

## Patchogue wants homeowners with cesspools to pay \$650/ year to connect to village sewer

<https://www.newsday.com/long-island/towns/cesspools-sewer-nitrogen-hookups-fees-flooding-fmua5uya>



South Ocean Avenue resident Jennifer Musante said joining the sewer system likely would cost her family less money than pumping out her cesspool two or three times a year and improve water pressure inside her home. Credit: Newsday/Steve Pfost

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Updated September 19, 2022

Patchogue officials are asking more than 200 homeowners to flush their cesspools and connect their homes to the village sewer system.

The village plans to extend sewage treatment service to houses on South Ocean and Cedar avenues and nearby streets to stem persistent flooding and reduce harmful nitrogen releases from antiquated septic systems, Mayor Paul Pontieri told Newsday. The flooding threat was highlighted in 2012 when Superstorm Sandy left much of the village south of Main Street underwater for days.

“In heavy storms, they flood,” Pontieri said Wednesday. “We haven’t had any in the last two or three years, but when you talk about global warming, the expectation is that the next hurricane, you’re going to have problems.”

The village is hosting a meeting to discuss the plan at 7 p.m. Tuesday at Patchogue Theatre for the Performing Arts. The owners of 238 homes will be asked at the meeting to grant permission for workers to go on their properties and install the necessary equipment, Pontieri said. Hookups are expected to start in late October, he said.

Participants would pay \$650 annually to join the program, he said, adding that's less than what homeowners typically pay to pump out their cesspools.

The Patchogue River Watershed Sewer Project became possible because of a planned \$12 million expansion of the village's sewage treatment plant, and a \$22 million program to hook up additional homes to the system, Pontieri said. Both projects are almost completely funded by federal and state grants, the mayor said.

In addition to installing grinder pump units at homes, the village will make any necessary repairs at no additional expense to homeowners, village officials said.

"If they have a problem, they can call us and we're going to help," Pontieri said.

Andrew Roehrig, who owns a South Ocean Avenue house, told Newsday that sewer expansion is needed "because those homes have been devastated. ... Sandy was really bad over there; so bad that they knocked down some of the homes."

South Ocean Avenue resident Jennifer Musante said joining the sewer system likely would cost her family less money —she said she pays \$300 two or three times a year to pump out her cesspool —and improve water pressure inside her home.

"We have to space out who can take a shower or when to do the dishes," she said Thursday.

But Ron Boughey said he won't attend Tuesday's meeting and plans to continue using the three cesspools in the backyard of his home, also on South Ocean Avenue.

"You're dealing with plumbers coming in and I don't need that," Boughey told Newsday on Thursday. "I think it's a great idea, but it's something they should have thought about a long time ago."



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