

## Mason County Onsite Sewage Advisory Committee

### Meeting Minutes for 9/14/2021

- 1) Call to order: 5:03 PM at Public Works and via Zoom
- 2) Roll Call and determination of Quorum (10)  
Present: Evie Fagergren, Constance Ibsen, Thad Bamford, Jim Henry, Kim Delaney, James Medcalf, Paula Johnson, Wes Graves, Keith Fuller, Rhonda Thompson, Alex Paysse (county)
- 3) Guest introductions: Teri King, Micah Halverson
- 4) Approval of 7/13/2021. Kim made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Motion was approved.
- 5) County updates. Alex said we are still busy with permits. Luke will be out on paternity leave for a few months so it will just be Rhonda and Jeff in onsite. Otherwise, not a lot of updates from the county. Alex asked if either of the guests would like to bring up any topics to be discussed.

Micah brought up recent issues with the Glendon septic systems. He said some Glendons require basins to be installed onsite and suggested the county require inspections of the basin prior to install of the rest of the Glendon mounds. Alex suggested adding this as a topic for future discussion and that Micah as a designer could also add this as a condition on the septic permit. Micah suggested the county could inspect or the designer could also. Micah said Paul Vandervelde from Glendon said most of the issues they come across is related to errors in the basin installation and not being installed per design. The group decided to add this to the agenda for next meeting.

#### 6) Old Business

6.1) Hose tests: Alex talked about the host test question again, originally brought up by Darin. Alex proposed replacing the question "Did the drainfield pass a hydraulic test?" with "Drainfield appears to be functioning at time of inspection". Alex said this change could remove any confusion around whether the hydraulic test is required by the county. This question makes it vaguer and leaves it up to the provider to determine whether drainfield is working. Details of a hydraulic test could be included in notes if performed. Thad agreed this was a good change. Wes said this sounds good. James made a motion to adopt. Kim seconded the motion to adopt and said a vote was required. All said they wanted to adopt. Motion was approved to accept the changes as written.

6.2) Tank Volumes: Alex went over the tank sizing requirement again. He said the county is proposing to better clarify in the standards whether the septic and pump tank sizing refers to operating or flood capacity. Alex said the proposed changes would align with the state code, but Mason County requirements for tank sizing would be slightly greater than state requirements. He said this change would reduce confusion among staff, designers, and installers but would take some time to implement and enforce.

Alex said that option 2 would be to scrap the Mason County requirement and just refer to the state code. Alex said years ago it was decided to increase the tank volume requirement in the Mason County standards, so referring to the state code would be going back to how it was before.

James suggested we adopt as it is written. Alex said minimum tank volumes in Mason County are larger than the state requires. Alex explained that the goal of this proposed change is to clarify whether the septic and pump tanks are referring to operating and flood capacity. Paula said it would be good to clarify and give the installers and designers time to adjust.

Thad asked if this change would be just for new installs or repairs. Alex said it will be for all new permits but said that the county may make exceptions for repairs in tough situations.

Kim made a motion that we adopt the verbiage. James seconded. Kim said we need to take a vote. All were in approval to accept the proposed changes as written. Motion approved.

6.3) Access Risers: Alex talked about the proposed changes to our standards that would state the pump tanks need two risers if equal to or greater than 1,000 gallons. Currently it is written as pump tanks needs two risers if greater than 1,000 gallons. Alex said this change was proposed because pumpers have a difficult time pumping out of the same access riser as the pump and floats. However, during the original change to standards, it was intended for tanks with pump vaults and did not have to do with the tank volume. Alex said another option would be to just require two risers on pump tanks with pump vaults instead of requiring it based on size. Alex said this change would include education for manufacturers and septic providers with an anticipated implementation date of January 2022.

Paula said it would take more time. Thad asked what other counties are doing. Alex said to his knowledge, no other counties are requiring this. James further explained the pump vault scenario for the group. He said the pump vault components would need to be removed from the one access riser to pump and that many pumpers were unwilling to do this due to liability issues.

Alex suggested that we could require two risers when pump vaults are used and are 1,000 gallons. Thad said requiring two risers has its pros and cons. Cons are another opening for infiltration if not installed properly. Pros would be another access for troubleshooting and pumping.

Micah says we are going to have some issues with requiring tanks that are 1,000 gallons to have two risers. He suggested that if a designer designs a system with a pump vault, they should also design a system with two risers on the tank. Micah says this falls on this designer. He says keeping our standards at over 1,000 gallons will be easier on the manufacturers. Paula agreed.

Wes said the two risers on the pump tank does make it a lot easier on pumpers. He said a lot of pumpers do not want to remove components to pump. Kim asked if it would be cost prohibitive to custom order a 1,000 gallon pump tank with two lids and if this would cost more than just sizing up to a 1,200 gallon pump tank which already has two lids.

Thad said the difference between 1,000 gallon tank and 1200 gallon tank is about \$300. Thad said it would be more expensive than the 1,000 gallon tank with one lid. Kim asked the designers if there is a reason that the designers would not want to just size up to a 1,200 gallon pump tank.

Paula said she talked to Hagerman, and they said this would pose huge problems. He has a lot of 1,000 gallon tanks with one lid in stock and it would be hard to move through all that inventory before the implementation date. He would have to create new molds just for Mason County.

Alex asked if we want to just leave it alone. Paula made a motion to leave it alone. If there is use of a pump vault, the designer can highlight this as a condition. The group decided to not change the standards; therefore, no vote was required.

- 7) New Business: No one offered suggestions for new business. Alex said he will bring an update to the codes and standards at the next meeting.

Micah asked if we could have a provider meeting. Alex said we could probably have a zoom meeting if needed. Paula suggested sending the updated requirements to suppliers and installers.

Thad asked if he could pay the install fee online. He also asked if we are sending letters to homeowners anytime soon. Alex said we will send letters as time allows. He said we are waiting for some Smartgov updates, then we will push for more online septic permitting, which would include online submittals and paying fees.

- 8) Next meeting date: 12/14/21. Alex said we can do both in person at Public Works again and via Zoom.

Close of meeting: 6:00 pm

Taken and submitted for review by Rhonda Thompson