

Additional Information Regarding Decommissioning of Wells

June 21, 2022

According to the Ulster County Department of Health, there are several concerns if a well is not properly decommissioned. Firstly, depending on how the internal plumbing of the residence is constructed, a cross connection could occur whereby should there be a sudden drop in the pressure of the distribution system (i.e. if the fire department starts to utilize several hydrants), and untreated water from inside the residence may enter the public water supply. Secondly, an abandoned well could serve a conduit for contamination of the aquifer.

The Ulster County Health District Sanitary Code refers to well abandonment peripherally on pages 29 and 32:

<https://ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/documents/health/UC%20Sanitary%20Code%202004.18.17.pdf>

There are three different scenarios that can be undertaken for decommissioning a well that have been deemed acceptable by the Ulster County Department of Health:

1. If the homeowner wants to use the well for a separate system and connect it to a hose it is required that it be a separate system and not connected to the internal plumbing in any way.
2. If the homeowner does not want to connect to a separate system and is no longer going to use the well but wants to leave the option open in the future they can “seal and secure” the well without abandonment.
3. If the homeowner wants to abandon the well they are required to follow Ulster County Health District Sanitary Code sec 5.6.1 (page 32 above) and decommission it according to Fact Sheet 4:
https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/regulations/fact_sheets/fs4_abandoning_wells.htm

The Town is currently engaging with the DEP to determine the best course of action regarding financial responsibility for this process.