

## ***TOWN HALL MEETING***

### **Between Kingsvale Water Company and Town of Ulster Residents (Whittier & Deer Run Neighborhoods)**

Thursday, June 1, 2017

6:30 PM

#### **ROLL CALL BY CLERK, Suzanne Reavy:**

TOWN COUNCILMAN JOEL B. BRINK - *EXCUSED*

TOWN COUNCILMAN ERIC KITCHEN

TOWN COUNCILMAN JOHN MORROW

TOWN COUNCILMAN ROCCO SECRETO

SUPERVISOR JAMES E. QUIGLEY 3<sup>rd</sup>

#### **ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

1. Town Attorney, Jason Kovacs
2. Highway Superintendent, Frank Petramale
3. Town Assessor, James Maloney
4. Water Dept Superintendent, John Rose
5. 37 Town Residents
6. New York American Water Manager Field Operations, Ben J.M. Claase, P.E.  
(Contact information: 60 Brooklyn Ave., Merrick, NY 11566, 516.632.2217)
7. Kathy Keyser, Constituent Services Manager, Office of Assemblyman Cahill

#### **Supervisor:**

**BACKGROUND:** A resident of Whittier, Chris Karabatsos, has been before the Board with pictures and complaints. Supervisor communicated with Carmen Tierno, President New York American Water to hold this meeting between water company and neighborhood residents.

Ben Claase has offered that if this meeting is insufficient, he will come back again before the residents.

**1. Ben Claase (BC):**

Thirteen years with American Water; runs 14 Hudson Valley districts. Began in this position April 1.

Brought map. There are nine wells on site; six in service and three are not sufficient for public needs & are out of service.

New system improvements to be made. Installation of emergency generator (already done). Replacing two 30,000-gallon buried tanks (vintage 1960s) and booster pump system. Tank systems cause of current headache with water quality. Will install, with permits, two new buried tanks . Adding automatic transfer switch with generator. In spring (because of result of water breaks) working on scheduling 2500 linear feet of 12” cast iron water main.

Did review number of contacts and complaints. 10 water quality complaints from 2016. Five this year. (range from inquiries, illness, water discoloration, taste and odor).

Before the meeting, list of questions/concerns: water main break on Kukuk Lane; water discoloration; bottled water use; cloudy water; water orange tinge.

Brought guidelines. Water quality monitored. Results submitted to Health Dept. Cannot run a system that is in violation. Was told that last year they did not do a system flush in the spring due to drought issues. This year he stood next to the operator as the spring system flush was performed. Made sure flush was done to prevent sediment from entering homes.

**2. Ron Chambers, 309 Cascade Drive:**

Neighbor of Chris Karabatsos, who brought the tainted water problem to his attention. Chambers used to be an athlete (boxing/softball). Since living in Whittier 13 years has had nodules in lungs. Wife has brain tumor. Son was sick. Only thing changed in their lives was the water. Please Town, step up and give us water we deserve. East Kingston got it. Brought sample of today’s water in mason jar. Regardless of tanks, still have junk.

**3. Dolores Tishenkel, 21 Jumping Brook Lane:**

Lived there since 1978 and drinks bottled water shortly after. Terrible. Brown water. Has water filtration system and change filter after 2 months. Questions for BC: 1. How long have they had the company? 2. What is the water source? 3. Is there money set aside for capital improvements?

*BC:* Took over from NY Water Service four years ago (part of which was Kingsvale). Evaluate system; put in emergency generator; booster pump and tanks, water main on the drawing board. Makes sure not to skip years of flushing.

*Chambers:* Only flushed three times that I've seen.

*BC:* Wanted to see with his own eyes this year. We will continue to remove what is in the bottom of the pipes.

*Supervisor:* One last question, the source and whether you paid for the water.

*BC:* There are 9 wells. Three have contaminants will not be used. Six wells obtain water from well water. Unsure of depth. As we plan to put in new tanks, we have to anticipate growth. Size equipment and not hamper current customers.

*Supervisor:* Regarding the development, four years ago, the Town Planning Board approved a condominium project. The owner did not pay taxes, County foreclosed. The new owner has not approached the Town on any plans for property. Kingsvale should anticipate a possible project.

4. **Craig Goldstein, 17 Alder Court:**

Water was brown this morning. He called. Told to run until clear. Each time he runs he is paying for water he cannot use.

Last month water main break Kukuk Ln. Day after repair again no water. Called. Told they will someone out to check. Found out himself that the company was doing scheduled repairs up the street. If scheduling an outage, customers should be made aware. Not good service. Not good water.

5. **Chuck Phillips, 43 Indian Springs:**

Resident and fire fighter. Hydrants are not efficient for fire fighting. Also, clothes turn yellow. What are you going to do for upgrades for fire fighting?

*BC:* As we design new tank sytem, will turn into fire rated system after evaluation of system. [Requests contact information].

*Phillips:* Refers to when Don Glass owned company.

BC: Spring flush allowed to test to boost pressure. Hoping to work with Town Board to get approval for larger sized tanks – turn into fire-rated system. Now, hydrants are not spaced properly. System not designed for fire flow. If hydrants need to be upgraded, they will certainly do that.

*Phillips:* How long will upgrade take? People think that with hydrants outside of their house they are safe.

6. **Lorraine Goldstein, 17 Alder Court:**

When are you going to do this? We don't have an alternative. What is our alternative? How many gallons do we have to lug every week?

BC: Nine wells. Six wells are used and spread across property. DEC puts wells into rigorous approval test. Capacity, water quality, pump test, treatment needed, spacing, not under influence of each other. Now chlorination and phosphates treatment – minimal treatment. With upgrade, will see if any further treatment is needed. Meeting with engineering firm next week (Wednesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>). Budgetary estimates. Financial approval. Try to make something happen by this fall. Will move it as quick as can.

*Goldstein:* can you test water for us weekly?

BC: Will take that back to company and have water quality reach out to you. We have a technique called “bump & flush”. Material and sediment build up. We shut off water supply in house, quickly open and close, and create shock wave.

*Goldstein:* How often is the bump & flush done?

BC: Upon request.

7. **Lois Smith, 10 Alder Court:**

7/1/16 purchased home. Relative worked for UC Health Dept. Had water with floating sediment; tested at health dept. Purchased 5-gallon jugs of water. Unit nextdoor had flooded. REO Property also confirmed water is not off. 5/3/17 fell in house due to water accumulation; broke femur and pelvis. 14 Alder Ct is zombie property. Complained about mold.

*Supervisor:* have you talked to Kathy? You have names of REO ?

*Smith:* Yes, she's been there.

*Supervisor:* Letter from UC Health Dept saying water is fine.

*Chambers:* What was found in your water?

*Smith:* Excessive chlorine. Different levels appear at different times of the day. Prior owner and neighbor passed away from cancer, also two other neighbors.

*Supervisor:* All residents with health concerns, encouraged to call Assemblyman Cahill's Office to leave name, telephone #, so they can get a list together.

*Smith:* Why can't Town of Ulster take precedence and take over water?

*Supervisor:* This is privately owned water co and has been. Town took over Whittier Sewer when owner went bankrupt. When residents came to the Town, he wrote letter to Mr. Tierno, President, NY American Water. Stated that Town of Ulster wants to discuss purchasing water company, never received a response. That would be a negotiation. Unsure of cost. Finance through municipal funding all of the improvements. Done that in other districts. Expensive, but not as expensive as your health care. Prior to Ben's association with company, talked about interconnecting. Would require company buying water from the Town of Ulster at rates Ulster sets.

Leaves question with Ben – letter he initially sent has not been responding to. Asks again.

*BC:* Has that noted and will follow up with Carmen Tierno and make sure Supervisor gets a response.

*Chambers:* Are you willing to give credit back for water we run continuous to get good water?

*BC:* Will take that question back. You have most direct channels talking to me.

**8. Margarete Fish, 64 Deer Run Rd:**

Where are the wells in relation to Deer Run and Whittier?

*BC:* [opens map] references pump station and wells. Number of wells on map not in use. May be from attempted wells not deep enough. Annual water quality report just came out. We need to look at where you live – what is in the main vs what is in your house.

*Chambers:* Are your others sites complaining as much as we are?

*BC:* 1960s system. This system needs attention. We can make these investments.

*Fish:* Where are water samples taken from? What is potable? Drinkable and healthy, or can you wash your clothes in it? Lot of babies in the neighborhood – formula.

*BC:* Water samples are taken from the source.

*Chambers:* Asks BC to drink his water sample.

*Supervisor:* Remain civil.

9. **Nancy Slauson, 15 Beech Court:**

Purchased a humidifier – steam vapor. Set machine up before bed. In the morning all over living room was white powdered dust. Could touch and gather in her hands. Is it limestone? Makes water cloudy. What is that? Filled dog bowl with cloudy water then dumped it out.

Sidenote: People in neighborhood with esophageal cancer.

*Tischenkel:* In 1978, husband had white residue around mouth after drinking water.

10. **Craig Goldstein:**

Any complaints of sulfur, particularly early in the morning?

*BC:* Most recent complaint did mention sulfur. Comes from the source we will have to take a look at that. We have to meet the standards.

11. **Claudia Felice, 34 Jumping Brook Lane:**

Shows bathwater. Has to fill three times before it runs clear. Head itches when washes hair.

In 2008, house caught fire. Total loss. Fire department stated could not use hydrants.

Should figure out what health problems are – take a survey.

*Supervisor:* Stresses -- do your own inventories. Contact Assemblyman Cahill's office. Give your information so that it can be analyzed.

12. **Jason Folscher, 41 Meadowbrook:**

Why are we paying for something we can't use? Has to spend \$100/month on water because he cannot use water in his house. Can we get reimbursed?

**13. Kathy Keyser, Constituent Services Manager, Assemblyman Cahill's Office:**

Has been in touch with Supervisor Quigley about this issue. Phone number in office is 845-338-9610, ask for her. There five days per week.

*Supervisor:* Can you give me an idea when it would be appropriate to reconvene with residents?

*BC:* can meet with residents again if needed. Will take this information back. Will fast track this, get a dollar amount on it. Does not want to commit to something.

*Supervisor:* Advises to contact him next week to give a briefing; if he is in the area stop by. When we set a date for another meeting, we will let everyone know either by phone call or mailing.

► *Councilman Kitchen:* Question posed earlier that wasn't answered. Are you setting aside any money for capital improvements?

*BC:* We have robust capital budget. We cover many districts. Estimates for improvements will run close to \$500,000 or more. I will find out more and share. We do have money set aside.

*Councilman Kitchen:* People tonight have made a good case.

*Councilman Secreto:* I'd like to see big improvements. If not the Town Board will have to go down their road and take it over. Reminds residents that the cost goes back to residents.

*Chambers:* Is it worth the life?

*Secreto:* No, no. I'm with you all on this. Knows what it is like.

*Councilman Morrow:* Question about "bump & flush". Is that something that would help each of these houses?

*BC:* If large # of people that request this, we will put a list together and try to coordinate this. No cost to homeowner. Do this after the spring flush. People do not realize that hot water heaters should be flushed periodically.

*Supervisor:* Town runs sewer in this water district. Reports based upon sewage usage. Hopes that company reports leaks to customers. Has heard that this is not happening.

*BC:* Technology is finally there. Trying to be proactive. Trying to get it implemented in this area.

**14. Margarete Fish:**

Should our insurance companies be aware that our neighborhoods are not capable of fire fighting?

*Supervisor:* There is national rating manual put out by ISO (Insurance Service Office); inspects Town of Ulster fire districts every five years (records; pressure tests; fire flow; and fire companies). Published information and insurance companies use data to set fire insurance rates. Town of Ulster is rated a 3/10. Sections of Town without water are rated "5".

Personnel should have been trained and should not hook up to the hydrants. Plan filed with 911 Center. East Kingston should have a package plan with other departments with tankers.

***ISO - Insurance Service Office - This is a, for profit, organization that provides statistical information on risk. For many years the "ISO Rating" had a large impact on most fire departments. The ISO (PPC) rating is from 10 - 1. With "1" being the best.***

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*Supervisor:*

Town committed to this issue. Try to get answers within next week. Follow up in the next week. Thank you.

CLOSE OF MEETING: 7:36 pm

Respectfully Submitted,  
Suzanne Reavy, Town Clerk