



Municipality of Anchorage

Matt Claman, Acting Mayor



ON-SITE SYSTEMS TECHNICAL REVIEW BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING

Date: May 13, 2009

Members Present: Linda Kovac
Mark Musial
Joel Neimeyer
Lori Davey
Scott Hattenberg
Matt Edge

Absent: Tim Pampusch (Unexcused)

Staff Present: Dan Roth
Deb Wockenfuss
Vicki Gonzalez

Guests: Tyler Johnson
Bill Rieth
Bob Tsigonis
Tom Varney
Ted Moore

The meeting was called at order at 11:47 a.m.

Approval of minutes: Minutes of the March 2009 meeting were approved
Minutes of the April 2009 meeting were approved

Staff Report:

Mr. Roth distributed a memo to the Board written by Ron Thompson explaining the current Development Services Department re-organization that eliminated the On Site Manager position and the Sr. Plan Review Engineer position, and created an Engineering Services Manager overseeing all of the department's engineering functions. The Board expressed concern that Mr. Roth was leaving the On Site Manager position, as they felt his expertise and experience was invaluable. They felt the new re-organization would not be beneficial to the On Site program and expressed concern about the new Engineering Services Manager being responsible for too many things and an additional Board [Building Board]. There was also concern about the continuance of the ad hoc code review committee. Mr. Roth told the group that Ron Thompson would be in attendance the next day at the code committee meeting and that process could be discussed then.

There was discussion on the fact that fees only come in on new construction and COSA's. Mr. Roth stated that once the construction is complete, On Site is still responsible for that system forever, and there are no fees for

the continuing monitoring, which is why the program runs in a deficit. Ms. Davey spoke about the discussions of fees being assessed in the Hillside District Plan (HDP), and brought up the possibility of the On Site Water and Wastewater Program oversight being transferred back to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Ms. Davey said they have been in discussion with the current administration, however they were told by Mike Abbott that would be for the next administration to decide. Ms. Kovac said there is draft legislation to the community councils and they are in agreement with On Site being transferred back to DHHS and Mr. Roth being retained. She would be on board with discussions with the next administration.

New Business:

Mr. Roth introduced Bob Tsigonis of Lifewater Engineering Company. Mr. Tsigonis has a new alternative wastewater system he wants to introduce to the Municipality. Mr. Tsigonis stated that Lifewater Engineering started 10 years ago as a consulting company, specializing in "bad" ground. Mr. Tsigonis went on to explain the two different systems – tubular member and flat plate member. After the presentation, there was a question and answer session. A **MOTION** was made by the Board to approve each system for testing to qualify as a Category 3 system, with drain-field the size of a Category 2. Motion **APPROVED**. (*See attached information on system specifications.*)

Other Business:

Ms. Kovac asked the Board how they felt about Mr. Roth leaving. She is concerned the next person will not have the same expertise and asked the board if they wanted to make a motion to retain Mr. Roth.

Mr. Hattenberg felt Mr. Roth had a tremendous amount of historical knowledge, and he would support a Board action to retain Mr. Roth. This is a regulatory function and he didn't think making the cuts in this area should be connected to development.

Mr. Roth asked Mr. Rieth of SOA if Mr. Smythe (also of SOA) was aware of the change. Mr. Rieth replied that Mr. Smythe was aware and was very surprised as this is a dramatic change.

Mr. Edge felt that On Site needed to have a specific individual as supervisor and it shouldn't be lumped in with a lot of other functions. He felt that Mr. Roth was the best person and is in favor of supporting a motion to retain Mr. Roth.

Mr. Musial felt the issue was to where On Site should be. It worked well when it was under DHHS and they weren't happy when it changed. He felt they were moving away from the purpose of protecting the water supply. He thought Mr. Roth was great, but he's seen other people in that position too. He felt they needed to focus on the program and not necessarily who was the supervisor.

Mr. Neimeyer stated the mission of the Board is to protect the water – a public health function. He felt there should be a separation between public health (water) and public safety (buildings). Once a well and septic tank is installed, On Site's oversight is not finished. When a building is done, the oversight ends. He also felt that the Board should be reviewing duplexes, tri-plexes, and cluster systems. Ms. Kovac stated that the person coming in wouldn't have Mr. Roth's expertise; Mr. Neimeyer said that merging public health with public safety was not a good fit, but he understood the economics of the situation.

MOTION: Mr. Musial will prepare a draft resolution to the Mayor and Assembly reiterating the long-term, regulatory purpose of the On Site Program and emphasizing the need to move the oversight functions back to DHHS. Resolution will be prepared, approved, and signed electronically. **APPROVED**.

Mr. Rieth asked for a copy of the resolution to be sent to his department.

There was discussion on how the functions of On Site Water would be expanding with cluster systems in the HDP and how AWWU would not be responsible for those. Ms. Davey felt AWWU would not be able to maintain those systems and would not want to take on the responsibility of the cluster systems. Ms. Davey felt the funding of the program is dependent on new construction and COSAs. Mr. Roth stated On Site is not fee-based; Building Safety is based on fees. If they run out of fees, they run out of employees. Ms. Davey feels the On Site program is underfunded.

Ms. Kovac asked Mr. Roth if he would be attending the code review committee the next day. She felt that would be the last meeting and Mr. Roth stated it would be until someone else schedules one. Ms. Kovac and Mr. Roth felt that the directive to fill out the code change form did not work. Mr. Roth stated that the process used for the well code, reviewing line by line, was the same process the engineers wanted to use to review the septic code. Mr. Roth stated the engineers refused to put in any changes in writing. They want to meet every Thursday and go line by line over the code.

There were questions on the new Engineering supervisor position. Mr. Roth stated that his position and another position were eliminated at the same time; the announcement for the new Engineering supervisor came out the next day and only one person in the department qualified for it. He was asked if the other person had any experience and Mr. Roth stated zero; he owns a system that was out of compliance for a while, but that was the engineer's fault and it has been corrected.

Adjourned at 1:23 p.m.