

THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COMMISSION

555 Main Street
Telephonic Only Meeting
Hartford, Connecticut 06103
Monday, May 4, 2020

Present: Commissioners Andrew Adil, John Avedisian, Avery Buell, William A. DiBella, Peter Gardow, Denise Hall, James Healy, Allen Hoffman, Jean Holloway, David Ionno, Gary LeBeau, Byron Lester, Maureen Magnan, Jacqueline Mandyck, Dominic M. Pane, Bhupen Patel, Jon Petoskey, Pasquale J. Salemi, Michael Solomonides, Raymond Sweezy, Alvin Taylor, Calixto Torres, and Richard W. Vicino (22)

Absent: Commissioner Daniel Camilliere, Donald Currey, Mary LaChance, Michael Maniscalco, Alphonse Marotta, and New Britain Special Representative Michael Carrier (6)

Also

Present: Scott W. Jellison, Chief Executive Officer
Christopher Stone, District Counsel
Steve Bonafonte, Assistant District Counsel
Carl R. Nasto, Assistant District Counsel
John S. Mirtle, District Clerk
Christopher Levesque, Chief Operating Officer
Kelly Shane, Chief Administrative Officer
Sue Negrelli, Director of Engineering
Tom Tyler, Director of Facilities
Nick Salemi, Communications Administrator
Jennifer Ottalagana, Senior Project Manager
Allen King, Real Estate Administrator
Carrie Blardo, Assistant to the Chief Operating Officer
Victoria S. Escoriza, Executive Assistant
David Silverstone, Independent Consumer Advocate

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by District Chairman DiBella at 5:31 PM

In accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order #7B, this meeting was telephonic only.

ROLL CALL AND QUORUM

The District Clerk called the roll and informed the Chairman that a quorum of the Commission was present telephonically, and the meeting was declared a legal meeting of the District Board of The Metropolitan District of Hartford County, Connecticut.

PUBLIC COMMENTS RELATIVE TO AGENDA ITEMS

No one from the public spoke.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On motion made by Commissioner LeBeau and duly seconded, the meeting minutes of April 6, 2020 were approved.

REPORT FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Scott Jellison delivered the Chief Executive Officer report.

REPORT FROM DISTRICT COUNSEL

Christopher R. Stone delivered the District Counsel report.

**594 ALBANY TURNPIKE (ROUTE 44), CANTON, CT
RESCISSION OF ENCROACHMENT APPROVAL**

To: District Board

May 4, 2020

From: Water Bureau

On March 7, 2016, upon approval and recommendation of the Water Bureau, The Metropolitan District Commission (the "Board"), approved a request by David and Jacqueline Mott (collectively, the "Owners"), who own a certain parcel of land known as 594 Albany Turnpike, Canton, Connecticut (the "Property"), to permanently encroach upon the Barkhamsted-Nepaug Pipeline Right-of-Way, containing an existing 48-inch RCP raw water transmission main (the "Main"), located across private lands (including the Property) south of Albany Turnpike in Canton, Connecticut (the "Right-of-Way") for the purpose of installing electric, telephone and cable lines and a new paved driveway to serve a proposed house on the Property (the "Initial Approval"). As part of this Initial Approval, the Board required that "a formal encroachment agreement shall be executed by the [O]wner[s] and [T]he Metropolitan District, consistent with current practice involving similar requests." On or about April 14, 2016, MDC staff prepared the encroachment agreement and sent the same to Owners for review and execution.

Notwithstanding the foregoing Initial Approval, Owners refused to execute the encroachment agreement, and instead proceeded, without any notice to the MDC or its staff, with construction of the single-family house on the Property in complete disregard of the safety and integrity of the Main. Such construction included the installation of a 1,000 gallon underground propane tank in a location abutting the southern edge of the Right-of-Way, which tank and its location were not disclosed by Owners either in their encroachment request to MDC or in the site plan or other

documents submitted by or on behalf of Owners in connection with such request. As a result of Owners' above actions, MDC brought an action against Owners in Hartford Superior Court, which included a claim for injunctive relief, and secured a court approved order that permitted a one-time encroachment in the Right-of-Way for the purpose of installing the aforementioned utilities and driveway subject to and in accordance with all the material provisions of the Initial Approval. This order also requires Owners to immediately remove the excavated soils that were stockpiled on the Right-of-Way, and to work with MDC in good faith to relocate the propane tank to a mutually acceptable location on the Property where it will not pose any threat or danger to the safety or integrity of the Main. Please note that this order only resolves the injunctive claim of the action brought by MDC against Owners, and the underlying lawsuit (i.e., a quiet title action) remains intact and is proceeding absent a final settlement. As a result of this order, on April 3, 2017, and upon the approval and recommendation of the Water Bureau, the Board modified its Initial Approval by expressly requiring that the fully executed encroachment agreement be recorded on the Canton Land Records (the "Supplemental Approval," and the Initial Approval together with the Supplemental Approval are hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Approval"). Despite this order and the Approval, Owners have steadfastly refused to relocate the propane tank or to sign the encroachment agreement containing modifications that are consistent with such order.

In light of the foregoing, Staff is recommending that the Board rescind its Approval.

At a meeting of the Water Bureau held on April 28, 2020, it was:

VOTED: That the Water Bureau recommends to the District Board passage of the following resolution:

RESOLVED: That the Board hereby rescinds its Approval, effective immediately.

Respectfully submitted,



John S. Mirtle, Esq.
District Clerk



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Hartford, Connecticut 06103
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Writer's Direct Dial
ELIZABETH M. SMITH
860-740-1358
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March 25, 2020

VIA E-MAIL TO: JMIRTLE@THEMDC.COM

John S. Mirtle, Esq.
Assistant District Counsel/District Clerk
The Metropolitan District Commission
555 Main Street
P.O. Box 800
Hartford, CT 06147

Re: Proposed March 25, 2020 Water Bureau Resolution, 894 Albany Turnpike, Canton, CT

Dear Mr. Mirtle:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated March 20, 2020, addressed to me as counsel for David and Jacqueline Mott (the "Property Owners") in the above-referenced matter. Before responding to your letter, please note that the contact information you have for me is incorrect. As of August 2019, I have been working at the firm of Ford Harrison LLP. My correct contact information is contained in this letterhead, and in the email transmitting this letter. Please also ensure that you copy my co-counsel, Joseph M. Mott, on all correspondence related to this matter.

We would also ask that you provide a copy of this letter and attachment to the Water Bureau for its consideration prior to any vote on the proposed resolution. As set forth more fully below, the Property Owners submit that the Water Bureau's proposed "rescission" of its prior authorization for the Property Owners to install underground utilities across the MDC's easement at 894 Albany Turnpike, Canton CT (the "Property") is improper and invalid for at least three reasons.

First, the resolution is the subject of pending court proceedings captioned MDC v. David B. Mott, et al., Docket No. HHD-CV17-6074833-8 (the "Action"). The principal issue in the Action is precisely the subject of the proposed resolution you sent, i.e., the right of the MDC to unilaterally force a written modification of the applicable easement agreement upon the Property Owners through the MDC's use of the self-styled "Encroachment Agreement." As such, any attempt to usurp an issue that is presently pending before the Superior Court exceeds the scope of the Water Bureau's and the MDC's authority and has no legal effect. The issue can only be resolved either by Court ruling or by a settlement agreement by the parties.

Second, the proposed rescission by the Water Bureau would constitute a breach of the Interim Settlement Agreement entered into between parties to the Action on February 16, 2017 (the "Agreement") (copy enclosed). Specifically, Paragraph 2 of the Agreement specified that "[t]he Mott Defendants and other Defendants may resume construction-related activities concerning the [Property] immediately, including excavation and the installation of the utility

John S. Mirre, Esq.
March 25, 2020

lines/conduits and a paved driveway ..." (Emphasis added.) The authorization to proceed with the installation was contingent upon certain criteria required by the MDC and outlined in subparagraphs 2(a)-2(c), all of which the Property Owners satisfied.¹ Further, the Agreement provided in Paragraph 3 that "[n]o Encroachment Agreement will be signed or required at this time and no recording will be made in the land records regarding any of the Improvements/Utilities located in the right-of-way at this time, but the Plaintiff reserves its right to seek that relief in the future." (Emphasis added.) Accordingly, the plain language of the Agreement indicates that any relief the Water Bureau/MDC should wish to pursue regarding the signing of an Encroachment Agreement must be done within the pending Action. The Water Bureau and the MDC are not at liberty to disregard the Court proceedings or the obligations agreed to under the Agreement. Additionally, it should be noted that the Agreement was entered as an Order of the Court, Berger, J. (Dkt. Entry 105.00), and any attempt by the Water Bureau/MDC to act contrary to that Order by retroactively "rescinding" their authorization of the installation of utilities would constitute contempt of that Order.

Third, the proposed rescission would be improper because the asserted basis for the resolution is not factually or legally correct, i.e., a purported "encroachment" on the MDC's "right-of-way."² The Court filings and the land records demonstrate that the MDC has mischaracterized the area as a "right-of-way," when in fact the MDC only has an easement across the Property. An easement is far different than a right-of-way under Connecticut property law and does not grant the MDC an ownership interest in the Property. Because the MDC has no ownership interest in the subject strip of land it has no legal authority to restrict or interfere with the underlying right of the Property Owners to use their land in accordance with the rights enjoyed by all similarly situated residential property owners, provided that the use does not unreasonably interfere with the rights of the MDC under the easement grant.

The MDC's continued efforts to interfere with the Property Owners' rights to enjoy their property is a violation of the limited use privilege it enjoys under the terms of the easement grant. In addition, providing a false and misleading narrative of the alleged "facts" as set forth in the draft resolution constitutes bad faith. Two notable examples of misrepresentations relied upon to support the Water Bureau's adoption of the draft resolution you provided are that (1) the Property Owners allegedly proceeded "with construction of the single-family house on the Property in complete disregard of the safety and integrity of the Main" and (2) the Property Owners allegedly failed to work with MDC in good faith to relocate the propane tank to a mutually acceptable location on the Property where it will not pose any threat or danger to the safety or integrity of the [water main].³ Neither statement is supported by the facts.

The "complete disregard" comment in the draft resolution is refuted by several salient facts. First, when Property Owners advised the MDC that they were constructing their home and voluntarily provided information to the Water Bureau, the Water Bureau's staff concluded that: "Staff has reviewed the proposed construction plans and determined that there will be no negative impact on District property or infrastructure." See Minutes of the Water Bureau

¹ Indeed, MDC officials were present on the Property when the excavation for the propane tank occurred.

² The resolution also inaccurately states that the MDC is pursuing a "quiet title" action against the Property Owners. The MDC has no such claim pending; in fact, it is the Property Owners who have asserted a quiet title action in their counterclaim against the MDC.

John S. Mirie, Esq.
March 25, 2020

Special Meeting of March 7, 2016 (emphasis added). Second, the Property Owners subsequently fully complied with the requirements in Paragraph 2 of the Agreement, including having MDC Inspectors on site at all relevant times, at the Property Owners' sole cost and expense. The Water Bureau's own minutes and the Court record also directly contradict the draft resolution language referencing that the utility was "a one-time encroachment," and "topsoil excavation." In particular, the topsoil excavation was an express part of the Interim Settlement Agreement and its removal occurred at the end of the construction, as the parties agreed.

With regard to the relocation of the underground propane tank, the MDC has failed to cite to any legal authority that would allow the MDC to object to its location, which is outside of the area of the easement. In addition, it should be noted that the Agreement does not require that the propane tank be relocated. Instead, it merely required that the parties "discuss, in good faith, the potential relocation of the propane tank ... which is currently located outside of the [MDC's] right of way." Agreement, ¶ 5. Given that the propane tank is outside of the MDC's easement, any demand by the MDC that it be relocated would involve a taking of property, for which the MDC would need to provide just compensation under Connecticut eminent domain law.³ See, e.g., *Westchester v. Greenwich*, 227 Conn. 495, 503 (1993) (any "direct and immediate interference with the enjoyment and use of the land" of a property owner entitles the property owner to seek such compensation).

Moreover, the issue regarding the propane tank is controlled by the pending Court proceeding, and the Court's existing jurisdiction over this subject matter preempts the Water Bureau's proposed action to rescind the prior authorization. This is particularly so given that the basis for the proposed revocation action is premised upon the MDC's claim that the Property Owners allegedly breached the Agreement that was entered as an Order in the pending case. The MDC has no evidence to substantiate the assertion, and no such finding has been made by the Court.

Based on the foregoing, we would reiterate that any action by the Water Bureau/MDC to proceed with the proposed rescission as set forth in the draft resolution would be improper and a legal nullity. Proceeding further with the proposed action as outlined in the draft resolution would also constitute a breach of the Agreement and an act of bad faith by the Water Bureau and the MDC.

As always, the Property Owners remain open to discussions in an attempt to resolve these issues, but they should be addressed in the context of the pending lawsuit.

Finally, please be advised that I and the Motts intend to participate in the 4:00 p.m. telephonic meeting of the Water Bureau. Please ensure that the Bureau is provided with a copy of this correspondence prior to that meeting.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss the matter any further.

³ It also should be noted that the MDC has failed to produce any evidence to support its assertion that the current location of the propane tank "pose[s] a threat or danger to the safety or integrity of the Main."

John S. Mirle, Esq.
March 25, 2020

Very truly yours,

Elizabeth M. Smith

Elizabeth M. Smith

Enc.

Cc: Joseph M. Mott, Esq.
Carl R. Nasto, Esq.
Tony E. Jorgensen, Esq.



3. No Encroachment Agreement will be signed or required at this time and no recording will be made in the land records regarding any of the improvements/utilities located in the right-of-way, but the Plaintiff reserves its right to seek that relief in the future.

4. The mound of topsoil located on the easement area was placed in that location to limit vehicular traffic over the water main during construction and will be removed by the Mott Defendants ~~and the easement area returned to grade upon completion of construction~~ ^{restored per the terms of the original easement grant}

5. The Mott Defendants agree to discuss, in good faith, the potential relocation of the propane tank at the Plaintiff's sole cost and expense which is currently located outside of the Plaintiff's right-of-way but in close proximity to the pipeline. However, the relocation of the propane tank is subject to agreement of the Parties and approval by the local permitting authorities including, but not limited to, the Town of Canton and the Farmington Valley Health District and manufacturer recommendations regarding appropriate installation standards.

Agreed to this 16th day of February 2017.


Tony E. Jorgensen, Esq.
The Jorgensen Law Firm, LLC
Counsel for Plaintiff, The MDC


Joseph M. Mott, Esq., Pro Hac Vice

James R. Byrne, Esq.
Counsel for Defendants
David B. Mott and Jacqueline L. Mott

*Approved
Ranger
2/16/17*

On motion made by Commissioner Sweezy and duly seconded, the report was received and resolution adopted by unanimous vote of those present.

WATER SERVICE INSTALLATION PROGRAM

To: District Board

May 4, 2020

From: Water Bureau

At the November 18, 2019 Water Bureau meeting, the Bureau approved the Water Service Installation Program to facilitate property owners to repair or install a water service line to their property. The District Board approved the program at its December 16, 2019 meeting. Staff recommends the following modifications to the Water Service Installation program.

At a meeting of the Water Bureau held on April 28, 2020, it was:

VOTED: That the Water Bureau modifies the Water Service Installation Program, and recommends to the District Board approval of the following modified Program:

**THE METROPOLITAN DISTRICT'S
WATER SERVICE INSTALLATION PROGRAM**

Scenario	Water Service Type – Domestic**	Residential or Commercial Services 2” or less***	
		Public Portion (within ROW)	Private Property Portion
1	Existing Service Renewal	District installs at own cost	Property Owner is responsible for actual cost of contractor. District pays contractor and Property Owner repays District over time.
2	New Service Class 1 Water Main – Pay charges when connect	District installs public portion, cost to owner \$150 per foot* with option to roll into connection charges	Property Owner is responsible for actual cost of contractor. District pays contractor, up to a cap, and Property Owner repays District over time.
3	New Layout & Assessment Class 2 (private or community well) – Assessment due upon water main completion	District installs public portion, cost to owner \$150 per foot* with option to roll into assessment	Property Owner is responsible for actual cost of contractor. District pays contractor, up to a cap, and Property Owner repays District over time.

* Prevailing rate for a Water Service Installation Charge as established by Water Bureau

**No fire services to be included

*** Exceptions subject to approval by CEO or designee

Criteria of Water Service Installation Program:

- Residential/Commercial properties requiring a water service of 2" or less abutting an MDC water main. Exceptions to the service size or type would be subject to approval of the Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee.
- Renewals shall be installed for the full length of service pipe.
- Water services must be built to MDC standards.
- Limit of \$10,000 per property for water service installation/renewal for all work in public right-of-way and private property.
- Amount owed by property owner will be paid to District over fifteen or twenty years with same interest rate as water assessments (6%).
- Credit checks performed at District's discretion.
- Contracts and/or price quotes between the property owners and their contractors must be submitted to Utility Services for review to verify the appropriateness of the cost proposal. The District reserves the right to deny any price proposal. Any increase in price of construction must be approved by District in order for property owner to receive increase of District payment to contractor.
- Owner bound to terms of the written contract with Contractor.
- ~~District will issue a two-party check addressed to the property owner and the contractor. The property owner will be required to endorse the check over to the contractor as acceptance of completed work and to pay for the completed work.~~
- **The property owner will be required to provide written acceptance of the completed work in order for the District to issue payment to the Contractor. Failure by the property owner to provide written acceptance will not alleviate the property owner's responsibility to pay the Contractor for the completed work.**
- ~~A 10% down payment of the cost proposal shall be required from the property. The 10% down payment may be waived at the sole discretion of the Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee.~~
- **Property owner shall indemnify the District for all claims for damages arising out of the work performed at the property.**
- Property owner will repay the District by monthly payments as a separate line item on the water bill.
- Any deposit required by the contractor will be the sole responsibility of the property owner.
- No pre-payment penalties
- Funding to be established with a revolving fund from the Assessable Water Fund. \$250,000 per year for the first 5 years appropriated in fund, plus revenue from principle and interest payments, to establish a self-sustaining fund.

FURTHER

VOTED: That the Controller or Chief Administrative Officer be requested to make tentative allocations for this project pending passage by the District

Board, and payment for the same is authorized from the Assessable Water Fund.

Respectfully submitted,



John S. Mirtle, Esq.
District Clerk

On motion made by Commissioner Pane and duly seconded, the report was received and resolution adopted by unanimous vote of those present.

SEWER LATERAL INSTALLATION PROGRAM

To: District Board

May 4, 2020

From: Bureau of Public Works

At the November 25, 2019 Bureau of Public Works meeting, the Bureau approved the Sewer Lateral Installation Program to facilitate property owners to repair or install a sewer lateral to their property. The District Board approved the program at its December 16, 2019 meeting. Staff recommends the following modifications to the Sewer Lateral Installation program.

At a meeting of the Bureau of Public Works on April 28, 2020, it was:

VOTED: That the Bureau of Public Works modifies the Sewer Lateral Installation Program, and recommends to the District Board approval of the following modified Program:

Scenario	Sewer Type	New 6-inch Lateral*** in Public ROW	New 6-inch Lateral*** in Private Property	Lateral Renewal/Rehab**
1	New Sewer Main – Layout & Assessment	District installs as part of the project, cost to property owner \$4,420* plus frontage and dwelling unit assessment	Property owner responsible for actual cost. District pays contractor and property owner repays District over time	N/A

2	Existing Sewer Main with Existing lateral in ROW	District installed as part of the previous project, cost to property owner \$4,420* plus frontage and dwelling unit assessment	Property owner responsible for actual cost. District pays contractor and property owner repays District over time.	District responsible for public portion within the ROW.
3	Existing Sewer Main with no lateral	Property owner responsible for actual cost. District pays contractor and property owner repays District over time.	Property owner responsible for actual cost. District pays contractor and property owner repays District over time.	N/A
4	Existing Sewer Main with Existing lateral to be renewed			Property owner responsible for private property portion actual cost, District responsible for public portion within the ROW. District pays contractor and property owner repays District over time.

*\$4,420 – prevailing rate per lateral or inlet

** Renewals to include lining of lateral, include PPID work with prequalified contractors

***Subject to approval by CEO or designee

Criteria of Sewer Lateral Installation Program:

- Properties requiring a sanitary sewer lateral of 6” abutting an MDC sewer main. Exceptions to the lateral size or type would be subject to approval of the Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee.
- Renewals shall be installed for the full length of lateral pipe.
- Sewer laterals/renewals must be built to MDC standards by qualified, licensed, bonded and insured contractors.
- Limit of \$10,000 per property for sewer lateral installation/renewal for all work in public right-of-way and private property.

- Amount owed by property owner will be paid to District over fifteen or twenty years with same interest rate as sewer assessments (6%).
- Credit checks performed at District's discretion.
- Contracts and/or price quotes between the property owners and their contractors must be submitted to Utility Services for review to verify the appropriateness of the cost proposal. The District reserves the right to deny any price proposal. Any increase in price of construction must be approved by District in order for property owner to receive increase of District payment to contractor.
- Owner bound to terms of the written contract with Contractor.
- ~~District will issue a two-party check addressed to the property owner and the contractor. The property owner will be required to endorse the check over to the contractor as acceptance of completed work and to pay for the completed work.~~
- **The property owner will be required to provide written acceptance of the completed work in order for the District to issue payment to the Contractor. Failure by the property owner to provide written acceptance will not alleviate the property owner's responsibility to pay the Contractor for the completed work.**
- ~~A 10% down payment of the cost proposal shall be required from the property. The 10% down payment may be waived at the sole discretion of the Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee.~~
- **Property owner shall indemnify the District for all claims for damages arising out of the work performed at the property.**
- Property owner will repay the District by monthly payments as a separate line item on the water bill.
- Any deposit required by the contractor will be the sole responsibility of the property owner.
- No pre-payment penalties
- Funding to be established with a revolving fund from the Assessable Sewer Fund

AND

VOTED: That the Controller or Chief Administrative Officer be requested to make tentative allocations for this program pending passage by the District Board, and funding for the same is authorized from the Assessable Sewer Fund.

Respectfully submitted,



John S. Mirtle, Esq.
District Clerk

On motion made by Commissioner Patel and duly seconded, the report was received and resolution adopted by unanimous vote of those present.

**ACCEPTANCE OF SEWERS BUILT BY DEVELOPER'S
PERMIT-AGREEMENT**

To: District Board

May 4, 2020

From: Bureau of Public Works

The sewers outlined in the following resolution have been constructed under Developer's Permit-Agreement in accordance with the plans, specifications and standards of the District, and the Director of Engineering has certified to all of the foregoing.

At a meeting of the Bureau of Public Works held on April 28, 2020, and pursuant to Section S8g of the Sewer Ordinances re: "Acceptance of Developer's Sewers," it was:

Voted: That the Bureau of Public Works recommends to the District Board passage of the following resolution:

Resolved: That, in accordance with Section S8g of the District Ordinances, the following is incorporated into the sewer system of The Metropolitan District as of the date of passage of this resolution:

	<u>Sewers In</u>	<u>Built By</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
1	Davenport Road, West Hartford WVSWHF.09	Developer: RJ Contractors Contractor: RJ Contractors	January 7, 2019

Respectfully submitted,



John S. Mirtle, Esq.
District Clerk

On motion made by Commissioner Vicino and duly seconded, the report was received and resolution adopted by unanimous vote of those present.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 PM

ATTEST:

John S. Mirtle, Esq.
District Clerk

Date of Approval