



MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

DATE: 10/15/2013

REGULAR

ITEM #: 17

AGENDA ITEM: Council Policy on Non-Compliant Septic Systems in Old Village/
Potential Sewer Area

SUBMITTED BY: Dean Zuleger, City Administrator

THROUGH: Mayor Mike Pearson

REVIEWED BY: Washington County Health & Environment, City Attorney

SUGGESTED ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- Introduction of Item City Administrator
- Report/Presentation.....City Administrator
- Questions from Council to Staff..... Mayor Facilitates
- Public Input, if Appropriate Mayor Facilitates
- Call for Motion Mayor & City Council
- Discussion..... Mayor & City Council
- Action on Motion..... Mayor Facilitates

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUESTED:

The City Council is respectfully requested to approve a City Policy to provide a bridge for homeowners in the Old Village with older septic systems to use temporary measures / continue to use their systems until City sewer services can be provided in 2015-2016. *The recommended motion for this action is as follows:*

“Move to adopt the general property notice regarding private septic systems residing in the old village of Lake Elmo dated October 15, 2013.”

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Many homeowners in the Old Village area of Lake Elmo have private septic systems that exceed 20 years in age and were built under state law that did not require as much soil separation as current law. Subsequently, when these systems need to be replaced these same homeowners find

themselves with little or no room for the replacement, especially lake shore homeowners. This problem becomes compounded when the house is placed for sale with many homeowners finding that they must either discount the sales price or escrow funds for a system replacement. With City sewer services imminent, the City, in cooperation with Washington County, thought it prudent to develop an interim policy that allows taxpayers / homeowners to bridge the gap between having to install a new system and hooking up to City sewer (2015).

STAFF REPORT:

The City Administrator (after being made aware of the issue by several home owners and Council Member Smith), in concert with Washington County and the City Attorney, has constructed a two-fold policy that allows for temporary use of holding tanks for systems that are deemed to be an imminent health threat and a continued use of non-compliant systems until sewer is installed in the Old Village beginning in 2015. The policy places operational control of system review in Washington County's hands for the determination of system viability. The material change in policy for the Council to consider is that current City Code allows for a two year grace period for hook-up to City sewer when it is made available at the curb. Systems found to be either a health threat or non-complaint would not be allowed the grace period.

RECOMMENDATION:

Based on considerable review, the City of Lake Elmo staff recommends the adoption of the attached policy for interim measures to transition homeowners from private septic systems to city sewer in the Old Village or other potentially sewerred areas:

“Move to adopt the general property notice regarding private septic systems residing in the old village of Lake Elmo dated October 15, 2013.”

ATTACHMENT:

1. General Property Notice Regarding Private Septic Systems Residing in the Old Village of Lake Elmo - October 15th, 2013