

Mason County Onsite Sewage Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes for 7/13/2021

- 1) Call to order: 5:01 PM via Zoom
- 2) Roll Call and determination of Quorum (12)
Present: Constance Ibsen, Darin Ogg, Evie Fagergren, James Medcalf, Paula Johnson, Thad Bamford, Wes Graves, Jim Henry, Kim Delaney, Keith Fuller, Rhonda Thompson, Alex Paysse (county)
- 3) Guest introductions: Teri King
- 4) Approval of 4/13/2021. Constance motioned to approve minutes, Jim Henry and Kim Delaney agreed.
- 5) Public Comments and County Updates. Alex talked about how permit intake numbers have remained high and stable, similar to last time we met. Development has not slowed down in Mason County. Environmental Health has two new hires to help with enforcement and water quality issues, freeing up onsite staff to focus on permitting.
- 6) Old Business: Online RME Hose Test Question Review
 - 6.1) Alex restated the original question by Darin. Darin had concerns over the validity of a hose test when done on gravity systems when homes are occupied. If a septic professional is testing the drainfield by running water to it, but the occupants of the home have already used water that day, it can be difficult to determine how much water should really be used to test the drainfield. When a house is not occupied, the process is straight forward, and you can add the daily flow volume to the system. Alex said that there were a couple of ways we could address this, including changing or adding additional questions to the pumping or O&M reports in OnlineRME.

James suggested just noting the operating level if home is occupied and number of people living there. If house is not occupied, do hose test. Kim said during a property sale it could be difficult to get accurate information on occupancy as sellers may be untruthful. Darin said the buyer can always request camera inspection, but not sure if that should be required every time as they would add extra expenses to a home sale. Wes asked if there is one person living in a 3bd house, would you still need to do a hose test?

Alex suggested adding a question to OnlineRME, was hydrological test performed under limits of design capacity? Alex also clarified that the county is not requiring a hose test be done. What the county is requiring is an inspection be done which includes a full inspection of the septic components, including drainfield.

Kim asked what triggers a hydrologic test. Darin said when he sees a high-water level, he will do further investigation. Alex said he took notes and suggested he will draft something up and bring to next meeting.

6.2) Rhonda first went over the MC Standards Updates with regard to tank sizing. She said the WAC refers to septic tank volume requirements in terms of operating capacity. The Pressure RS&Gs refer to the pump tank sizing requirements in terms of flood capacity. Rhonda said in an effort to align with state requirements, we are proposing to change the "Volume of tank" to "Working Capacity of tank" for septic tanks. For pump tank volume, we will clarify that the 2.5 times the design flow refers to flood capacity.

Thad expressed concern that for repairs, it would make it challenging for septic tank replacements as the tanks would be larger and may be hard to fit in confined areas. Thad asked if we would allow exceptions on repair situations. Alex said we are already doing that with repairs and the county is always willing to work with providers and homeowners on tough repair situations. Alex said he researched what other counties were doing, and most did not have county specific tank sizing requirements and just referred to state requirements. Alex said this could also be an option for Mason County.

Paula said this change would be really confusing for many designers and installers as this is backwards to how the county has been approving things. She said she gets calls frequently from installers who are used to working in different counties that have trouble figuring out what Mason County requirements are. Paula said she would like us to reach out to other counties to see what they are doing- primarily Kitsap and Thurston County.

James Medcalf reminded the group that we had discussed changing the pump tank two lid requirement to be for 1,000 gallons and more, instead of over 1,000 gallons. James said it can be difficult to pump out of the same opening with the float tree and pump so it is better to have two lids. Paula suggested that if we made these changes, we should give the providers a window to adjust and say it would be effective Jan 1, 2022, as an example. Hagerman cement 1,000 gallon tanks currently only have one lid so the manufacturers would need to make adjustments as well.

Alex suggested we can take a vote to approve this, we can reach out to other counties and come back to the next meeting with more information, we could just refer to the state requirements for tank sizing, or we can table it for now. It was agreed to table it for now and we will look further into other county requirements.

Rhonda then went over the proposed pipe sizing requirements. All transport and sewer distribution lines will be plumbed with ASTM 3034 pipe and fittings. Pressure distribution systems will require Schedule 40 or better. Rhonda asked how the group felt about these changes.

Thad and James agree with piping change. Kim remembered during our last conversation that there were some instances where Class 200 may need to be used. Rhonda said she thinks those situations were rare and likely could be addressed with a local waiver, but Paula may have more insight. Paula said the situations are rare and agreed a waiver could be applied for if Class 200 needed to be used. Kim made a motion to accept pipe requirements as written. There was unanimous vote in approval for the piping requirement changes.

7. New Business: Alex went over the code updates which were last updated in 2009. He said our department is getting a lot of complaints especially around RVs and alternative living situations that do not have proper sewage disposal. The commissioners suggested code updates could help with our enforcement process. In addition to this, Alex said there are some other maintenance type updates that we are proposing.

Alex says the state allows pit toilets in the RS&Gs, but the county would like to remove them from allowed sewage disposal methods. Mason County has a lot of shoreline and pit toilets require much greater setbacks to surface water and require very deep soils. This excludes much of Mason County already, and Alex thinks the state intends them more for eastern Washington where there is not extensive shoreline.

Alex added in a reference to the Mason County Environmental Health Building Permit Policies. He added that Repair septic permits are valid for one year. The county is already doing this as allowed per WAC, but we need to update county code to reflect this and add transparency.

Alex went over the adequate sewage disposal requirement that was added to help public health staff with enforcement process.

Alex went over O&M requirements for all systems within the last year for sale of a property or transfer of ownership. Keith said it may be challenging to require inspection for all transfers of ownership as it can include divorce, quick claim deeds, estate, and foreclosure. A judicial transfer would be the exception. Keith said if the O&M inspection cannot be enforced during these circumstances then it should not be in our code. Alex said we do not have the staffing anyways to enforce this requirement on property transfer and we mostly leave it up to the buyers, sellers, and real estate agents to follow this requirement.

Jim asked if it be required for O&M specialists to locate D-box and riser to surface. Alex said no, it would not be required. Keith said he had a related situation come up recently. The O&M specialist wrote that the d-box was not dug up. Wes responded and said sometimes the D-box is 4 feet deep and is challenging to dig up by hand. Wes started writing unable to locate d-box on reports. People have complained that their company is not inspecting d-boxes so that is why they have started adding that to inspection.

Alex said the inspection shall include status and findings of septic system and perhaps we should not clarify actual components to be inspect. Alex said the state is working on these code

updates for property sales in the new WAC updates. Alex also mentioned this could affect the workload of current O&M specialists in county.

Alex went over the non-occupancy notices/appeals section.

Alex went over the removal of the contractor review board. He said it has not been used or needed in the last 8 years.

Alex asked for motion to approve changes.

Keith spoke again about the language in the O&M requirement for property sale. Kim agreed and said language needs to improve. Keith said it is not an enforceable statement and suggested to elaborate on exceptions. Paula suggested "remove OR TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP". Alex suggested those in real estate industry propose changes to language. Alex said the state code does not include exceptions so he is hesitant to include that as it may conflict with state regulations.

Teri said this new requirement would only be affecting the gravity systems, as most other systems already require annual O&M. Alex said we have about 26,000 systems, and about 60% of those are gravity systems. Thad said most systems that do require annual O&M do not get it done on annual basis.

Evie asked us if need more time to review. No one said they needed more time. She asked if everyone is in agreement to approve these changes as is. Unanimous vote to approve changes as is.

- 7) Next meeting day is scheduled for 9/14/2021. Evie asked if we want to do it through zoom or in person. Kim likes the idea of coming back together. James, Jim, Thad and Wes agreed it would be better to meet in person. Alex said he would like to move it up to Public Works building to give more room for social distancing and we can continue to have zoom call in option.

Close of meeting: 6:42 pm

Taken and submitted for review by Rhonda Thompson