WATER SYSTEM UPGRADE

Questions & Answers

Last updated September 29, 2011

Send your questions to hmcmanager@herronisland.org

Project Contacts

Who is the contractor for the work, and can we contact them directly if we have a question?

The contractor will be selected via a competitive bid process, after the bid documents have been approved by the USDA and the HMC Board, on the advice of the HMC attorney and others. Bid documents are currently near completion (as of September 26).

Any questions should only be directed to the office, as questions directed to the contractor might distract them from their work and make it more difficult to manage the project. This will also give us the opportunity to share common questions (and answers) with other owners.

I'm getting some conflicting information. Someone said I'm getting two hookups, but I only need one. How do I make sure I just get the number I need?

If you want to confirm you are only getting the number of hookups you need, contact the Island Manager at HMCmanager@herronisland.org.

Whom do I contact to get some of the soil that will be excavated during the upgrade?

We'll put you on the "dirt list." Please email the HMC Island Manager at the address above, and if possible, state about how many yards of fill dirt you would like to have. Up to 40 cubic yards may be available to you before requiring that you obtain a county permit to fill.

Payment Plans

If an Owner elects to go with the 40-year financing payments, what happens if they sell the property? Would the full payment come due at the time of the sale?

No, full payment would not be due at the time of the sale. The debt "travels" with the property and continues to be paid via the water bill. In Tacoma, for example, you might purchase a property that was subject to a bond issue approved under previous ownership. You would then inherit that debt as part of your property tax payment. The same principle applies here.

Meters and Charges

Can I move the meter so it can be on my property?

Service meters may not be moved onto private property, but must stay in the HMC right of way in order for the work to be eligible for USDA funding, and for future ease of meter reading and maintenance. It's best to leave the meters in place, if possible. Double meters (next to one another) are less expensive to install than single service meters. Each location request will be considered, but the conditions attached to the USDA project and the physical conditions will be the final determinants.

Where will a metered water connection be installed on undeveloped lots with no prior water service?

According to Jester Purtteman, for undeveloped lots with no prior water service, the new water connections will be placed at corner locations off those lots and on the HMC right of way. There will be a capped-off connection point on the property owner's side of the metered service. This connection point can stay capped off until the owner is ready to use it; there would be no water usage charges for that connection until that point. However, there will be a base fee and reserve fee charged each month, since those charges are independent of water usage.

Will there be water charges for water service to undeveloped lots?

There will be no water usage charge for water service that has not been turned on; however, there will be a base fee and a reserve fee charged each month, since those charges are independent of water usage.

Backflow Preventers

What is a backflow preventer and how do I know if I need one?

According to the State Department of Health, "A cross-connection is any actual or potential physical connection between a drinking water system and any other non-potable substance (liquid, solid, or gas). Backflow occurs when water or other substances flow in the opposite direction than intended allowing contaminants to enter the public water system or consumer's plumbing. A backflow incident occurs when biological, chemical, or physical contaminants enter the drinking water supply (under backflow conditions) via unprotected cross-connections. Backflow incidents may cause injury, illness, or death."

Backflow prevention assemblies are mechanical devices installed on water service lines (or at plumbing fixtures) to prevent backflow of contaminants into drinking water through cross-connections. An example would be if you have a pool, hot tub, etc. on your property.

I see. It looks like I need to install a backflow preventer on my supply line then. Are there any types you recommend?

There are several approved devices out there, and any of them should work. Bill Bernier, our backflow preventer specialist, likes the Wilkins 950XLT and Wilkins 007, but any approved device should work. He recommends that everyone use the same type, to simplify future replacements and inspections. We will ask our project engineers for a recommendation.

Can we get a group order for backflow preventers and get a discount?

That is definitely a possibility. If you need one of those devices, let the office know and we can compile a list. It's possible we may be able to get a better price if we order more than one.

Miscellaneous Questions

Why aren't we undergrounding power along with the water project?

We are not planning on doing underground power with this project. Adding power to the trench requires an additional foot of excavation down, and an extra foot in width, which would drive up the project cost significantly. Further, Penlight indicated that they will not be re-coppering the island for a long time, so the conduit would be sitting underground degrading for several years (and probably decades) prior to being used. Given all these factors, we will not be expanding this project to include a "rewiring" of the island.