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NEWS ARTICLE: Gainesville Times on November 29, 2009

Oakwood moving forward on sewer project

Construction could begin soon on pump station

Oakwood is poised to take a major step in fulfilling longtime plans to upgrade its sewer capacity with the help of Braselton.

City officials, through a consultant, are reviewing bids for the construction of a pump station on Martin Road, next to a Hall County pump station that flows to the Flowery Branch sewer plant.

City Manager Stan Brown said a recommendation on a contractor could be made to City Council at the Dec. 14 meeting.

If all goes as the city hopes, construction could start in January and be completed by October.

“This is major piece of infrastructure that will help us meet our long-term sewer needs,” Brown said.

The city plans to receive bids early in 2010 for the installation of a force main, the second major part of the \$10 million project.

In the meantime, the city is working to collect the parcels of land, or easements, needed for the sewer line that will run along Winder Highway/Ga. 53 between Martin Road and the Braselton sewer system in Jackson County, Brown said.

Work on the force main could take six to eight months to complete.

“Hopefully, that project will wrap up about the same time as the pump station,” Brown said.

“The goal is, by the end of next year, to be in a situation where we start flowing wastewater to Braselton.”

Oakwood already has bought 50,000 gallons of capacity from Braselton, “basically to deal with customers we’re bringing on line right now.”

As part of an agreement between the cities, Oakwood could acquire a capacity of up to 2½ million gallons per day from Braselton.

The South Hall city has been able to grow rapidly without its own water or system, instead relying on capacity from neighboring municipalities, Flowery Branch and Gainesville.

“What we’re seeing is, as we continue to grow as a city, we’ve got a lot more demand for service in the Winder Highway corridor,” Brown said in an earlier interview.

“We could (ultimately need) somewhere between 1 million and a million and a half gallons per day ... in that area.”

The developing area is in the Oconee basin, where Braselton’s plant is located.

Braselton Mayor Pat Graham has said the city doesn’t normally provide sewer outside the city, but Oakwood and Braselton “are really not in competition for economic development.”

Asked whether he thought neighboring pump stations on Martin Road was unusual, Brown said, “It’s unusual to have this situation in Hall County where the county and the cities aren’t necessarily cooperating on everything.”