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Village and Town Agree to Suspend Connections to Sewer System

By Anthony F. Hall

In the wake of the July 5 sewer break that caused thousands of gallons of sewage to spill across the Shepard Park beach and into Lake George, officials have announced that they will proceed with a moratorium on any new residential or commercial connections to Lake George's wastewater collection system for at least six months.

Village and Town officials met on Monday, September 29 and agreed in principle to impose a moratorium in both the Village and the Town, which contains the Caldwell Sewer District.

"We need to make a thorough investigation of the system, determine where the problems are and make improvements," Mayor Bob Blais said. "We need time to accomplish this."

Although town officials have in the past refused to commit them-

selves to imposing a moratorium, Blais said he was given assurances that the Town would follow suit.

"Whether we call it a moratorium or not, there will be no more hook-ups for six months," said Lake George Supervisor Lou Tessier. "We'll take applications, but not allow hook-ups."

The moratorium will not affect any proposed developments that have been approved by Planning Boards or which are currently under review by the Planning Boards, said Blais.

During the moratorium, Blais said, the capacity at Lake George's wastewater treatment plant will be expanded to accommodate any new development within the Caldwell Sewer District.

Town Highway Department crews will assist with the construction of new sewer beds, said Tessier.

The Village and the Town have also agreed to draft and sign a new contract for the provision of wastewater collection and treatment services, Blais said.

The two municipalities have not had a new contract since 1977, Blais said.

A moratorium on any new residential or commercial connections to Lake George's wastewater collection system has received support from the Lake George Waterkeeper and The Fund for Lake George.

"Lake George is the economic engine of this area's economy. It demands the best in stewardship by local governments and state agencies. The Fund for Lake George and Lake George Waterkeeper believe that there needs to be a full, open public planning process that evaluates the current condition and operation of the Village and Town sewage treatment system and reviews and improves the management of this system," said Peter Bauer, the executive director of The Fund for Lake George.