

July 25, 2019

Residents of Bethel Heights,

The purpose of this letter is to provide the residents of Bethel Heights the City's response to the false accusations that have been stated against Bethel Heights Wastewater Treatment system.

Our City denies all claims of the dumping/flooding of raw sewer to any residents' property or ponds. The Wastewater treatment plant located on Lincoln Street has been in operation for 15 years. The plant has been inspected numerous times by the Arkansas Department of Environment Quality, ADEQ, and the Arkansas Department of Health, ADH.

The property owners, Steeles and Bowens, have provided photographs showing pools of water sitting on the Bowens yard. They have claimed this water is from the sewer plant and that test results show the water to have a high fecal count.

Our City believes the water in their yard is runoff from the pond located on the Steele property and the two ponds located on the Bowen property. The three ponds overflow during rain events and converge together in the Bowen's field and side yard swale and form a pathway into the drainage ditch on Apple Blossom street. This overflow also infiltrates the city sewer field on the NE corner where there are no sewer drip lines. One rain event was documented when KFSM, Channel 5 News, reported from the Bowen's side yard on June 11, 2019. The water in the video was after 2.25 inches of rain on June 7, 2019. The rainfall total from May 1st through June 11th was 13.25 inches.

The test results that Bowens & Steeles presented to the City Officials show a high fecal level. Their property and ponds have been used to raise cattle and crops for over 20 years. The property has had fertilizer spread every year to enhance their hay production. The cattle have drunk, bathed, and defecated in these three ponds during this time. We must also note the geese, birds, frogs, and other wild life that frequent these ponds. These facts provide the reason why the test results will show a high fecal level from pond water.

Their claims that the City has been dumping raw sewer on their property from "day one" are simply not true. If raw sewer was being dumped, it would have been seen and smelled sooner, by the homeowner, as well as during surprise inspections by ADEQ or ADH.

Our City operates the Wastewater facilities under the authority of a permit granted by ADEQ. The licensed sewer operator is required by law to file a monthly report of

test results and flow. The city pays a licensed, qualified testing lab to pull the sewer samples and perform the required test each month. Only the lab technicians can pull the samples. No City employees are involved in this process. The City also reports any sewer line breaks to ADEQ as they occur. These monthly reports are available for public viewing on ADEQ's website.

ADEQ has asked the City to submit a Corrective Action Plan, CAP, by August 9, 2019. ADEQ has asked for a plan due to the effluent limits and monitoring requirements. This CAP will include a long-term plan for Bethel Heights sewer and also address the drip fields. The CAP has several items that will be addressed by the qualified engineers the City has retained.

Due to the continuous false accusations made against Bethel Heights, and that have been noted in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, we felt we could no longer remain silent. We, the elected officials of Bethel Heights, chose to live in Bethel Heights for various reasons. We chose to run for office and serve as public servants because Bethel Heights is our home. Some of us have lived in Bethel Heights over 25 years and we have raised our children in this City.

Please contact your Councilmember if you have questions or concerns. You can also contact the City through the website at www.bethelheightsark.org. Elected Officials contact information can also be found on the City website.

Thank you for your support and choosing Bethel Heights.

Respectfully,

Mayor Cynthia Black

Debra Cheval, Councilwoman

Jim Swanson, Councilmen

Sherry Tuck, Councilwoman

Karen Taylor, Councilwoman

Sam Black, Councilmen

Jacob Meckem, Councilmen

Janet Nelson, Recorder/Treasurer

city of Bethel Heights

