

Engineering studies of poor Hyde Park water nearly done

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HYDE PARK – Engineers continue to study how to improve the service of six water districts and two sewer districts, but for some customers the only question is how quickly the poor water can be improved.

The town in early 2013 received six grants for \$175,500 through the New York Department of State 2012 Citizens Re-Organization and Empowerment Grant Program. The grants funded engineering studies of the Greenfields Water and Sewer District, Pinebrook Water and Sewer District and Violet Avenue, Greenbush, Arbors and Quaker Hills water districts. The studies focused on opportunities to streamline and improve service.

The studies are considering the option of transferring ownership and management of the districts to the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority. The county authority owns and operates the Hyde Park Regional Water System, which provides filtered Hudson River water to about 2,000 customers in the Route 9 corridor, hamlet of Staatsburg and Harbour Hills neighborhood.

Three of the water districts — Greenfields, Pinebrook and Quaker Hills — provide treated well water to customers. The other three are connected to the Poughkeepsies' Water Treatment Facility on the Hudson River in the City of Poughkeepsie.

Residents of the Greenbush district say they are unhappy with their water quality due to elevated levels of trihalomethanes. These chemicals are formed when chlorine used for disinfection reacts with trace elements of organic materials in the water.

Arthur Lauria, 53, of Yates Avenue said he has received notices from the town for over a year about the water quality.

"They are telling us not to drink the water, don't use it to cook and don't bathe in it," he said.

Lauria questions why a study is being done of the Greenbush district since town officials are well aware of the poor water quality.

"How much do they have to study?" he said. "They already tested the water. They know the results aren't good. So let's find another source for our water."

Lauria said he supports connecting to the county water system, especially since water mains are nearby on Saint Andrews Road.

David Tillou, 61, of Greenbush Avenue said he pays over \$900 a year for water he can't drink or use to cook.

"The bottom line is if I can't drink it, it's not doing me any good," he said. "What's the sense of having it?"

Tillou said he hopes the town's engineering studies provide "an answer" to the Greenbush water problems. But he is wary of connecting to the county water plant in Hyde Park if it's going to drive up his water bill.

"I don't know what the cost factor would be," he said. "I don't want to pay any more for water."

Public presentations are planned soon on the results of the studies, Hyde Park Supervisor Aileen Rohr said.

"The engineers did a detailed examination and analysis of the current condition of the districts," she said. "They came up with options or ways to improve the quality of the water and/or the physical condition of the plant and delivery system."

The town last year hired Tighe and Bond engineering firm to conduct the studies in conjunction with Clarke Engineering Services. The studies are about 95 percent done, Rohr said.

"We are very happy with the work they did," she said. "It was very extensive and thorough."

The engineers are estimating the cost of making the suggested improvements to each of the districts. Each option has an associated cost, Rohr said.

Once the final engineering reports are presented to the Town Board and public hearings are held, the board will decide how to proceed with each district, Rohr said.

"We will come up with a decision on whether to transfer the ownership of the districts to the water authority," she said.

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