

*Mar. 24, 2005*

The Garrett County commissioners on Tuesday voted unanimously to include two new amendments to the county's water and sewer master plan. Two proposed private developments in the Deep Creek Lake area will now be able to receive service from Garrett County Public Utilities.

The first approved amendment involves the Glendale Woods Subdivision, to be located southeast of Glendale Road. Developers want the Garrett County Department of Public Utilities operate and maintain water and sewer service at their site when their project is completed. A public hearing on the issue was held this week.

Director Mark Tonkovich, Public Utilities, said the developers plan to drill two private wells to serve six residential buildings.

"The raw water will be piped to a control building for treatment and distribution to the lots within the subdivision," he said. "The water will be tested to determine potable treatment requirements. Based on the surrounding geology and other groundwater sources in the area, it is anticipated that the treatment will be only chlorination."

Public Utilities' licensed water plant and distribution system operators and maintenance technicians will operate and maintain the system. Once the developers design and complete their system, they will sign a contract with the county.

Tonkovich noted that a force main line was already available for the site to receive public sewer service.

Commissioner Dave Beard asked if public water service was planned for the Glendale Woods area. Tonkovich indicated the service would be provided in the future, but no preliminary plans had been made yet.

Commissioner Fred Holliday wondered if it would be feasible for the county to maintain and operate a private water system that only served six houses.

Tonkovich indicated it would be feasible under contract stipulations, which will outline fees and repair costs for property owners. He noted that similar agreements had been made with 12 or 14 other subdivisions.

A second master plan amendment approved by the commissioners this week will enable Public Utilities to provide public sewer service to another new development, which will be located adjacent to Oakland Sang Run Road and near the Deep Creek Lake Wastewater Treatment Plant. Maryland Developers LLC, which requested the service, plans to build 30 homes at the site. A new force main will be constructed from the plant to the development.

The commissioners held a public hearing on the issue two weeks ago, but the record was kept open until Tuesday.

According to county officials, the soil conditions in this area are not suitable for a long-term septic drain field. For this reason, the county will provide the service to the site to prevent contamination of Deep Creek Lake from wastewater inadvertently flowing from a failing septic drain field.

Oakland Sang Run Road resident Russell Sines asked that the main line from the plant to the development come to Oakland Sang Run Road. This would allow residents in that area who do not have public sewer service at this time to receive it in the future.

"I think that's what public service is about, for the public, not just for developers," he told the commissioners on Tuesday.

Kyle Newsome, a principal with Maryland Developers, agreed that the line should be set up as Sines suggested.

Holliday noted that all the capital for infrastructure will be borne by the developers.

The commissioners also recently approved an amendment allowing the proposed Holy Cross development to receive public sewer service. Developers of that project had requested the service for 26 to 32 homes, to be located near Paradise Acres.

A public hearing was also held for that amendment, but no one voiced any opposition to it at the event.

Developers of the project will also be responsible for the cost of the design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of infrastructure to connect to the existing Deep Creek sewer system. Additionally, because the Holy Cross site is currently not in a sanitary district, sewer service customers at the development will pay out-of-district rates.

As with the Glendale Woods Subdivision, a contract will be made between the Holy Cross developers and the county. Linda Lindsey, Garrett County General Services, said the contract would "spell everything out," including project costs, connection fees, ERUs, line diameters, and the linear feet of the lines. A similar contract will be drafted for the Maryland Developers project.