us a number for Alice Court because it didn't exist then, so we had to take 10 Brookwood Lane.

Mr. Kulacz explained, if you can take a look on the map, the water main is going to go past your house on Brookwood Lane. If Alice Court was not there, you would still be part of the project. We only assess the first side of a home that the water main passes on the project. In other words, say we just did Brookwood Lane for a water main assessment – number 6 and number 10 would be assessed because they're on the corner – they have frontage on Brookwood Lane. Now, at sometime in the future, after this project was done, say 20 years down the road we did Alice Court, 6 and 10 Brookwood Lane, even though they face Alice Court, they would be assessed under the Brookwood Lane project, they would not be assessed a second time.

It really doesn't make any difference what your address is, you would have the opportunity and benefit to tie in to the public water on the Brookwood Lane side of your property whether or not your house faced Alice Court. So you're going to have a say on the project on Brookwood Lane. You're going to be one of the 13 homes that will have to vote whether or not the

project goes forward, because you will be affected, because it's going past one side of your property. So the issue of whether you're Brookwood or Alice really doesn't make a difference in this case, according to our Ordinance and our past practices.

Mrs. Rioux asked, when you say assessed, that means how much will we be assessed – it's a one-time?

Mr. Kulacz stated, it's a one-time assessment. It's going to be in the range between \$9,000 and \$10,000 and it can be paid back over a 10-year period. We included a sample payback schedule in the mailing for you.

Mrs. Rioux asked, that is even if we don't have the water, we have to pay that?

Mr. Kulacz replied, yes. If this project goes forward and it goes past your house on Brookwood Lane, you will be assessed for the benefit, because you had the opportunity to tie into public water.

Mrs. Rioux stated, as much as we want it, I don't think we can afford it. That is being very honest with you. We just have our Social Security, and that's it. If it were just the \$9,000 or \$8,000 that is one thing, but then you have to hook up to the house, then you have your monthly. My husband is 86 and I'm 76. I guess I'm going to have to say no on it then.

Alderman Anglace stated, we'll mark you down as a no, and if you change your mind call the City Engineer and let him know.

Chris Boczer, 11 Douglas Court

Over the 10-year period that this has to be paid, is this interest free if you choose to pay for it yearly, or is there going to be a percentage charged onto that?

Mr. Kulacz stated, what the City does is, it's going to be at an interest rate determined by the Finance Director when the project is completed. The City has to borrow the money at the prevailing bond rate. Over the last several years, the interest rate ranged from 2.5 to 3.5 percent depending on the time and the bond rates that the City received. In the handout, the yearly payback shows an interest rate of about 3 or 5 percent for a typical payback period, to give you an idea of what it would cost.

Mr. Boczer stated, since I'm up here, I have a well also and I don't have any problems with the drinking water, but I do feel that City water would benefit just in case something does happen to the well, you do have a backup water supply. Being on the extension street, it would be beneficial to be included in it now rather than later, because you're saving more costs of divvying up and everything else. I also have a letter from Peter Holst, number 9, who also is in favor of the plan. I really don't think that \$1,000 per year is that bad of a figure when you look at it. That is my personal opinion for what it's worth.

Mr. Kulacz noted that he spoke to Mr. Holst this week and he is in favor; he just couldn't be in attendance tonight.

Alderman Papa asked, Bob, the consensus you have. How many people are in favor, of all the homes on these streets, and how many were opposed?

Mr. Kulacz replied, we didn't mail out a ballot yet.

Alderman Papa asked, but you did have a petition to bring water in, right?

Mr. Kulacz stated, a petition was submitted to the Board.

Alderman Papa asked, so after this is done, you're going to get a consensus of everybody on that street – who wants it and who doesn't.

Alderman Anglace stated, he's not going to do that if we get a clear consensus tonight. If we get 10 people out of 11 for example, then that would be – that is what the public hearing is for. But if we don't have a clear consensus tonight, then we will poll each person and get it that way.

Mr. Kulacz stated, and that is done by mail.

Wes Hobby, 9 Brookwood Lane

The map the gentleman gave us stops at One Douglas Court. It does not go up by 9 or anywhere near 11.

Alderman Anglace stated, I had trouble finding it too. It's right at the very bottom – look at it.

Mr. Hobby stated, the water main, as they've drawn it here, does not go up there. So whether he's voting for Brookwood Lane or not – the main doesn't seem like it's going to his house, either way. I'm just curious about that

Alderman Anglace stated, it looks like it stops at the cul-de-sac.

Mr. Kulacz stated, that's correct. The water main will terminate at the cul-de-sac and they will be responsible for a long service, both for number 9 and number 11. We terminate at the right of way, and it's the homeowner's responsibility to take care of that distance. But the water main is never extended outside of the public right of way except if it's necessary to make a connection to another street.

[unidentified person speaking from the audience]: On that comment, my wife called and was told it would be brought a few feet onto the property line.

Mr. Kulacz stated, the question was, is the water service going to be terminated in the cul-de-sac. What I was referring to is the water main. The water main is going to terminate in the cul-de-sac. A water service line is brought to the front lawn of each home, 10 feet off the pavement, and it's terminated with a curb box and a shut off valve. Nobody has to excavate into the street. So everybody is going to have a water service line terminated with a curb box and shut off valve about 10 feet from the edge of the pavement.

Charlie Losito, One Brookwood Lane

I just want to say that I'm in favor of the project. I have a well and I have a lot of different pieces of equipment to make that well work correctly - water softener, neutralizer - and when everything is working fine, it's okay – it's livable. But whenever something goes on the fritz, I have a high iron content in my water, and I have new fixtures in the bathroom, and everything is already stained. I would definitely be in favor of City water if we could get it.

Eleanor Olin, Two Brookwood Lane

I am in favor of the City water. But, I was wondering about what you spoke about the curb - from the curb to the home. I was told that if the majority of the people used the same contractor it wouldn't be astronomical – like Ted said – that \$3,000 to \$5,000 – that figure is really way out, but I don't know anything about those things. Do you have a ballpark figure that we could factor in with this?

Alderman Anglace stated, what we can do is ask the City Engineer if he knows what has been charged to people who have recently put in water by a contractor.

Mrs. Olin stated, if everyone uses the same contractor, naturally it would be lower.

Mr. Kulacz stated, we really don't keep a record, because it's all privately done. It ranges anywhere from \$1,500 to \$3,000. It depends on how much internal plumbing has to be done, what the length of the run is going to be, if there is ledge, rock and so forth. Historically, what a lot of the neighbors have done is they've gotten together and put their resources and asked for estimates, and told the contractor, we're four or five of us, we'll give you the job if you give us the best price. You have to shop around. It's supply and demand. The people that are busy are going to give you a higher price, and the people that are not so busy are going to be a little more competitive. All we can say is, shop around.

Mrs. Olin asked, when you get the water, if everyone gets water, is this a monthly bill or a quarterly bill. The water bill from Aquarion.

Alderman Anglace stated, that is quarterly.

Mrs. Olin asked, do you happen to know that figure, roughly?

[Unidentified person speaking from the audience replied].

Unidentified Male Speaker

I have a couple of questions. As far as the curbside box goes, is that put at the owner's specified location or is it just randomly placed on your lawn?

Mr. Kulacz stated, we put the water service connection wherever the homeowner specifies. We send out a mailing about a month in advance before the water services are installed and we ask the homeowner to mark up where the well is, and septic system, and also to stake out the location and paint it. We have an inspector on the job and we put the water service where the homeowner would like it. It's flexible. Anywhere along their frontage, we can accommodate them.

Unidentified Male Speaker - Is it possible for the homeowner to connect the service themselves? Or does that have to be done by a licensed plumber?

Mr. Kulacz stated, as long as you meet the - people have done it on their own – the water company wants to make sure you have four feet of cover over the service line and you have to put the necessary meter setting in your basement. You can dig the trench yourself, you may have to get a licensed plumber to make it totally legal, but there is nothing to prevent you from renting a backhoe and doing the work. You won't need a permit from our office, you may need a permit from the building department. I can't speak for the building official. The water meter will be inside the house and there is an external, digital read that the water company can read from the outside. They don't have to enter your home.

Joan Delaney, 5 Brookwood Lane

I'm really happy with my water supply, so this sort of puts me in a funny spot. I want to know – you said that, at that cost, if you connected with 10 years, it would still be that cost, is that right?

Alderman Anglace replied yes, that's right.

Mrs. Delaney stated, supposing I decide not to do this, and want to sell my home, say, in four or five years. What will happen as far as the water goes – does someone else have to pay for this?

Alderman Anglace stated, the same rights you have they would have. They would have the balance of the 10-year period to decide whether or not they wanted to hook up. If they hooked up, they'd be subject to the cost that everybody else is paying, plus the interest for the period that they have to pay it, which would be 10 years.

Mrs. Delaney stated, I was just concerned that if I sold the home, is someone going to have to do this – but they don't have to, if they don't want to.

Alderman Anglace stated, no, nobody has to, unless, if we decide, if you're on Brookwood and the majority says, you, whether you hook up or not, you are going to pay the 10 years. If you sell the house after five years, whoever buys the house picks up your payments.

Alderman Anglace stated, you didn't say yes or no.

Mrs. Delaney stated, no.

Kevin Gannon, 23 Alice Court

I have a couple of questions. My first question is, were most of the people on Brookwood Lane complaining about the quality of water or the quantity of water that arose the need for City water?

Mr. Kulacz stated, the residents are going to have to answer that – I really have no idea – I never asked.

Mr. Gannon stated, I'm really not sure if I'm for it. I understand everybody's concerns since I'm the only house on Alice Court – there is a big financial difference if I decide to do it or not. My first question is, you're just going to poll the residents of Brookwood Lane, and then if they decide that they want to do it, then you go to Douglas and Alice and we decide if we want to participate or not?

I guess I'm under the impression that if it did go through Brookwood, I would consider it. I did talk to my real estate agent, and they told me that out of the \$10,000 I would probably see about \$5,000 back on the value of my house, so that's a consideration. But I have no problem with my well water. I would probably consider just hooking it up and probably not using it until I had a problem with my well. I guess my main question is, being the only house, is there a cheaper way to keep the price down for everybody else, not putting a main line down my street just for my one house.

Mr. Kulacz stated, we did discuss that the other possibility is to install a long water service – we would extend a water service line from the water main on Brookwood about 10 feet up Alice Court, and that would terminate in the curb box. The City would then have our contractor put the inch and a quarter service line up to the cul-de-sac. I don't know what that cost would be, we don't have unit prices on such a long run and a price to include the water service. If that was done, it would be significantly less than putting in 245 feet of water main. However the homeowner would be responsible for maintaining that water service line, not only from the house to the cul-de-sac on Alice Court, but down the edge of the road on Alice Court to Brookwood Lane. That's roughly almost a \$400 run. The homeowner would be responsible for that entire run, and I don't know if a homeowner wants to assume that type of liability. The other issue would be, if somebody did excavate on Alice Court, the record is not there, but for the Call Before You Dig at the water company, and nobody would mark that out, so there is a possibility that it could have been excavated or damaged by somebody in the future. There is a possibility to look at it. If there is a real interest in

pursuing that issue I can try to get some cost estimates from our contractors, and then make an adjustment to the cost estimate. The homeowner would have to understand that he would be totally responsible for maintaining that line, all the way down to 10 feet off of Brookwood Lane.

Mr. Gannon stated, it's probably one of those things that if the residents of Brookwood, if it actually ended up happening, I'd probably take advantage of it, but I wouldn't cry if I didn't get it.

Alderman Anglace asked, put you down for a no? The reason you are so critical is because you're the only one on number 23 and that will determine for us whether we go down Alice Court or not. So if you say no, we won't. It's that simple.

Mr. Gannon stated, I guess I don't know. I would probably want to talk to my neighbors too, even though they're not on Alice Court, they are.

Alderman Anglace stated, let's see what decision is made with respect to Brookwood Lane, because you won't have to make a decision if they say no. You've got a little more time to think about it, but if the decision is made to go down Brookwood Lane, then you should immediately get in touch with the City Engineer and let him know what you'd like to do, because you're the only one.

Mr. Gannon stated, I would probably take advantage of it at that point.

Alderman Anglace stated, we will put you down as undecided. Is anybody else here from Brookwood Lane? We need a lot more information from Brookwood Lane. If we don't get it, to be quite honest with you, I think we would have to poll everybody by mail and then the City Engineer will have to get back to us.

Mr. Kulacz stated, I just wanted to interject, the clerk brought over some information. Her water bill ranges from \$72 to \$79 a quarter for a three person household. Those are typical. I've heard a family of four is basically going to run \$90 to \$100 – depending upon how you use the water.

Alderman Anglace stated, I've got two yeses on Brookwood Lane, four no's, and seven not heard from. It adds up to 13. We're going to have to do a poll.

Alderman Finn stated, there are five no's on Brookwood – 26, 10 ...

TAPE TWO

...you haven't heard from six residents, so you would have to poll.

Alderman Anglace stated, if everybody else voted yes, it could conceivably be eight to five, and that's a tough decision. Bob, would you do a poll and get back to us? If nobody else has anything to add to this, we'll do the poll and the City Engineer will get back to us. We'll communicate with you by mail as to what the final result was and what it looks like. Thank you very much.

Alderman Finn MOVED to close the public hearing; SECONDED by Alderman Kudej. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Regan
Clerk
Board of Aldermen

Date Submitted: _____

DATE APPROVED: _____

BY: _____

Mark A. Lauretti
Mayor, City of Shelton