



by Douglas H. Frazer

SEWERS

Part 2

Municipal line manhole cover



THE VILLAGE OF FOX POINT has always been responsible for its own municipal sewer lines. To pay for the cost, the Village has created a sewer utility, sets rates for this utility, and charges property owners fees based on those rates. This arrangement provides a dedicated and immediately adjustable source of revenue for sewer services.



The Department of Public Works, led by director Scott Brandmeier, is in charge of Village sewer matters and manages over 186,000 feet of sanitary sewer (mostly clay) pipe, with a diameter between 8-to-15 inches, laying eight-to-fifteen feet below the ground. The Village cleans each line every other year. Because of age, the condition of these pipes is less than average; indeed, a localized failure of the lines may occur from time to time.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Village sewer system is maintaining the infrastructure for conveying sewerage from the properties on Beach Drive up and over the bluff. The Village owns and maintains two lift stations (pumps) that lift (convey) sewage from the north sections of Beach Drive over rises in the terrain and finally to a Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District (MMSD) sewer line. This sewer line then conveys the sewage to a central pump that sits along the bottom of the bluff a few hundred yards to the south of where Beach Drive splits at the bottom. At the top of the bluff, the MMSD line continues down below Thorn and Coleman Lanes to Lake Drive, Bell Road, and the MMSD sewer lines that run along and underneath Santa Monica Boulevard.

Among local municipalities, Fox Point has been in the forefront of trying to identify the location of the infiltration and inflow of clear water into sewage system – a suspected contributor to overflow that causes sewage backup in basements and “blended” (clear water combined with untreated sewage) dumping into Lake Michigan. In fact, Fox Point may be the first municipality to have adopted an ordinance prohibiting property owners from installing or maintaining clear water connections (e.g., down spouts, drain tile, or sump crocks) into sanitary sewer pipes.

In addition, the Village has worked closely with MMSD on flood management issues. The results can be seen most clearly along the Indian Creek Parkway corridor.

MMSD runs interceptor lines within or near the village boundaries where the Village sewer lines connect. Residents can trace the various lines by the markings on the manholes. Municipal lines are accessed by manholes marked SEWER; MMSD lines are accessed by manholes marked MIS (which stands for Metropolitan Interceptor Sewer). Many of these lines typically consist of 60 inch diameter pipe buried approximately 45 feet underground.

In addition to the MMSD sewer line from Beach Drive, MMSD maintains interceptor lines along Seneca Road south of Brown Deer Road, and also along Indian Creek Parkway to Port Washington Road and south to Green Tree Road. In addition, a MMSD line runs from

North Santa Monica Boulevard along Bradley Road to the Port Washington Road line and south along Santa Monica Boulevard to Green Tree Road connecting to the Port Washington Road line to the west. A MMSD pumping station sits on Green Tree Road just west of Port Washington Road.

Two more interesting facts. First, under normal conditions, MMSD treats Village of Fox Point sewerage not at the closer Jones Island water reclamation facility, but rather at the South Shore water reclamation facility in Oak Creek (placed in service in 1968). It takes approximately thirteen hours for our sewage to reach the South Shore plant. During major rain events, MMSD has the ability to share flows between the two water reclamation facilities so when it rains hard, some of Fox Point’s sewage is treated at Jones Island. Second, the deep tunnel does not run under the village. The deep tunnel’s northern terminus is approximately Mill Road at 27th Street.

MMSD executive director Kevin Shafer is a long time Fox Point resident. Indeed, the Shafer children attended Stormonth Elementary School and Nicolet High School. It is Shafer, after consulting with the facility operators and staff at MMSD, who makes the decision concerning sewage overflows during severe weather events. Shafer is trained as a civil engineer. Before assuming the helm at MMSD, he served as their head of technical services.

Mike West, our Village president, is serving his second term as chair of the eleven-member MMSD Commission. (The Intergovernmental Cooperation Council, the appointing authority over four of the MMSD seats, placed West on the Commission in 2008.) Given that MMSD’s annual budget (operating and capital) is well over \$130,000,000, this is an important job.

In local water treatment management and innovation, Fox Point stands proudly at the fore.



Douglas H. Frazer is a trustee on the Fox Point Village Board. The views expressed are his own and not necessarily those of the Village, the Village Board, other Village Board members, or Best Version Media, LLC.