Welcome 2019 Season

With the summer season upon us, we’d like to bring you up to date with the news from over the winter—and make you aware of events coming up. We are a little late in putting this together, so it has become a really long Sandscribes—our apologies!

Over the May 18th-19th weekend, we had a very successful Heidelberg Beach Family Reunion. We are grateful for the help in getting the beach and grounds cleaned up. Thanks, as always, to Dean, Carol, and Harvey for the leadership and equipment to help us do that work. Many thanks to Barb Tereshko, Jan Peer, and Claudia Springer for providing the good food and location for the potluck.

Activities and events are getting lined up—see the articles about the Summer Pavilion Services and Bible Studies. The next Board Meeting is Saturday, June 22nd and the Annual Meeting has been set for Saturday, July 20th. It is time to keep a closer eye on the Community Calendar out on the Web site.

As always, a lot of work was done over the winter to get everything in shape for the summer. Unfortunately, part of that process this year was dealing with what seemed like the worst water main break that we’ve ever had. We’ve also experienced an extreme year of beach bank erosion and share those heartbreaking stories too.

Please keep an eye out for each other this summer.

Jane & John

Summer Sunday Pavilion Services & Friday Evening Bible Studies

- The Pavilion Service season begins on Sunday, July 7th and runs through Sunday, September 1st. Services begin at 10 A.M. with a Social Hour at 11 A.M.

Special Note: Remember, if you cannot clean the Pavilion on your assigned Sunday, it is up to you to find someone with whom to switch dates. Please let Claudia Springer know of any changes that are made.

- The Bible Study evenings run on alternate Fridays beginning on Friday, May 31st and running through Friday, August 23rd. Meet at the Springer cottage (52 Kentucky) at 7:30 PM.

Help Needed: Social Hour Hosts/Hostesses

The Christian Work and Worship Committee would like to thank the many hostesses who helped with the Social Hours following summer Pavilion services in 2018. The social hours are a good time to catch up on news of friends and neighbors after worshiping together.

We are looking for hosts and hostesses for the 9 Summer Pavilion Services for this season. See the Community Calendar to look up the Sunday that you are scheduled to clean and to see the Officiant. It generally works well if the Host/Hostess is a volunteer from the Sunday cleaning crew—then you can set up the Social Hour table as a part of your morning cleaning activity.

Items such as tablecloths and napkins are provided along with coffee, sugar, etc. Hosting involves setting up in the morning before the church service, making coffee, and providing a cold drink and refreshments. You can be reimbursed for the items that you purchase. If you are interested in hosting a social hour this summer, please contact Linda Glaviano (she can be reached via E-mail, by phone, or by text).

Thank you for your help!

Linda Glaviano and the CCWW Board of Trustees: New Members

The Annual Membership Meeting has been set for Saturday, July 20th this year.

As always, the outgoing members serve as the “Nominating Committee” for new trustees. The members going off the Board are Tom Eshelman and Jan Peer. If you would be willing to volunteer for the Board, please contact one of them.

To report news, please send email to HBadmin@HeidelbergBeach.org, drop off at 82 Indiana Road, or telephone (440) 864-5951.

Heidelberg Beach Web Site URL: http://www.HeidelbergBeach.org.
Depending on how many volunteers Tom and Jan receive, the Board is considering naming the slate of 4 (two incumbents and two new members) and asking the membership for a vote of acclamation to accept that slate without a ballot count.

As per our Rules of Order, we will still open the floor for nominations at the meeting. If a name is nominated from the floor, we will then have to do a roll call and hand out ballots. The Board is assuming that if you desired to serve on the Board, you would volunteer to Tom or Jan now, and we can simplify this process and eliminate the by-product of a vote where someone must lose.

April 22nd Water Leak: Beck Cottage

On April 22nd, 2019, water was seen leaking out a part of the Beck cottage (58 Kentucky). They had a valve fail in their crawl space, which flooded a bathroom and bedroom. The situation was complicated by the broken water main shut off outside (which has been broken for some time). Based on the community’s water bills, we estimate the break occurred in January. Justin Beck, Barb & Dick’s grandson has taken care of the cottage repairs.

April 23rd Water Main Break

Then the very next day after discovering the Beck cottage problem, we awoke to very low water pressure and this scene south of the Warder cottage:

Within an hour or so, the water found its way into the storm line, and poured into Fichtel Ditch.

We called Franklin, because as you can see by the pictures, the problem was clearly north of the water meter, which meant it was ours to fix (the County services south of the meter). We had very poor pressure and only a trickle of water out of the faucets. By midday Franklin had been out to assess the situation and get the ball rolling to fix it.

As of Wednesday morning (April 24th), we were still waiting for Columbia Gas to mark their lines so that we could dig safely.

At 1:00 P.M. on Wednesday, about eight trucks from Erie County and a few other services descended upon our neighborhood. It turns out that Erie County had received electronic alerts, starting at 2:00 A.M. Tuesday morning, that there was major draw on the water system. Subsequently the County began receiving problem calls from businesses and homes all along Rt. 6 (notably Willow Way nursery and Mitiwanga residents).

Not able to pinpoint the leak location electronically, the County hired a team of professional “Leak Seekers.” It turns out that the new meter reading and reporting mechanisms that they’d installed in both our meter pits last fall, had failed. They would have pinpointed us easily if that equipment had worked properly.

The County was unhappy that we had not called them to report the leak. We explained that we knew it was our problem and we’d called a service to fix it. We also explained that we had no idea that an internal leak to Heidelberg Beach would affect anyone other than us.

As it turns out, this was a really big leak—pumping out 130 gallons a minute! During the two days it ran full bore, we lost about 300,000 gallons of water. That was enough of a draw to impact others significantly. We did know it was a big leak—but didn’t have the perspective to understand just how big and how problematic.

So, the County shut our water off immediately. Franklin re-arranged their priorities and after an emergency call to OUPS to get the gas lines marked, they started digging. You’ll see the detailed photo chronology below. It ended up that the entire beach was completely without water for 26 hours and had to manage with extremely low pressure and low volume for about 48 hours preceding that.

The break was unusual—it went lengthwise up the pipe. There are two possible explanations as to why it split—or maybe both reasons were a factor. The pipe that broke was 2” plastic. After asking around, we are pretty sure this is the line that the beach installed to tap into city water in 1964. The plastic connection pipe ran from the
(then new) meter pit to the south end of W. Virginia road, where it was connected to the 2” iron pipe.

So, it was most likely 55-year-old plastic, probably reaching the end of its lifespan for the material of that day. Because of the nature of the break, there is speculation too that the pipe may have frozen or been cracked by frozen water around it. Though the pipe was below the frost line, it was laid in stone that filled to the ground surface. Stone is not as insulating as dirt. Either way, it was very difficult to fix because the pipe size is not standard anymore, and they don’t readily make couplings that work with it. It required a lot of effort and time by Franklin to find parts that would work—eventually getting some specialized brass fittings driven up from Ashland.

As a side issue to all of this, you’ll note in the photos that there was a huge sunken cavern north of where the water break was. This was how the water found its way out to the W. Virginia storm line. The “new” (in 1964) water line was installed “through” an old storm line, that appears to be defunct. The gushing water found its way into the eastern part of that old line, which connected into the W. Virginia storm line.

Since it was possible that some of the problem may have been caused by freezing, Franklin advised us to top the pipe with 1.5” insulation board.

This break is going to be very costly to us. The parts were expensive. The “emergency” call to Franklin. The two days of work time. And of course, the water bill. (We may be able to recoup a little of that cost.) Erie County is also saying they will want us to pay for the “Leak Seekers.”
Catching up on the Baby News!

- Congratulations to Nancy and Tom Lukens (93 Ohio) who became first time grandparents to a beautiful baby granddaughter on July 6th. Esmé Isabelle was born to Nancy and Tom’s son Greg, and his wife Ki Gaines.

- John and Valerie Rohrbaugh (59 Kentucky) are grandparents to twin baby girls, born on October 8th. Julia Marie and Clara Elise were born to John and Valerie’s son Tom, and his wife Michelle Lagrotta. Double congratulations!

Water Main Break Contact Information

The “Emergencies” page on our Web site has been updated with more detailed information about what to do if you notice a water leak or break.

Summary of Heidelberg Beach’s Infrastructure History

The Board has put together a brief chronological summary of the known information about our community’s infrastructure. It was put together so that we could remember key events as we continue to work through this problem and the resolution. Information was pulled from secretarial records and people’s memories—plus, of course, the more recent information that was well documented on the Web site these last few years. Please let Jane Chidester know if you have any further recollections. This summary (see attachment to this Sandscribes) will serve as a good refresher when we get to the point of starting the detailed design work. This document is permanently filed on the Web Site under the “By-Laws/Rules/Resolutions” tab.
• Molly Lou Jorah Bovinett was born at 7:06 P.M. on Tuesday, October 9th. She weighed 6 pounds, 11 ounces and was 20 inches long. She was welcomed by her parents Meg and Don Bovinett along with her siblings Joey and Dottye. Meg is the daughter of once-again grandparents Marilyn and John (67 Kentucky) Chidester.

Catching up on the Family News

• Gordon Belmont (formerly of 64 and 62 Kentucky) passed away on November 21st, 2018. Our sincere condolences to Judy Destro and Jeff Belmont (64 Kentucky) on the loss of their father. Gordon & Mary Lou (who passed in 2017) built 62 Kentucky next to 64 Kentucky, the Kessler cottage (Mary Lou’s family). They lived at 62 Kentucky for several years before building a new home in Birmingham.

• Joy and Don Bratton visited Barb and Dick Beck in Daytona, Florida on February 14th.

• Ken Stone (56 Kentucky) passed away peacefully on Wednesday, March 13th. Ken was 97—almost 98—and could still out-work most of us! The family will hold a commemorative social hour one Sunday this summer in his honor. Our sympathies and prayers to Ken’s remaining daughter Molly Richeson, his grandchildren, and extended family.

• Mary Border (10 Pennsylvania) has been diagnosed with Multiple Myeloma. She is currently in Assisted Living at O’Neill Healthcare in Bay Village while she receives her chemo treatments. Mary loves texts, visits, and cards—and is so grateful to all the good wishes she has received. Please keep Mary and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

• Kate & Herb Foote (formerly of 6 Pennsylvania) had moved to Florida after the sale of their cottage in 2017. In February, they moved back to Ohio! They now live in the Avenue Assisted Living section of the Sprenger Town Center in Avon Lake. They have several family members living at this facility along with granddaughters nearby that are looking after them. Herb’s Parkinson’s disease is progressing, and they need more help now. Their new phone number is (440) 930-6880 and they would love to hear from you!

• Will Ossman (99 Ohio) was in the hospital in early April. He was admitted for pneumonia and cardiac and kidney evaluation. He is now back at VITALIA Senior Residences in Strongsville. Please hold Will, Linda & David, and the Ossman and Rohrbaugh families in your prayers.

• Congratulations to Susan and Karl Volk (6 Pennsylvania) who celebrated 50 years of marriage on Saturday, May 18th!

• Good wishes and prayers to Richard Henderson (62 Kentucky) for his continuing recovery from knee surgery.

• Thoughts and prayers to Jane Eshelman (73 Indiana) who has had a series of health setbacks (on her road to having knee surgery!).

• Update on the Chidester/Bovinett family: Late last fall we shared that John & Marilyn Chidester’s (67 Kentucky) October-born granddaughter Molly (daughter of their daughter Meg, and her husband Don Bovinett) was going to require heart surgery. Gratefully that was a misdiagnosis and after several confirmations, Molly’s heart is well, and she is thriving. Also, for those following the saga of difficult events for this family, Meg was diagnosed with skin cancer last summer and is on a year’s course of immunotherapy. While Meg continues this therapy, we are happy to report that doctors believe Meg is now cancer-free. Lots of good news here! And one final note—John, himself, had a successful shoulder surgery a few months ago. Whew!
Septic Tanks Cleaned & Inspected

Septic tanks were cleaned in mid-March. Dave Abel has held our cost to $110/tank for the last 13 years and has justifiably asked for a small increase to better cover his costs. Dumping fees keep rising. On the June Heidelberg Beach Tax and Assessment Invoice you’ll see a septic tank cleaning charge of $115 this year. Next year the rate will be $120/tank.

Winter Grounds Work

Dean did more work along the east edge of the property by the Pavilion. He continued the project he started the year before with clearing vines and scrub brush. He has put new grass seed down and by summer it should be looking beautiful!

As promised, the woods area south of the creek has been cleaned up and cleared out. The compost pile has been removed and dead brush and dead trees have been cleared. The forsythia bushes were shaped up.

Planting an evergreen buffer along Rt. 6 has been on our community’s “To Do” list for over a decade now. There are some beautiful pines up there, but more are needed to create both a visual barrier (a beautiful visual barrier) and a sound barrier to muffle the road noise. A good start on this project was made.

For those with long memories, you’ll remember that Harry, Bob, Harvey, Herb, and many others used to keep after the trimming along Rt. 6. In addition to keeping the area looking nice, this was done to maintain good visibility when driving out of the beach. As the years have passed without regular attention, the underbrush and vines have continued to push southward—both causing obstructed road views and in the case of the destructive vines, killing the more desirable trees. We’ve made a dent in pushing back this brush line a few feet and trimming up some of the nicer trees.

Either this fall or next, Jane Chidester will take up a collection to fund the new evergreens (including replacing the two recently lost near where the old compost pile was). We need to do a little more work to plan where they would go—and the varieties we’d like to have.
Beach Bank Erosion & High Water

From April 11th:

From April 18th:

To report news, please send email to HBadmin@RoadRunner.com, drop off at 82 Indiana Road, or telephone (440) 864-5951.

Heidelberg Beach Web Site URL: http://www.HeidelbergBeach.org
Minutes from the Heidelberg Beach Board Meeting
May 18th, 2019

Board: Jane Chidester (President), Claudia Springer (VP), Tom Eshelman (Secretary), Mary Chidester (Real Estate), Jeff Belmont, Don Bratton, Carol Dunkle, Aaron Hamilton, Richard Henderson, Jan Peer

Adjunct Trustee: Dick Castele (Treasurer)

Absent: Dick Castele (Treasurer), Jack Corrigan, Scott Welch

Opening Prayer: Rev. Richard Henderson, 1:20 PM

Approval Vote for prior Meeting Minutes:
Motion approved to accept minutes of September 22nd, 2018 Board Meeting (J. Peer/D. Bratton).

Real Estate Report: Mary Chidester
No new business.

Treasurer’s Report: Dick Castele

- **Budget vs Actual** - Overall there are no significant items to discuss other than the Water Consumption. It is anticipated that all the account overs and unders will offset each other with a net result of ending the year close to Budget. This assumes we will be billed for 8 mowings for the April to June timeframe.

- **Infrastructure Assessments** – As of June 30, 2019 we will have available approximately $326,000 in the Reserve for the future Infrastructure Project. We also will still have approximately $25,500 in an additional reserve to cover repairs to the current system (less the unknow cost of the repair of the April 23rd, 2019 break).

- **Road Reserve** – The balance in this reserve is approximately $48,000 and the funds were invested in a Certificate of Deposit which matured on May 7th. Instead of rolling this CD into a new CD earning 0.60%, the CD was closed and the funds moved into the Money Market account we opened last year which is currently earning 1.12%. We now have ready access to these funds.

- Motion approved to accept the Treasurer’s interim report (the above three bullet points) and to accept
the report of the annual audit (see the 2017-2018 tab under “Financials” on the Web site) (M. Chidester/C. Springer).

- Suggestion from the audit report to separate CCWW funds from Heidelberg Beach funds was tabled.
- As of May 18th, we do not know how much we will be billed by Franklin Sanitation for the April 23rd large water main break or how much we will be able to recoup as a water bill credit.

**Business:**

- The septic tanks were cleaned March 12 & 13, 2019 at a rate of $115/tank, next year’s rate will be $120/tank.
- Suggestion to put 2 signs on Pennsylvania to indicate Norton’s property boundary was tabled.
- Suggestion to buy a buffer strip to the east due to the impending sale of the Brown property will be explored.
- A new procedure was agreed to for annual Board Member replacement: a nominating committee will present a slate of nominees to the Board at the June Board meeting. The number of nominees will be equal to the number of open Board seats. At the following annual meeting the slate will be presented, then the floor will be opened for additional nominations. If nominations are made from the floor, then an election will be held (one vote per lot). If no floor nominations are received. A vote of acclamation will be held.
- Water line issues: Erie County requests that we now inform them of all leaks that we have at Heidelberg Beach. See the “Emergencies” tab on the Web site for the procedure and phone numbers to call.
- A new “Brief History of Heidelberg Beach Infrastructure” summary document was reviewed and approved for distribution to the community and is posted on the Web site. See attached.

**Next Meeting:** June 22, 2019 at 9:00 AM.

**Annual Meeting:** July 20, 2019 at 10 AM.

**Adjournment:** 2:53 PM.
A Brief History of Heidelberg Beach’s Infrastructure Projects

Written by Jane Chidester, Association President, in the Summer of 2019

Milestones

1930: 2” Byers Iron pipes were laid for water. The water was drawn from the lake and stored in a cistern buried in the sand. The water was treated and then pumped up the cliff to the water lines that ran under each of the roads. To allow gravity to help distribute the water, the lines sloped southward and terminated at the south end of each road.

Date Unknown: 6” and 8” clay pipe was laid for a “storm” sewer in each road. This pipe was probably laid in 1930 at the same time as the water lines because it lies directly underneath the water line in most areas. These clay pipes slope south and drain directly into Fichtel Ditch. This sewer is used for both rain water run-off and septic tank run-off.

Dates Vary from the late 1920’s to 1950’s: As each cottage was built, a septic tank was placed. There are a few newer tanks, but most were placed before 1960.

Late 1950’s to 1964: After years of high expense and many problems keeping the old cistern system running and safe for drinking, the community wanted to tie into Huron’s public water system. By 1964, a plan was in place and approved by the membership to replace the water lines, add fire hydrants, and add a gravity-based sanitary sewer system. A 3.5% interest loan was secured through the Erie County Commissioners, under the direction of one of Heidelberg Beach’s residents, Paul Reutenik, who was the Financial Administrator for Erie County.

This plan was never implemented.

1965: As a stop-gap measure, Heidelberg Beach’s water source was changed to Huron city public water without replacing the private water lines within the community. The plumbing was shut off at the lake side, a connection line was run from the city’s main in Rt. 6 to a newly-installed water meter near the Heidelberg Beach sign just south of the Hayman & Warder cottages.

1965 to Present: The 1964 plan was contingent upon Erie County upgrading the lines in Rt. 6 and initially there were construction delays on the part of the county. The new lines were installed by the late 1960’s and Paul Reutenik’s term ended as an Erie County Commissioner. Then time just continued to pass. It is unknown why the Board of Trustees, the county, and the community did not follow-up on implementing the full plan.

Dates Unknown: Over time, more tweaks and fixes were made to the water line to reduce the rusty brown water due to stagnation and address the water pressure problems. Some of the lines were connected to simulate circuits. This allowed the pressurized water not to sit still at the end of each water line as had been the case.

At some point, the new water meter was moved to the south end of W. Virginia Road, in the grass south of Willowdale Drive.

A few manholes were added over the years to access the pipes. It is unclear what this access provided or what actions were taken as a result.

1985: Until this point the only fire hydrant for the neighborhood was up at Rt. 6. A new 8” line was run from our internal water meter at the south end of W. Virginia to the playground area, where a second water meter was installed along with a fire hydrant.
2000-2010: The makeup of the year-round residents started evolving—some moved, some passed away, some made Heidelberg Beach their new home. While some outside contractors had been used in past years, to this point, much of the repair work had been done by the generations of Heidelberg Beach residents who had the knowledge and equipment to do it.

2010-Present: While there were sporadic issues all along, in about 2012, problems started arising more frequently. 2014 was a particularly cold winter, and that increased the pace of problems for a year or two. For three years (February 2014 to February 2017), there were 9 repairs, averaging one repair about every 4 months.

During these years, the help of outside contractors was used more. The contractors gave us further insight into the current state of our system, the state of the county and government entities that oversaw public health, and the situation we were in.

2015: With the increasing frequency and severity of the leaks and breaks, the Board of Trustees re-opened the discussion about infrastructure and what the Board should be doing to protect our members, be in compliance with standards and regulations, and fulfill our responsibility to the community.

The Premise: The folklore for years was that “money was out there” to help us. We would never have to pay for a new system ourselves. When Erie County “made us” do it, they would also pay for it—so we should just “wait.” The corollary to this stance was always that there was no need to save money. We wanted to “look poor” to get all grant money possible and the project would be paid for by someone else anyway.

The Beginning: With this premise, the Board decided that it was time to try to “find the money.” pick up the ball that was dropped in the 1960’s, and proactively consider getting our aging 85-year-old system replaced.

With the help and connections of an Association member who was a career property developer, Jeff Springer, the Board started to do research. Jeff Springer and Jane Chidester (current President of the Association) consulted with all of those in the community who might have any information. Jeff reached out to engineering firms to gauge ability and interest in creating a Feasibility Study for us. (Note, that in infrastructure nomenclature, this is akin to creating a Grant Proposal in other industries. The primary purpose of this document is to “shop for money.”) Jeff and Jane narrowed the field and made a recommendation to the Board to contract with OHM Advisors, which the Board accepted and approved.

Why OHM? The engineers from this firm were the engineers for the City of Huron and regularly worked with Erie County officials on a range of related projects. They had a pre-existing working relationship with the people that would be involved in our project. Also, and not insignificantly, a Kramer family member worked at OHM and oversaw the engineers who were working for us. The work done for us far exceeded the price we paid.

The Strategy: OHM surveyed Heidelberg Beach, made drawings, did topological studies, and assessed our current situation.

The solution OHM suggested was to have our new infrastructure become a public system and therefore, become Erie County’s responsibility. As such, this plan needed to meet all the city, county, state, and federal codes for compliance. It was the Board’s hope that after going through this major upheaval, we could turn over all future maintenance of our infrastructure to the county.
Since it was our premise that the cost for a public system would be free or very low-cost to us, this was the strategy we took. Also, in the spirit of all “Grant Proposals,” the cost was estimated high with the expectation we may not get all the funds we were asking for.

Roughly, for the entire project, the estimate was $2.3 million dollars.

2016: With the completed Feasibility Study in hand, OHM, Jane Chidester, Jeff Springer, and the Board set to work on finding the money.

OHM made presentations and submitted applications. Board members attended meetings with the Erie County Commissioners and other agencies that oversaw water and sewer projects. For good measure, we also shopped for loans at local and commercial banks.

In May 2016, Heidelberg Beach was granted a $900,000 EPA low-interest water line loan. Unfortunately, we discovered the money had to be given to and administered for our benefit through Erie County—and the county was unwilling to do this. They refused the funds.

The Bottom Fell out of our Plan: Put simply, through this process, we learned that our premise was completely wrong. Because Heidelberg Beach is a private property, Erie County will never let us have access to any grants or loans from outside agencies like the EPA or USDA. It is the firm policy of Erie County to not assist homeowners or private communities with this type of large-scale infrastructure effort. The County does, at times, assist in much smaller and narrower ways, with individual homeowners who meet certain low-income criteria. And finally, even if we paid for this outright and built to public standards, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to get the county to take over the maintenance responsibility.

The Board Re-Grouped: Because commercial loans are complicated to get, interest rates are high, large down-payments are required, and repayment schedules are short, the Board concluded the best course for Heidelberg Beach was to pay for it ourselves and save as aggressively as possible. OHM re-estimated the project as an internal, private system that we will maintain.

Roughly, for the entire project, the estimate was $1.8 million dollars. $700,000 for a water line. $800,000 for gravity sanitary sewer. $300,000 for storm sewer.

Determining the Assessment Structure: Since Heidelberg Beach now had to pay for this, the Board evaluated how to assess it.

The three standard ways to collect money for an infrastructure project are (1) based on property value, (2) based on front footage, or (3) based on “taps.” After a summer of discussion and feedback, the Board enacted option (3), an equal sharing of the cost between existing cottages. Any new cottages built in the future will have to pay a “tap in” fee equal to what the existing 48 cottages have paid. See the full Assessment Methods Summary for more details.

2017: At the summer Annual Membership Meeting, the community voted to move forward with the replacement of the water lines. Then at the Board’s fall budget meeting, the Board levied a new assessment of $15,000 per cottage ($720,000 total) to be collected over 5 or 10 years, depending on the assessment level chosen. See the 2017 Binding Resolution of the Board for full details.

The installment distribution is as follows:

13 cottages chose an accelerated installment ($5,000 or greater, collected in 3 years or less)
16 cottages chose the standard installment ($3,000 collected in 5 years)
19 cottages chose the delayed installment ($1,000 collected for 5 years, then $2,000 for 5 years)
2018: A water main connection to a cottage failed and leaked for about 4 months before it was found and fixed. Continued to collect funds for the Infrastructure Reserve.

2019: Another cottage’s water main connection failed and leaked for about 4 months. Major water line break in April—and currently pursuing at least two other problems. Still collecting funds.

Expected 2020-2021: The target of $500,000 in savings should be reached. The Board will set up open community meetings with an engineer, contractors willing to consult, and anyone and everyone in the community that can share experience and expertise, to begin the detailed decision-making process.

Follow-on Insights

The two most painful aspects of this three-year investigation are not understanding why the effort to replace and upgrade our system did not continue after the community voted to do so in 1964—and why the years of folklore got the facts so wrong.

Why did the 1964 effort fail? As we learned in the 2016 meetings with Erie County officials, it is not standard practice to fund or administrate projects for a private community like Heidelberg Beach. We laid the lines we use, under the roads we maintain, and in the County’s view, they are our lines to maintain. There are very rare instances where the County will financially participate with a person or community. The most probable scenario is if the person or subdivision is cited for EPA violations. If Erie County administers a loan, they are bound to repay it. A few years ago, Erie County helped Beulah Beach fund a pump station, but many residents defaulted and did not pay, which left Erie County on the hook for that money. This closed the door permanently for other private communities seeking Erie County’s help.

The best guess at explaining why beach members thought getting outside funding was even a possibility was probably because of Paul Reutenik. We now believe that Paul Reutenik’s time as an Erie County Commissioner in the 1960’s was not just helpful in moving the effort along—it was the only thing.

The Misunderstood Process and the Mistaken Folklore: It was also not understood that Heidelberg Beach was so beholden to needing the County’s help in receiving outside grants or low-interest loans. The EPA and other agencies do not work directly with private communities or Homeowners Associations—they only work with municipalities. The Association members who had connections to these government agencies from their career experience, knew these agencies had money to allocate, but did not understand that it required Erie County’s administration. As pointed out above, Erie County does not designate money or facilitate infrastructure projects for private homeowners or private communities.

Then there was the folklore. It was ardently believed that there were no sanitary lines at Rt. 6 to connect to. It was also believed that the Huron Processing Plant did not have the capacity to process our sewage. Despite the evidence and facts, these notions were still hard to dispel in 2015 because the myths had been passed around for years with such “authority.”

Also, in a community mainly comprised of farmers and ministers, “subsidies” were a way of life. It was easy to believe, and the community wanted to believe, that someone else would pay for this.

Finally, there were and are many differing opinions on “how bad” our current system is. We know things were considered “so bad” with the system 30 years after its initial installation that the community took active measures to replace it in 1964.

Logic dictates that at 89 years it is time to look seriously at replacing our system, but emotions still run high. Just 3 years ago no one had any idea what we faced and how much it was going to cost. Most of the cottages at Heidelberg Beach are passed down generationally, so having ample resources to face a crisis like this is not a given. This was a true shock to everyone. No one was happy to learn we have this huge unexpected cost, but it is particularly difficult for those with very limited means.
Known Water Line Issues

- The water main is greatly undersized with 2” lines. The current standard is 8”.
- The water main was laid at a time when water was drawn from Lake Erie, so the layout and design focused on that.
- Plumbing standards have changed dramatically in the last 89 years. Switching the water source from the lake to municipal water without laying new lines created many problems throughout the years.
- To do repairs on the water lines, or repairs at the connections to an individual cottage, we must shut off the water to the entire neighborhood. We can only do this by shutting the main valve by Rt. 6—which we are technically not supposed to be using because it is owned by the county. We cannot use our own internal shut-offs because they don’t fully stop the water flow because of our hopscotch of pipe connections. Hence, the new system must be designed with logical shut-off sections.
- We still only have one fire hydrant for the entire neighborhood, and it makes it hard for members to get good home insurance coverage.
- The lines are very fragile now. The iron has degraded and rusted, especially in the roads that used the acidic cinders from the neighboring farm’s furnace to line the ditches. The pipes are filled with pinhole leaks—only being held together by the compacted clay around the rusted-out pipe. The pipe is so weak that anytime we touch it to make a fix, we generally create another leak.
- Cottage owner’s faulty exterior water valve shut-offs have been a constant source of leaks and problems over the years.
- The water system does not meet Erie County Building and Health Department codes.

Known Sewer Line & Septic Issues

- Most of the septic tanks tie directly into the storm sewer (no treatment or leach field).
- Output from the storm sewer (and thus septic tanks) flows directly into Fichtel Ditch, and then the lake.
- Many septic tanks are undersized for a cottage’s occupancy.
- The septic “system” (which is not really a system) does not meet Health Department codes.

Things to Keep in Mind in Design

- Try to minimize disruption as much as possible. Possibly use small circuits or a double system.
- The Association owns the following easements widths. A new system would have to work within these boundaries or new easements would have to be negotiated.
  - 6’ down the tree line pathways
  - 16’ Pennsylvania Road
  - 20’ W. Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio Roads
  - 30’ Willowdale Drive
  - 40’ Entrance to Willowdale across bridge
- 8” is standard water line size, 6” could possibly be used in some places. Fire hydrants require 8” line.
- The Erie County water line down Rt. 6 is an 8” line. No current plans for upgrade.
- The Erie County sanitary line down Rt. 6 is pressurized (not sure of dimension).
- Heidelberg Beach will need a pump station (could be “underground” up near Rt. 6).
- There are septic tanks that are in or near tree line pathways: 62 Kentucky and 69 Kentucky.
- A storm line crosses the tree line pathway easement: 8 Pennsylvania to between 24 & 25 W. Virginia.
- Areas of bad drainage:
  - 60 Kentucky
  - 79 Indiana (street area)
  - South end of Michigan
  - Across Willowdale by the Tennis Court