



Newsletter

September/October 2015

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Board of Commissioners meetings are held on the 2nd & 4th Thursdays of the month at 1 pm in the District Office. All meetings are open to the public.

Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District is not associated with or governed by the Hartstene Pointe Maintenance Association. Please direct water-sewer service related questions to the District.

Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Fire Hydrants

The increased fire danger due to our region's hot, dry conditions over the past few months has reignited the topic of using the hydrants within the Pointe for fire suppression. The District would like to take this opportunity to address questions recently asked regarding the functionality and use of the hydrants and give some history on the subject.

Hartstene Pointe Fire Hydrant History

When Quadrant Corporation developed the Pointe the water system was designed and installed for domestic water supply only and with no intention of providing adequate fire flow through the distribution system. In 1977, representatives of HPMa met with John Kirner, P.E., Regional Engineer for the Water Supply and Waste Section of the Department of Social and Health Services to discuss the proposed installation of fire hydrants. Mr. Kirner, in a follow-up letter to HPMa, advised against the installation of hydrants. He warned that the majority of the water mains are of inadequate size to carry the volume of water necessary for fire fighting. He explained that using undersized water mains to supply fire flows could result in low or negative pressures in the distribution system, which could cause contaminants to enter the system. This would result in a possible boil water notice while sampling of the distribution system for bacteriological analysis was conducted and disinfection of the system if the water was found to be contaminated with bacteria.

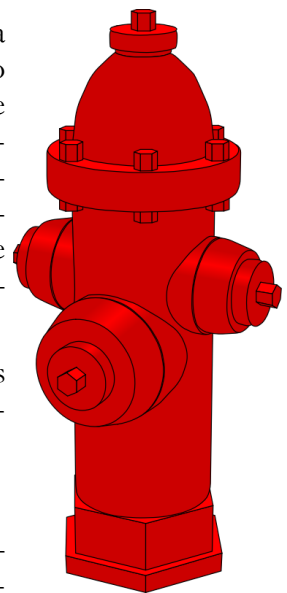
Additionally, Mr. Kirner explained that it is possible for a pumper connected to a hydrant on an undersized water line to collapse the line. The cost to repair the water lines and the disruption to water service, should this occur, would be significant. Mr. Kirner went on to warn, "The appearance of adequate fire protection as represented by hydrants may also delude the residents of an area into believing that an adequate fire protection system currently exists when, in fact, the hydrants may not have an adequate supply of water."

Despite these warnings, HPMa decided to install hydrants throughout the Pointe. No record has been found of the hydrants ever being used to fight a fire since their installation.

What Is the Situation Today?

The Water-Sewer District does not own or maintain the hydrants, but rather they belong to HPMa. The primary concern of the Water-Sewer District is to provide safe drinking water in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations. To this end, the District maintains that no untrained individuals should operate the hydrants, as this could result to significant harm to the water system and water supply.

There are six hydrants located along the six-inch main line between the reservoir and Promontory Road which have adequate flows for fire suppression. The rest of the



Continued on the next page.

Fire Hydrants (continued)

hydrants throughout the Pointe are served by undersized lines and/or have ports too small for use by the Fire District. The Hartstene Pointe Water-Sewer District General Manager has provided Central Mason Fire & EMS a map showing the locations of all of the hydrants in the Pointe, along with their flow rates, and highlighting the six hydrants that could be of use to the Fire District. When fighting fires the Fire District brings water to the site and would only use these six hydrants to refill their tankers, should the need arise. Even so, these hydrants would need to be used with extreme caution so as not to depressurize the system or deplete the reservoir.

In order for the remaining hydrants to be used for fire suppression, new, correctly sized water lines and additional water storage would need to be engineered and installed. Such a project would cost millions of dollars.

Wastewater Treatment Plant's 4th of July Weekend Woes

It appears that residents were busy cleaning over this year's busy 4th of July weekend, because the wastewater treatment plant saw an excessive inflow of cleaning products from the sewer collection system. The disinfectants in the cleaning products caused a die-off of a large portion of the plant's microbial bacteria necessary for breakdown processes in the treatment plant, rendering the treatment plant inert. As a result, 13,000 gallons of sludge had to be hauled away at a cost of \$4,500.

The District asks residents to be mindful of what is deposited into the sewer collection system. Anti-bacterial soaps, disinfectants, and other harsh chemicals can wreak havoc on the beneficial bacteria which are crucial to the wastewater treatment processes. Additionally, oils and greases, personal care products, medications, food waste, and other trash should be disposed of in the garbage can, not the sewer collection system.



Drippy the Droplet's Water-Saving Tip:

"Install drip irrigation to directly water plant roots in flower, vegetable, and herb beds. Using this type of system will water more efficiently and can be set on a timer for convenience."

Watch for more of Drippy's tips in future newsletters and on the District website, hpwatersewer.com.

Billing Transition Update

The District staff is continuing to work hard to streamline our billing and customer service processes since bringing these operations in-house this past May. It has been a mostly smooth process with only a few bumps along the way.

We are working to improve our phone system to accommodate the increased number of calls to the District Office and to respond more quickly to calls. We would also like to remind our customers that, in order to keep personnel costs down, the District does not employ full-time office staff, so you may not always reach someone when you call the office. Messages will be returned within one business day.

Also, you can now pay your bill online at hpwatersewer.com. You may also email the office at info@hpwatersewer.com.

Drought Update

The unusually dry and hot summer we have been experiencing here in the Pacific Northwest has pushed our water system to its production limit. The District is asking residents to be conscientious of how much water they are using, especially outdoors.

The average well production this summer has been 180,000 gallons per day, or 125 gallons per minute, while the maximum well output is 140 gallons per minute. Considering that the average free-flowing garden hose uses 10-16 gallons of water per minute, it is clear how much of an impact just one person's water use can make.

There are no indications that this year's drought has had an immediate effect on the aquifers which supply the District with its water. The current drought is a result of an absence of snow pack due to a warmer than usual winter, primarily affecting water systems that rely on surface water snow melt for their water supply. However, if we continue to experience warmer than average temperatures in the coming years, it is possible that our aquifer levels could be affected.

We can all take steps to conserve water, easing the stress on the water system and preserving our water supply. Here are some tips for wise outdoor water use:

- Hand water plants and shrubs instead of leaving a hose or sprinkler running unattended, or install a timer that will automatically turn off sprinklers when watering is complete.
- When watering your lawn, one inch once per week is plenty and watering early in the day is best.
- Rain water is actually better for plants because it has not been treated with chlorine. You can purchase a rain barrel, or the District can provide empty barrels and instructions on how to make your own.

Look for more water saving tips in each bi-monthly District Newsletter and on our website, hpwatersewer.com.