



# Down the Drain

An Informational Newsletter from the  
Hull Sewer Department  
1111 Nantasket Ave. Hull, MA 02045  
(781) 925 – 1207



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Hull Wastewater Treatment Facility

## **Sewer Plant Failure: A Year Later**

As most of the Town is now aware, we suffered a catastrophic failure at the wastewater treatment facility at the end of February 2013. The collection system was inundated by a heavy volume of rainfall in the month that caused a rapid melting of the several inches of snow dumped on the town by Blizzard Nemo. In itself, that would not have been enough to cause our problems since we have seen flows like this in the past. We also suffered a number of mechanical failures that caused the plant to flood and subsequently shut down.

Through unbelievable teamwork between virtually every Town Department and multiple State and Federal Agencies, we were able to get the treatment process up and running in under 3-days, a feat that was commended by the MA Department of Environmental Protection.

We have been running safely, properly and efficiently for the past several months and are in very good shape now. Thank you to all of the residents that dealt with all of the construction over the past year and for everyone's understanding with what we had gone through. It was a very trying time for everyone involved but as a close-knit community, we all pulled together and worked as a team to get through this. Thank you to all.

## **A Little About the Treatment Plant**

When people drive by the wastewater treatment plant, also called the Water Pollution Control Facility, some look over and some don't. What most people see is a cement structure with an upstairs surrounded by a fence, they don't know about the complexities of the building, grounds or what gets done here.

The building itself is actually two floors above ground and two floors below ground; the lowest level is 30-feet below the street level. There are countless health, worker and environmental hazards that are dealt with daily here. There is a machine shop, a full laboratory, conference room, kitchen facility, office space, storage areas, emergency power room, 5-bay service garage, an incinerator room, multiple control rooms with electrical equipment and computer operated systems and two separate pump rooms on the lowest level.

On the grounds, we have several structures for the actual treatment process including two Gravity Thickeners, two Primary Clarifiers, four Aeration Basins, two Secondary Clarifiers, a Chlorine Contact Tank as well as underground storage tanks for waste, fuel and chemicals, an underground submersible pump room and two separate underground pumping and piping galleries.

Below are two laboratory jars with water samples from the plant, before and after the treatment process is completed, this is what we do here!



## Reminders and Things To Know

### Flushable Wipes

As stated in previous bills and in a small article a few months ago in the Nantasket Times, “flushable” wipes continue to be a major problem in the municipal sewer system, both in Hull and around the globe. Although they may make it through your plumbing system in the house, they tend to slow down once in the street and collect other solids and waste until they create blockages. Once a blockage occurs in the street, the only way to find out is when someone tries to flush their toilet and it comes back out onto their bathroom floor because there is no place for the waste to go. PLEASE dispose of these wipes in your trash barrels, do not flush them down the toilet. Even if they say “flushable” on them, they do not break down as quickly as they need to in order to keep flowing through the system. We encounter virtually hundreds of blockages each year caused by these wipes as well as floss, feminine products and other items that can be and should be disposed of in the trash. Aside from human waste, toilet paper is the only acceptable item that should be flushed.

### Sump Pumps

Town By-Laws prohibit the discharge of sump pumps directly into the sewer system. This includes hard piping to the actual pipe as well as a hose going into basement sinks, etc. All non-sewer disposed water that enters the sewer system adds to the overall wear and tear on the system and treatment process. Please check your sump pit and follow the route that the discharge piping takes to insure that it dumps the flow into your yard or a pit of some sort. If the pipe leads directly to the sewer line leaving your house, we ask that you have it redirected immediately.

If you need help verifying where your sump pump discharges, please call this office and someone will come out and assist you.

### Sewer Blockages or Slow Drains?

If you are experiencing any type of a sewer back-up or even unusually slow drains, please contact this office immediately. **Do not call** a private plumber first, let us know what is going on and we will dispatch a crew to check the sewer line that runs in front of your house to make sure that the street is flowing properly.

If there is a problem in the street, the call to a plumber that you made may cost you money that you didn't need to spend. Once the street is inspected, someone will contact you to tell you the status of their findings and then advise you of what your next steps should be.

### Who Is the Permanent Sewer Commission?

The Permanent Sewer Commission is a group of dedicated Hull residents with a diverse knowledge base that volunteers countless hours each year. Their main focus as a Commission member is setting sewer policy and rates for our customer base. Through their individual backgrounds and acquired knowledge, the sewer collection system and treatment plant operates on a very even plain year after year. Feel free to thank these residents for their service if you see them on the street.

The Commission is:

John Struzziery, Chair  
Ed Babcock  
Lou Collins  
Jack Kelly  
Rick Matilla

### Contact the Sewer Department

The Sewer Department number is (781) 925-1207. This should be your first call for all sewer related questions, concerns or emergencies.

United Water is the private company that is under contract to operate and maintain the treatment plant, pumping stations and collection system. They have personnel on duty seven days a week. If you have a problem after hours or on a weekend, please call the on-call person at (339) 236-0249.