

## Message from our Town Engineer

Mike Soyka

### Pet Waste – Why is it a problem?

Rain or snow can carry pet waste directly into waterways or storm drains, which in the case of the Town of Beekman, empty without any sort of treatment into the lakes and streams within the Town and is a cause of water pollution. Untreated fecal matter can be a source of harmful bacteria and nutrients. Just as we don't want human sewage in our water, it is important to prevent pet waste from being carried into our waterways. A recent study in New Hampshire found that dogs are a significant contributor of bacteria in surface waters.

It isn't just water quality that can suffer. Leaving pet waste on the ground, especially in public areas like parks and playing fields, may pose a risk to children, adults and even pets who can be exposed to diseases.

### Consider this...

- Pet waste carries disease causing organisms such as Giardia and Salmonella which can make water unsafe for drinking or swimming
- Pet waste left on playing fields or in parks can be unhealthy and messy...no one wants to step in dog waste at a ball field

### Here are some easy steps for dealing with your pet's waste:

- **Always carry a plastic bag** when you walk your dog. To avoid unpleasant surprises, check the bag for holes before your pet's walk.
- Use the bag as a glove to pick up your pet's waste. Turn the bag inside out around the waste, scoop it up, seal the bag, and **dispose of it in a trashcan**. You can also flush un-bagged pet waste down the toilet.
- **Don't place bagged or un-bagged pet waste in a storm drain** or hose the pet waste towards storm drains as they drain directly to streams or lakes.
- If you have a large yard, **bury un-bagged pet waste** about 5 inches deep in the ground away from vegetable gardens and waterways. Do not place in compost piles, as they may not get hot enough to kill disease-causing organisms.
- Remove waste from areas where children play or you garden.
- **Wash your hands** with warm, soapy water after dealing with pet waste.