

Mason County Onsite Sewage Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for 6/29/2022

- 1) Call to order: 5:09 pm
- 2) Roll call and determination of Quorum (12)
Present: Jim Henry, Wes Graves, Kim Delany, Dave Killoran, Paula Johnson, Micah Halverson, Thad Bamford, Constance Ibsen, Evie Fagergren, Keith Fuller, Cindy Waite, James Medcalf, Ian Tracy, Rhonda Thompson, Luke Cencula
- 3) Guest Introductions: Micah Halverson, Cindy Waite, Dave Killoran
- 4) Review & Approval of 3/8/22 Minutes: Approved
- 5) Public Comment: No public comment
- 6) County Updates: Ian replaced Alex as EH Manager and will work with OSAC to improve permitting, on-site issues. Confirmed, congratulated Jim & Wes as President, VP. Sunni will fill the food inspector position; Shelly is on leave but scanning should be caught up (we can track down and provide copies of permits). 2022 OSS permits are similar to 2021 permits, county is meeting turnaround times. County sent out 730 unsatisfactory letters starting in March with approximate 30% response rate, 16% confirmed resolved (does not account for those who do not contact the county).
- 7) Old Business: Paula will let inspectors know when permit fee has been paid for Craft3 designs so permit can be issued (not very common).

It was asked what the different OSS permits are issued by the county, how are deficiency letters generated, what are the county's maintenance requirements, and penalty for non-compliance. County went over permit types, letters are auto-generated by meeting deficiency criteria from inspection, and usually only letters until permits are needed.

Thad felt ORME report with pumping recommended shouldn't necessarily be marked as deficient, should be situational; Micah recommends having tank pumped within 3-4 months.

It was asked how effective is sending deficiency letters. Do recipients contact septic professionals? 700+ letters sounds high, are legacy deficiencies included? How many OSS in the county? County notifies professionals before mailing, staggers the letters, and does receive legitimate response. Deficiency letters should only come from deficient ORME pump or O&M inspection reports, there's ~25k OSS in the county. It's been over a year since last mailing, clean water district fees will help fund future mailings.

- 8) New Business 8.1: Ian provided background on workflow chart used for building permit requirements related to OSS. Cindy stated newer version was approved since then, search under Pam Denton. County will keep searching but will continue using older chart in the meantime.

It was asked if OSAC makes recommendations to county BOH. Ian responded he would have to check bylaws but believes they do.

Jim asked about seepage pit on chart, confusion between seepage pit and cesspool, and if existing seepage pit needs to be replaced. This would affect failing seepage pits or those less than 100' to shoreline. Ian explained there's no policy for mandatory dye testing, seepage pits are not conducive to dye testing (undetectable failure), and seepage pits not meeting requirement for building permit expansions less than 100' from shoreline.

Micah inquired how Dave Windom came up with seepage pit policy, stated how chart doesn't align with planning (Shoreline Master) requirement, and asked if this is an enforceable policy. It was asked if shoreline lots should require annual O&M. Ian agreed it has been difficult to abide by policy from 1997, has been adopted by code, asked if 200' requirement should be removed. Paula argued newer chart doesn't include low-impact expansions and how voluntary upgrades account for many shoreline projects. Micah would like legal non-conforming lots included in chart. Cindy said chart shouldn't have planning requirements, Jim said health requirements can conflict with plannings.

Rhonda clarified regulated shorelines by planning definitions. Micah explained how all shoreline development requires a meeting with planning (formal or informal) and his experiences with variances and the hearing examiner. Grays Harbor and Lewis Counties require planning pre-approval for OSS according to Jim. Paula supported planning involvement especially around shoreline, Cindy agreed there needs to be good relationship between the departments. Ian added that Malissa Paulsen was leaving the county and their department has fairly high turnover. He explained if OSAC can agree on something, he can bring it to Dave Windom and BOH; he can also speak with planning to get feedback on the chart moving forward. Ian added he is in favor of less waivers/variances and explained re-split of community development department. Paula will work on section on voluntary upgrades, Jim will check with Thurston on their policy.

New Business 8.2: Constance brought up short-term rental issue, which included speaking with Kevin Shutty about an ordinance. She would like a new permit with annual maintenance required by the health department explaining Island County requires oversight of food and OSS for this industry and some counties have sanitarians inspect systems. She asked if professionals see short terms as a problem. Increasing problem? How are these systems failing? Many are buying solely to rent them, and they are failing by hydraulic overload. Paula asked if you can mark on ORME if a system is a short term, Thad suggested professionals could add comment on inspection reports. Constance said Marissa Watson may be assigned to ordinance.

Asked what the county's priorities are, Ian provided information on commissioner retreat where departments will provide priorities lists. EH issues included employee retention, clarifying sewer requirement, wells drilled within public water systems. Comments included WAC requirements, group Bs not requiring testing, and regulating tribes for OSS issues.

Jim recommends in-person meeting in September if there's voting.

Constance asked about the budget. Ian explained public health foundational funding for the county.

Close of meeting: Jim adjourned meeting at 7:08 pm.

Taken and submitted for review by Luke Cencula