

# Update from City Hall

For lots of our local citizens it is difficult to keep track of the projects for which the Mayor, staff and council have been working to obtain funding and bring to completion. Replacement of the wastewater treatment plant heads the list. Prior to Irma our wastewater treatment plant was in serious decline. Mayor Grimm, City Clerk Dottie Smallwood, our City Attorney Zach Lombardo, engineering firm CPH and the entire city staff worked closely with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on the design and construction of a new plant which would provide for our needs well into the future. During the planning and prior to the start of construction the Pandemic caused the cost of the plant to virtually double. The funding for this project came from two sources. Our State Senator Kathleen Passidomo procured us a 100% grant in last year's budget of 4.34 million dollars which allowed us to start construction and a DEP SRF which started as a 100% loan but converted to an 80/20 grant of 5.9 million dollars of which 4.72 million dollars does not need to be repaid, The original completion date was projected to be July 2023, however, Ian caused a large backlog in sub-consultants work, the cancellation of orders by several concrete suppliers and the contractor has asked DEP for an extension until October. DEP agreed and will support the request for an extension before the court per the Consent of Final Judgement.

The construction of the new plant has required us to restrict new hookups to our existing plant, however, we have allowed property owners to pull building permits with the understanding that they sign an affidavit that no certificate of occupancy will be issued until the new wastewater plant is completed. This was done to avoid a logjam in the building department when the ribbon on the new plant is cut.

I imagine some of you have passed by the site and had a chance to see the work as it has progressed and I know we are all looking forward to its projected completion in October!