



Perris Press Release

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Meeting Details Enchanted Heights Sewer Project

More than 250 Enchanted Heights residents attended a public meeting Thursday to hear details about a proposed \$13 million, three-year sewer project that will replace existing and inadequate septic tanks in the community.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, City Councilmember Mark Yarbrough and Ron Sullivan, the Perris area representative on the Eastern Municipal Water District Board of Directors attended the hearing and spoke to the crowd about the sewer project, which is scheduled to begin this summer.

All three officials said they are aware of the inadequate situation in Enchanted Heights and they are committed to installing a modern sewer system to prevent possible health concerns, improve property values and enhance the quality of life for residents.

"This is a really important project and one we have been working years to get started on," Mayor Busch said. "We want to inform the public so they understand what is going to happen and we can proceed as swiftly as possible. Getting a new system is a major, major feat that will solve some major problems. It is a good project, it is needed and it is going to happen."

Perris is working with Riverside County, the State of California as well as EMWD to complete the project. Major funding for the project is coming from the California Department of Public Health. The working arrangement calls for the City of Perris to administer the state grant, EMWD to construct the project and operate and maintain its infrastructure and Riverside County to oversee the sewer connections.

The 446 residences in Enchanted Heights were constructed as resort-style living more than 50 years ago. The homes were designed for senior citizens. Over the years, the community has changed so that today many homes are occupied by much-larger families who produce more sewage than the septic tanks can process. Adding to the challenge is that half the homes lie in Perris with the other half in unincorporated Riverside County.

"This is a challenging issue but we are committed to solving it," Mark Yarbrough said. "This is another example of how we are stepping up and partnering with other agencies to solve a community issue."

Ron Sullivan said the meeting was well-coordinated between the City of Perris, the County and the water agency. "It's really nice to see all the people show up to get the information they need," he said. "It was a very cooperative community meeting put on by the three agencies."

Also attending the public forum were John Watkins, representing the Riverside County Department of Environmental Health and Barry Busch, who represented Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley. Ashley represents the Perris area on the Board of Supervisors.

Thursday's public meeting was conducted in English and Spanish. Representatives from EMWD discussed the need for residents to sign permission forms allowing contractors to enter their property to install and hookup the necessary connections.

The project will create noise and dust but in the end, the inconvenience will be well worth the benefits, Perris officials and

EMWD representatives agreed. Construction is expected to take up to three years, although if weather permits, the project could be done by the end of 2013. The contractor who will oversee the project is expected to be announced in May.

The City's designated representative on the project, Maria Elena Kennedy, visits Enchanted Heights daily speaking to small groups of homeowners about the need for the project and will continue those visits in the coming weeks and months.

Residents Sue and Scott Thomas said they could not wait for work to begin. They believe the sewer project will increase their property value and improve the look and appeal of their home and all of Enchanted Heights.

"Everybody should be on board to get this done," Scott Thomas said.

Sue Thomas said she would like to plant trees in her backyard but cannot. The septic system's leach lines prevent it. But once a sewer is installed, she hopes to turn her green thumb loose and plant those trees.

The City of Perris is hosting another public hearing about the proposed sewer project on Thursday, April 28, at 6 p.m. at Enchanted Hills Elementary School, 1357 Mount Baldy Street. Representatives of Riverside County and EMWD also will attend.



Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough addresses the crowd who attended the Enchanted Heights public hearing on a proposed new sewer system. The issue "is challenging but we are committed to solving it."



The crowd filled the multi-purpose room at Enchanted Hills Elementary School.



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch answers a question from two Perris residents.



EMWD Board of Directors trustee Ron Sullivan: "It's really nice to see all the people show up to get the information they need."