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Options on sewer lateral replacement are biggest concern raised during public informational meeting

Belgium residents will find Main Street torn up this summer as new sanitary sewer and water lines are installed in the first phase of the street's reconstruction.

About 50 residents learned more about the project Tuesday evening as engineer Matt Greely explained the work that will take place from Lilac to LarAnn streets. Residents saw photographs of sewer lines on their properties and the amount of deterioration.

Residents will be able to follow the progress on McMahon Associates' website, which will have a link on the village's website and also on Twitter.

Those who sign up for Twitter alerts will be notified quickly of any issues, such as their driveway being blocked for a few hours, Greely said. Crews will also knock on doors or call people to notify them if that happens.

"Construction is a messy thing and can be a hassle. Open communication is important and Twitter is just one tool for communicating," Greely said. Anyone who signs up for the notification will be taught now to access it.

Property owners who have old clay pipes will have to replace the sanitary sewer laterals at their cost. The village requires all sewer lines to be made of PVC.

Public Works Director Dan Birenbaum said about 20 properties along Main Street have PVC laterals that will not have to be replaced unless they are leaking.

Greely estimated the cost would be $2,000 to $3,000 per house, but said a similar project on North Street averaged between $1,200 and $1,700 per homeowner.

The new PVC laterals for homes will be four inches in diameter. The clay sewer lines are six inches

There are several ways to install the laterals on private property, including pipe bursting, excavation and slip lining the old pipe with new pipe, Greely said.

"They all cost about the same, but excavation requires restoration (of the disturbed land)," Greely said. "Most choose pipe bursting or slip lines. We will help you make that decision."

While residents can hire their own contractor to do the work, most people choose to go with the village's contractor, he said. The contractor, engineer and public works employees will meet with the homeowner to evaluate their current system and estimate the cost of the job, Greely said.

Those meetings will be in April or May after the contractor is chosen.

Resident Judy Anzia asked how long the PVC pipes will last. Greely estimated 50 to 75 years. She also questioned if the four-inch pipe would work as well as the six-inch one.

Greely said houses need only a four-inch pipe and residents shouldn't notice a difference.

Ernie Wood, buildings and grounds superintendent for all Port Washington State Banks, including Belgium, asked if businesses should upgrade to six-inch diameter pipes. Greely said it depends on the business and how much water is used.

The work on private property will only take a few hours and residents will be notified ahead of time when it will occur.

Most village sewer lines, some installed more than 100 years ago, were made of clay that deteriorated and allowed groundwater to seep into the lines, taxing the village's wastewater treatment facility. Once the sewer lateral is replaced, the water that used to enter the line will have to go somewhere, and it could be basements, Greely said.

Bids for the project will be opened in March and the contract awarded by April.

"The contractor may put two crews on it and it will be done quickly, or there may be only one crew," Greely said.

To avoid interest charges, those who choose to go with the village contractor can pay in November or have the assessment placed on their 2012 tax bill. Property owners can also choose a five-year installment plan. They will be charged the same interest the village pays to borrow the money.