



## *Office of the Onondaga County Legislature*

Court House, Room 407  
401 Montgomery Street  
Syracuse, New York 13202  
(315) 435-2070 Fax: (315) 435-8434  
[www.ongov.net](http://www.ongov.net)

**DEBORAH L. MATURO**  
Clerk

**DALE A. SWEETLAND**  
Chairman

**JOHANNA H. ROBB**  
Deputy Clerk

**PUBLIC HEARING IN CONNECTION WITH PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE  
REHABILITATION/REPLACEMENT OF COMBINED AND SANITARY TRUNK SEWERS FOR  
THE ONONDAGA COUNTY SANITARY DISTRICT  
May 1, 2007 - 2:10 P.M.**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Legislators Lesniak, Kraft, Meyer, Farrell, Rapp, Rhinehart, DiBlasi, Corbett, Kilmartin, Warner, Jordan, Kinne, Ryan, Chaplin, Winslow, Mr. Chairman**

Chairman Sweetland called the public hearing to order at 2:11 p.m.

The Clerk read the notice of public hearing. Chairman Sweetland called for speakers.

**Martha Butcher, 106 Floradale Road, Liverpool** – Lives on the Bloody Brook trunk line sewer. She has lived there for about 14 years. I that time they have had approximately 8 cases of sewage backup. It is actual raw sewage coming into their home. It does not always happen when it rains. The most recent episode was last July--28" of sewage came into their home. They had assumed that after roughly 4 years of no backups in their basement, that it was again safe to store belongings there. She lost 30 years of handmade Christmas ornaments, pictures, and personal items from friend, co-workers and family. She has been told that it is not the town's responsibility. She said that it is not her responsibility to take care of the sewage in her neighborhood. She is paying for it through her taxes, which goes to the County. She was recently advised that the County is responsible for sewage treatment, maintenance, and flow in her neighborhood. She asked the Legislature to put the Bloody Brook Trunk Sewer at the top of the list now. Something needs to be done. She knows of at least 4 engineering studies that have been done since 1966. She does not have any suggestions. Her plumber told her that she can't put in a sump pump; it is inadvisable for her to put in a check valve. As of this past January, she no longer has any coverage under her homeowner's policy; has had to use her retirement account to pay for some repairs. She was out of her home for a week because they had no electricity or hot water. NIMO would not come to her home until after it was inspected. She had to wait for a plumber and electrician because they were all busy. She has a home that she can't sell because NYS Law requires that she tell anyone that looks at the property that she has had numerous episodes of sewage backup. The property is now valueless. She and her husband do not want to live there. She asking for help in fixing this problem that they cannot do on their own, nor should they be expected to when they already have paid to have it taken care of by this legislature.

**Joan Middleton, 108 Floradale Road, Liverpool** – does not live in a 3<sup>rd</sup> world country, but forced to live like they do. She is a 40 year resident of this address. Bloody Brook Sewer Trunk is directly connected to the drain in the floor of her basement. Research shows that this problem began in 1966. She moved into her home in 1967 and received several feet of sewage in 1968. She and/or her neighbors have received sewer backups in 1974, 1994, 1996, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006. She has documented this by visiting her neighbors. It has caused significant damage to the property and health problems. They can no longer afford to maintain their homes, as they would like because they have been told that due to the stigma of this many

backups, the home is no longer saleable. It cannot be put on the market without full disclosure, and it cannot be sold for the full evaluation of the home. She and her husband are retired; 2 years ago they chose to stay in Onondaga County because her grandchildren live here. Her grandchildren no longer visit her home. When sewage dries in a basement, it becomes powdery aerosolizes, and it runs through the house from the air conditioner. It took 3 sanitations of the basement, after disposing of everything, and being told it was safe to use basement, she did. She lost her home office, sewing room, laundry room and contents from her mother's estate. It is all gone. She did not get an answer on how to clean the basement. She spoke to physicians, and she has developed asthma. Her doctor told her that being exposed to untreated sewage is extremely dangerous and could be life threatening. The last time that it happened, it was the weekend and she got on the Internet and left an email for the CDC. She didn't hear back until Monday, when she received a phone call and was told how serious this was. They immediately called their insurance company. She now questions if her home is a safe place to live. Her children were raised in that home and now doesn't know if it was a safe place to do that.

They are not on the list for rehabilitation and replacement. She questions why not. It has been 40 years. She understands that there is a problem with capacity; it is a 50-year old trunk sewer with cracks. In November there were no cracks. If it can't handle capacity, maybe it is time to replace. She has request a permit to put in a septic system; which was denied. According to EPA, SSOs and EFOs are put in for a purpose. When it becomes an issue of sewage in her house or sewage in the lake, you must chose to not put it in her home. There have been 40 years of studies and meetings. People have been ill, humiliated and demeaned. She had placed trust and assumed that everyone did their job. After July, she no longer takes anything for granted. No one is concerned about sewage in her house. If it means that there is no solution but to take those homes out of that community, then perhaps it is time to get rid of the homes. She built her home, and prefers that it not be the answer, but perhaps it should be. She stressed that this needs to be taken care of now.

**DAVID STOTT, Town of Salina-2<sup>nd</sup> Ward Councilman** – She represents the two women that just spoke, and has been meeting with them since last July. They went through process and understood the authorities would be looking into the issue. In talking with Joan Middleton, he has learned a lot about sanitary sewers--600 phone calls were logged to different agencies in county, state and federal governments. This is human issue; it's not about sewers. As representative, we represent/protect the people. He referred to illnesses that raw sewage can be attributed to. It has been mentioned that this be moved forward on the priority list; however it is not even on the list now. After about 8 meetings, the Board in the Town of Salina is been fed up. He asked the board to support a resolution (copy on file). It asks for the county's support. The engineering firm had come up with conclusions, and at that end of the study it basically says that it needs to be studied more. It doesn't makes sense. This is not something new, it is something that has happened several times in the last 4 decades. He understands that there is a \$10 million surplus as a result of sales tax and there are rumors about putting it into the zoo. This is more important. The town is talking about the possibility that if the County Legislature doesn't act, going through a significant task of fixing it themselves. He doesn't even know if legally they can do it. There are in excess of 20 homes affected, and urged the Co. Legislature to look at this. He said that there are problems in surrounding neighborhoods to Floradale also. He said that this is a responsibility of all legislators.

Chairman Sweetland asked for any additional speakers. Hearing none, he adjourned the public hearing at 2:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



DEBORAH L. MATURO, Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature