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Work on Fredonia Avenue will open the door for the village to require connection improvements

Village of Fredonia officials have been planning the reconstruction of Fredonia Avenue for years, but residents of that busy street are about to find out that the work will have a significant out-of-pocket impact for them.

The Village Board approved the wording last week of a letter from Director of Public Works Roger Strohm to property owners along Fredonia Avenue detailing how they will be responsible for lateral improvements when a new sanitary sewer is installed.

Strohm told trustees that it is likely to cost about $2,500 for a property owner to replace the lateral that connects to the new sewer line.

All of the new laterals will be made of PVC pipe, replacing clay or ductile steel lines that are decades old.

In addition to making the lateral connections compatible with the newer sewer line, lateral replacements are also being required in cases where there is evidence that the existing lines are flawed — allowing clear stormwater to enter the sanitary sewer lines.

That happens frequently when sump pumps are improperly connected to sanitary sewers.

“Part of these improvements includes reducing the amount of inflow and infiltration of clear water into the sanitary sewer system,” Strohm’s letter states.

“Inflow is considered to be sump pump discharges, roof drains, tiles, etc. Infiltration is considered to be groundwater seeping through joints or defects in the piping system.”

He said studies of village sewer lines and laterals suggests there is a significant amount of inflow and infiltration entering the sewer system through laterals.

The village is also working to reduce the amount of inflow into the main sewer by upgrading manholes and making other sewer repairs.

According to village policy, when problems are found with the laterals, the individual property owners are responsible for the repairs.

Detailed inspections are required of all laterals in conjunction with the Fredonia Avenue sewer replacement.

A specialized camera will be used to document the condition of the laterals. Access to the basement of homes will be required to complete the inspections, which will be done in October and November.

Copies of the sewer lateral videos will be available to property owners on request.

Officials are proposing three methods of payment for the lateral work, presuming it is done by a village-hired contractor and not a private plumber.

The options include payment in full prior to completing the work; special assessment on the property tax bill within the next tax cycle; and special assessment over the next five years.

Another option officials discussed last week was deferring the assessments until a property changes hands.

Village President Chuck Lapicola said he is interested in helping homeowners cope with the unexpected expense.

“I know we have a number of seniors living along Fredonia Avenue who are on fixed incomes and just getting by on $500 a month. They are already stretched to the point where they can’t afford their meds,” Lapicola said.

Anticipating a host of questions on the sewer project, village officials have scheduled an informational meeting at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 23.

The session will be at the Fredonia Government Center, 242 Fredonia Ave.