

Water & Sewer Commission

December 16th, 2025

Public Hearing Meeting Minutes

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Carrie J. Miller
TOWN CLERK

Minutes of East Lyme Water and Sewer Commission Public Hearing - 12/16/25

Date and time:	12/16/25 06:30 pm to: 12/16/25 07:25 pm
Present:	Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary, Commission Members; Carol Russell, Dan Cunningham, Chairman, David J. Murphy, David R. Zoller, Michelle Royce Williams, Ken Roberts, David B. Bond, Roger L. Spencer, Absent; Lindsay Bollenbach
CC:	Ben North, Chief Operating Officer, Ann Cicchiello, Deputy First Selectman, Tracy Collins, Town Attorney, Joe Bragaw, Director of Public Works
Location:	East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room, 108 Pennsylvania Ave., Niantic, CT, 06357

Topics

1. Call to Order

Note Chairman Cunningham called the Public Hearing to order at 6:30 p.m. and led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance. A quorum of Commission Members was present.

2. Presentation on the Determination of Capacity for Dan Trakas ETAL Concerning a Development on 202 Pennsylvania Ave

Note Dan Trakas of Pennsylvania Avenue came forward to discuss his request for sewer capacity and provided the Commission with a handout.

 [3497_001.pdf](#)

Note Mr. Trakas clarified for the record that the property address is 200 Pennsylvania Avenue, not 202 as previously listed in commission documents.

Note Mr. Trakas highlighted some of the following during his presentation:

*His request is for 54,190 gallons of sewer capacity for a multi-parcel development encompassing approximately 37–38 acres.

*The project is designed as an active adult community in the foreground with market-rate residential units in the rear.

*The project aligns with the state's regional plan of conservation and development, addressing a critical need for housing in Connecticut.

*75,000 gallons had been previously allocated to a different developer in 2023.

*Due to that developer's health issues and subsequent inability to proceed, the allocation was returned to the town in March 2025.

*After accounting for recent smaller allocations granted by the Board (Parker's Place and Flanders Road), there is a remaining surplus of 63,626 gallons from that original returned amount, making his request for 54,190 gallons mathematically feasible.

Note *The project developer is willing to install the necessary sewer main and infrastructure at no cost to the town.

*While the specific route (Main Street vs. East Pattagansett) is still being finalized with town engineers, the developer intends to utilize grant funding, which would ultimately provide the town with new infrastructure and additional ratepayers without municipal expenditure.

Note Mr. North, Chief Operating Officer, introduced several exhibits into the record to ensure the public hearing was properly advertised and based on current data.

 [3498_001.pdf](#)

Note Mr. North challenged Mr. Trakas' self-identification as a ticket holder, clarifying that in the Department's view, a ticket holder is an entity whose property has been specifically assessed for a certain land use. He noted that while the property is in the sewer shed, it does not currently hold that status for the proposed development.

Note Mr. North highlighted the town's current capacity challenges, noting that the 1.5-million-gallon figure cited by the applicant is incorrect; the town's actual allocation is 1.022 million gallons per day.

Using Exhibit 3, he demonstrated that when accounting for existing usage, approved developments (such as the Landmark project), and reserves for assessed properties (the 137,000-gallon ticket holder pool), the town is technically at a negative capacity of 26,524 gallons. He recommended a conservative approach to protect existing obligations until a holistic engineering study is completed.

3. Public Comment

Note Mr. Cunningham called for public comment.

Note Dan Trakas re-addressed the Commission to emphasize that the requested 54,190 gallons would not be utilized immediately. He noted that the development is in its early stages, likely requiring 1.5 to 2 years of planning and infrastructure work before any actual discharge occurs. He argued that securing the allocation now is vital for the contractor to proceed with confidence.

Note Ann Buonocore of Buena Vista Real Estate Co., in Mystic said she supports the project and noted that the Board's role is to allocate available capacity rather than making political or developmental decisions. She emphasized the Trakas family's long history in town and their desire to develop the land in a way that enhances the community and provides a lifestyle enhancement for the downtown area.

Note Mr. North reminded the rest of the Commission of the legal precedent regarding swapping allocations between projects and noted that previous optimism about purchasing capacity from New London or Waterford had cooled, as those towns have shown reluctance to sell.

Note Mr. Trakas emphasized that there is not a big rush of people coming forward to tie into the system.

Note Mr. North defined a ticket holder as a property owner who has either already paid a sewer assessment or has been assessed for a specific land use. Because the Trakas project involves a change in land use from the original assessment (from a single-family home to a large-scale adult community), the property does not hold ticket holder status for this specific request.

Note Mr. Trakas noted that his family has been paying taxes since 1927 and suggested that taxpayer dollars originally funded the infrastructure.

Note Mr. North and town staff clarified that while the town fronted some costs in 1988, the East Lyme system is currently funded by ratepayers, not general taxpayers, and those initial funds have since been paid back by system users.

Note Mr. North replied that there has been a lack of a response from the State regarding their unutilized capacity.

Note A debate ensued regarding the ticket holder reserve and Mr. Bond suggested that the 137,000 gallons reserved for future hookups is a moving target and that the town should absorb that reserve to allow for new growth and ratepayers, especially since the state holds unused capacity (380,000 gallons) that the town might eventually access.

Note The Commission Members noted it's a decision between prioritizing those reserves or utilizing those reserves to facilitate immediate housing development.

Note Kevin Burn of 29 Jolan Lane, Colchester addressed the Commission to provide personal and historical context regarding the property. He identified himself as the son of Alice Trakas and stepson of George Trakas, noting that the land has been in the family's possession for over 100 years.

Mr. Burn described the property's history, mentioning its past use for horses and recreation, such as skating on Little Dodge. He emphasized that the land is currently vacant and has become a liability for the family. He urged the Commission to view the application not as a request from an outside developer looking for something special, but as a legacy project from a foundational local family. He argued that the family deserves special consideration because their stewardship of the land predates the current regulatory framework.

Note Mr. North added the following as official exhibits:

Exhibit 6- the Sewer Department Monthly Reports.

Exhibit 7- East Lyme and State sewer flow history dating back to 2015.

Exhibit 8- a worksheet detailing the average sewer flows from previous years.

Exhibit 9- a graph of current sewer flows.

Note Ann Buonocore stepped forward for a final plea, requesting that the Commission, during their private deliberations, explore the decision from all angles. She emphasized that the Board should consider the unique long-term positive effects this property offers the community and reiterate the Trakas family's willingness to work in partnership with the town.

Note A procedural point was raised by Ms. Russell regarding the original 75,000-gallon allocation from 2023. The Board agreed to incorporate by reference the full record of the original Pelleteer LLC allocation, including the meeting minutes and recordings.

Note Ms. Russell noted that the context of that original approval—specifically the discussions surrounding the town's then-optimism about purchasing capacity from neighboring towns—is essential to understanding why that allocation was made and how the current capacity situation has since evolved.

4. Adjournment

Decision MOTION (1)

Mr. Murphy moved to close the Public Hearing at 7:25 p.m.

Mr. Spencer seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 7-0-1.

Mr. Roberts abstained from the vote since he was not part of the original Public Hearing.

Note A Regular Meeting of the Water & Sewer Commission immediately followed.

Note Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Stevens,

Recording Secretary

Next Meeting

Meeting title: East lyme water and sewer commission regular meeting

Date and time: 11/18/25 06:36 pm to: 11/18/25 07:06 pm

Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room, 108 Pennsylvania Ave., Niantic, CT, 06357