**Ashton Estates Homeowner’s Association UPDATE since HOA Spring meeting in May**

**as of September 3, 2015**

**Please read through all of the updates in order to understand that it is highly likely that the HOA DUES will increase again next year to a minimum of $1,000/year to allow for planning for future sewage treatment solutions and road repair/maintenance.**

**Ashton Sewage plant Update 9-3-2015**

In May 2015, the Ashton Estates HOA responded to WVDEP with our “Plan of Action”. We have received no response to date. Local inspectors are fine with our progress. (“Plan of Action letter is attached). The HOA Board has met at the sewage treatment plant to get a full description and explanation of repairs (met with plant engineer and the people who will fix the problem..

**Researched options to repair Surge Tank.**

The board decided to go with the basket system in the surge tank with FRP basket & screen and with Always Fixin’ to do the tank repairs & modifications. Sewage Treatment Plant Engineer = Kathy O’Brien; Always Fixin’ = Jeff Dalrymple and company

**Sewage Treatment Plant Surge Tank repairs:**

1. The FRP (fiberglass) baskets and screen have been received - $7,892.00

2. The hoist structure is on site and the concrete foundation has been poured this week. It will take a couple of weeks to cure

3. Always Fixin’ has procured the electric hoist, 12” shut off valve, new splitter box and steel to replace support rails & basket.

4. The Sewage Treatment Plant Engineer and Always Fixin’ have designed a plan to make the required repairs without using a long-time pump around (risky) but we are waiting on pricing for a short term pump around process from two vendors to allow the time for the installation of the 12” shut off valve.

5. The Sewage Treatment Plant Engineer and Always Fixin’ are getting pricing to have an 115 volt electric line run out to the hoist and a 20 amp breaker installed in the main control panel to a junction that the conduit ( ¾” PVC sch 80) will come to**. Volunteers are needed to a dig trench and install approximately 20’ of conduit with pull rope & two 90 degree long radius sweeps.** The hoist end of line will require a main shut off switch and a junction box that the electric hoist can be wired into. This structure will need supported by a post. Three Contractor vendors have been contacted to price pulling the wire and making all connections. **If you would like to volunteer to dig a trench, please contact me (Stacie Redelman) at 304-692-5171.**

6. The timing on the plan to install the 12’ shut off valve is planned for 9-19-15 but is dependent on the weather and the vendor to perform the short-term pump around. Also planned is the to remove the old beams and old bar screen near influent side and install the new beams to support grating, baskets and screen.

7. Once the new basket system is operational, the rest of the beams will be installed, and the old splitter box removed & the new one installed. All steel will be painted except where welding will be done. When the surge tank sludge is being pumped out, the rusty areas of the Surge tank will be scraped, sanded & cleaned. The cost to pump out the large amount of sludge in the surge tank is $2,500. Originally, the cleaning, painting, etc was going to be done from inside the tank but with the change in process, all work will be done from above to avoid a long pump around.

**Drainage work**

Always Fixin’ installed a drainage ditch along the bottom of the hill on the upper side of the sewage treatment plant to prevent the water coming off the hill causing excess water to the plant. They also re-sloped the road coming into the sewage treatment plant to prevent the water coming down the hill from going straight into the plant. The DEP also required a discharge sign be installed. Always Fixin’ installed the sign. Cost for drainage ditch and resloping of road $7500

**Other repairs to Sewage Treatment Plant**

The 1.0 Rotophase equipment (which converted single phase power to three phase power) stopped working the last week of July/first week of August which resulted in a burned up motor on Plant #1 b/m (blower/motor #2) closest to the discharge end. The Operator requested approval to perform $2,000 of work to repair and balance the old rotophase. After many conversations between the plant engineer, operator and external vendors, this request was denied because this repair would have continued to put a band-aid on the issue. The rotophase is very old and extremely old technology so I worked with The Plant Engineer to discuss the issue and come up with a plan quickly that aligned with the sewage plant plan to FIX the issue in the future. The decision was made to install four VFDs (Variable Frequency Drives) because it would be more economical to install VFDs rather than fix the rotophase in the long run. During the emergency situation, One VFD was borrowed and installed to get plant # 1 running, the other three were installed a few days later by August 17, 2015. A significant savings in power consumption should be seen as a result of the VFD’s. A surge protector was also installed to protect the VFDs. No surge protector was in place for the rotophase. Total cost $7,658.00

**Plant # 1**

The roto-phase failed which killed Motor on #2 blower/motor in August 2015.

The quotes to replace the Motor from Green Energy construction, LLC:

Hyundai 7.5 hp motor $530 with estimated 4 hour to install = $320. = $850

WW for $440 with estimated 4 hour to install = $320. = $760

B&M (current operator) quote WEG 7.5 HP motor installed $1,167.48 6-9-15

We can wait some on this replacement as plant is running on just one Blower/Motor unit (it has a new motor and a fairly new blower but should be replaced in 6 months).

**Motor on b/m #1**

B&M WEG 7.5 HP motor installed $1,167.48 on June 9, 2015

**Plant #2**

Contactor went bad in control panel cost $317.25 to repair on June 9, 2015.

**Control Building exhaust fan**. Stacie Redelman approved the installation of the building exhaust fan during the first week of July, 2015. The Plant Engineer sent an e-mail to B&M to get the exhaust fan installed immediately into the sewage plant building. As of the first week of August, the fan had not been installed. Stacie Redelman called operator during the rotophase repair request and followed up on fan. The estimated cost for the fan is $500.00 from B & M. The operator put a thermostat on the fan to kick on when the building is at a certain temperature. When we were down there for the HOS Officer’s meeting at the plant, the fan was set to 95 degrees. Always Fixin’ was there with us and reset the temperature to 75 degrees. Also, the fan isn’t receiving enough air to cool down the building properly so the plant engineer is getting a price on vents to cover hole in back wall and new vents on doors.

**Long Term Maintenance Program**

Plant Engineer has been working on an inventory of all sewage treatment plant equipment (Installation Date, years in service, serial numbers, model #, etc.) Kathy will need access to purchase records and repair records from current operator. She has requested this information from B&M.

**Plant Evaluation:**

The Plant Engineer received a price from Wilson Works for surge repairs and evaluations of the three plants. The evaluations were priced at $1,500 per plant after the HOA had plants completely pumped down & cleaned.

Richmorr gave the HOA a price to evaluate the entire plant system for $1,500 total. The HOA Officers approved Richmorr to come in and do a complete plant evaluation; they did the comprehensive on-site evaluation and we are waiting on the results.

B & M gave a list of recommended repairs, see attached report it is not dated.

**This will information when received and evaluated will help the HOA set up a long term maintenance program and tangible figures to budget for the sewage treatment plant program to keep the plant system running for years to come.**

Three-Phase Power – The sewage treatment plant is at maximum electrical capacity so an evaluation on the power possibilities/solutions is part of the long-term plan.

Three Phase power is available along route 73 but the power company will not bring it under the Interstate Bridge due to safety regulation with DOH. The Ashton HOA would have to procure a 40’ wide Right of Way (ROW) down to the plant. The best place would be adjacent to I-79 ROW. An underground line would be needed down to the access road for the conduit then it would go aerial. The rough cost to do this is $35,000 to $40,000 not counting the cost of procuring the right of way from the property owners along the 1-79 ROW. Four of the eight blower/motor units are already 3 phase power. Three phase power is more economical when running this type of facility but one needs to factor in the replacement of four single phase M/B units into that cost. The surge grinder pumps are single phase new three phase ones are less expensive to buy and run.

The plant is running near electrical capacity so no other big units can be added to the plant without another source of power. One contractor mentioned that there should be a separate pump-to-pump installed to each plant to keep the flow controlled but at this time, we can’t add more pumps. There is a possibility that another 200 amp single phase power drop could be made if we needed to run more equipment, that would be another metering point and may not be cost effective. This will continue to be evaluated by the plant engineer and plant experts for a future solution.

**Plant Operators**

The Board wanted to investigate the cost of other operator for the plant for cost and service comparison purposes. The Ashton Estates plant requires a Class 2 operator which excludes several local operators.

The current operator is B & M Environmental, Tim Bosley charges $2,600 per month and provides the chlorine tabs & de-chlorine tabs. We asked the average lbs of each used and were told the usage was two buckets per both of each type assuming he is using 27 lb buckets the cost would be approximately $540 per month. Any repairs are extra and the contract does not have an established rate of hourly pay for other work beyond general maintenance of the plant, required sampling and reporting. We have requested a cost for them to remove bagged debris since getting a dumpster is very cost prohibited. The contract states that the operator is to maintain the grounds inside the plant and 4’ around. The perimeter outside the fence is not being mowed or maintained.

Green Energy Contracting, LLC is interested in contracting to run the plant, they have made an offer to provide Basic maintenance at $2,800 per month, chlorine & dechlorine tabs would be extra and billed based on documented usage. Repairs beyond the normal scope of work would be billed at $75.00 per hour. Bagged debris would be removed as part of basic maintenance. Maintenance or parts requiring a cost over $50.00 would need Board approval. This firm would provide monthly reports to the Board and attend Board meeting if requested. The plant would be operated under Mark Mercers Class 2 license.

Richmorr has been asked to provide a basic rate to operate the plant. This firm is located in the Charleston, WV area and would need to hire a local operator to make this work but would provide support & equipment. We are waiting on rates & conditions from this firm.

It would not be cost effective to have either firm mowing grass or providing snow removal to access the plant.

A scope of work for Basic plant maintenance is being developed. A list of proper procedures will be established and followed when a problem occurs, including communication as to the repair and why it happened, establishment of hourly rate for work beyond basic maintenance, logging attendance and work performed details each time daily/weekly service is performed. This will be used as a comprehensive service model to modify the current contract or procure a new operator. The plan will be presented to the Board for consideration and plan of action.

**Landscaping update:**

The original estimates to remove the landscaping at both entrances was $3,000. Jeff Dalrymple rented and operated the equipment and Stacey Layton used his truck and trailor to haul them away and many many volunteers came out to sweep, help clean up the brush. The cost to the association was $400 to rent the equipment.

The original estimate for landscaping just for river rock was $14,000 from Greenblades (current mowing contractor). We received another quote from Mon River Landscaping out of Fairmont and it included plants and river rock around the entrances for $14000.

Jeff Dalyrmple and his wife donated their time and rented equipment at a significantly reduced rate to work on the south entrance during the second weekend of August. The third weekend of August, Jeff Dalrymple also rented equipment and working on Friday evening to prepare for Saturday. We had to run out to Lowe’s and get landscaping tarp, mulch, and mums. We had a great turnout of volunteers again to make the entrance look awesome. Jeff was able to get the river rock from a plant next to his work in Washington and had it delivered for both entrances around $4000.

The empty lot with the brush will be cleaned up in the very near future. We will be renting a brush chipper to clear the rest of the brush. I have taken 7 truckloads of brush to the park to burn and Stacey Layton has taken a truckload and it hasn’t made a dent. Stay tuned, more progress will be made.

The north entrance will be finished soon as well. I just need to get the timeframe from Jefff when we will be able to get more stone. I wlll get more landscaping tarp this week to cover the ground.

**Lights:**

Brian Weimer will replace the light in the entrances when I get new bulbs.

**Covenants:**

The current by-laws are attached for reference. These are out-of compliance with the State of West Virginia.

Steve Prunty as researched the status of the current by-laws and spent many hours in the tax office to learn about the current by-convenants and bylaws, etc.

Attached are the DRAFT BY-LAWS and covenants. We will have to have many iterations before it is approved. A letter from Steve Prunty will tell you how the by-laws and covenants will be approved. It will take our entire community to review, make comments, and approve.

**Drainage**

After years of discussion, the drainage issue at the upper section of Andrew Drive has been repaired. An additional drain was put in along side the road to repair the crushed pipe under the driveway.

The drainage pipe on the upper side of Jametown was exposed and not accumulating water as it was designed and allowed for water to drain over the road and into the yard/driveway of the house on the corner of Andrew and Jamestown. Mr. Dawson has requested that he be allowed to cover the rip rap rocks at the bottom of his yard at his own expense. The HOA Board approved him to be able to cover the drain with mesh material to plant grass. This shouldn’t impede the flow of water into the drain.

**ROADS:**

Always Fixin is developing a plan to repair the potholes within the development.

Round Bottom Road parsonage has received approval from Ashton Estates for a right of way for water/gas. As a result, the water company is going to work with us on the spigots at the entrances and the park. Thank you Cynthia Sparks!

**WEBSITE:**

Ashton Estates Website has been ran by Eric Sorton for many many years. THANK YOU Eric and thank you Shelly for all of your help and volunteerism over the years. Eric has stepped down and is working with William Hunt to transfer all of his knowledge and information. William has been researching website capability and services. He is estimating that a new interactive website will cost around $125-$150/year.

William would have had this up and running if it weren’t for me. I haven’t got back to him but we are scheduled to connect next week and look at the options. Stay tuned…. I think it is going to be great. THANK YOU William Hunt for volunteering to design and run our website.

**BUDGET**

I have attached the budget expenses through July 31, 2015. At this point in time, if we collect the approximately $23,000 in outstanding current dues and approximately $7,000 previous years outstanding dues, then we shouldn’t need to dip into the Ashton Estates HOA Savings/Road Assessment, etc. other accounts.

If you have outstanding dues and have not contacted Cynthia Sparks to make payment in full or payment arrangements, then you will have a letter attached along with these meeting minutes.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT THE HOA DUES WILL LIKELY GO UP AGAIN THIS YEAR TO APPROXIMATELY $1,000 PER YEAR TO SAVE FOR FUTURE REPAIRS TO THE ROADS AND SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT.

**I can’t thank you Jeff Dalrymple, Stacey Layton, Brian Weimer, Mike Kief, John Rogers, the Barry family and the many other numerous volunteers who were out in the rain or hot sun doing all they can to help our neighborhood. I could kick myself for not getting all of your names because your efforts are just as important and meaningful. You make me proud to live in Ashton and I truly appreciate your support and kindness.**

**If you have any questions about the notes, updates, covenants, by-laws, etc.**