



BERRIEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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BERRIEN COUNTY SEWAGE APPEALS BOARD

VIRTUAL MEETING (via Zoom & Streamed on YouTube)

12/2/2020 Approved Minutes

Present: Peg Kohring (Berrien County Board of Health), John Dewane (County Corporate Counsel), Dr. Gleiber (Great Lakes Scientific), Nick Margaritis (EH Manager BCHD), Randy Payne (representing for Jerry Smith), Jerry Smith, Brian Murphy (EH supervisor BCHD), Laird Willard (EH, BCHD), Saunya Bowie (EH, Program Support Specialist)

10:48 Meeting called to order by Peg Kohring

Approval of Agenda: Dr. Gleiber made a motion to approve the agenda, a second was made by Judge, motion passed and approved.

Introductions: John Dewane: virtual attendance from the city of St. Joseph; Dr. Gleiber: virtual from Chikaming Twp.; Randy Payne: virtual from Galien Twp.; Peg Kohring: virtual from Weesaw Twp.; Jerry Smith: virtual from Weesaw Twp.

Nick Margaritis, Laird Willard, Brian Murphy: physical present at BCHD office.

Approval of 2/5/2020 Minutes: Dr. Gleiber made a motion to approve the minutes, a second was made by Peg Kohring, motion passed and approved.

Suggestion to have minutes sent out for review within 2 weeks of meeting, agreed.

Owner/Installer Presentation: Mr. Jerry Smith (Randy Payne Representing) 15129 Cleveland Ave., Weesaw Twp., Section #23; for 2 acres being split from his farm.

Randy Payne: A 2 acre parcel is being sectioned off for the site of a new building. Septic would be located on NE corner of property. Planned for a 1500 gallon tank for a 4 foot sand mound system with a 7:1 slope, maintaining isolation distances from wells. There is a reserve area towards the NW corner of the lot available for replacement system in future. House will be south of drain field and there were no water issues that he found. Mr. Smith had nothing to add.

Berrien County Health Department Presentation:

Nick Margaritis: Evaluations were done on property, one on May 12, 2020 where Laird Willard did soil borings revealing clay heavy type soils down to 5 feet. Mr. Smith was given the option to hire a backhoe at his expense, to explore soils greater than 5 feet deep, he chose to do so. Dan Versaw (Versaw Earthworks) did the excavation on June 16, 2020 to 20 feet. The findings were clay type soils, brown clay down to 12-14 feet followed by blue clay to 20 feet. The seasonal high water table was noted just below top soil layer. Following the excavation, a denial letter was sent to Mr. Smith and the opportunity for the appeals process was chosen.

Regarding the proposed system chosen by Randy Payne and the topography of the land in question is as follows:

System design of the mound is typical to what we usually see here in Berrien County, it was reviewed by Nick, Laird and others in the BCHD, Environmental Health office. It follows general guidelines of mounds but in the past, these mounds are designed just a little differently. Typically for the "Allegan style mound" system referenced in this proposal, we see the need for two (2) septic tanks at 1000 gallons each for a 3 bedroom home along with a 500 gallon dosing tank with alarm (instead of a single 1500 gallon tank proposed). Removing the topsoil is typical, and it is used to cover the top of the system once completed. We typically see a total of 5 feet of clean sand (not 4 feet as mentioned in proposal) so that you are 4 feet above existing natural grade. The slope of 7:1 is exactly what we would design our systems to be. The topography of the land itself, there is a slope and the NE corner where the system is supposed to be located is higher but the land slopes towards the road to the West. The main concern we have is accommodating that slope. The high side might have 5-6 feet because of the land slope, which will have a domino effect on the mound itself, as the slopes will need to extend farther out.

Appeal Board Discussion:

Dr. Gleiber: is there any slope to the SE of that area, towards the creek/drain? Mr. Smith stated that that creek/drain is approximately 10 acres away from the proposed building site. Peg Kohring added, that drain has had high E.coli and is in agreeance that the proposed location of the building site is best available. Judge Dewane asked for clarification, how many feet away from the drain is the building site. Mr. Smith states it is 2500 feet if not more, approximately half a mile. Adding that he added field tiles to the land many years ago. Nick: there was mention of tiles in the field, are there any field tiles on this 2 acre parcel? Mr. Smith: there are none in the area of the building site that we know of, only in the south most area of the lot. Peg: any concerns of garbage disposal? Nick: typically two 1000 gallon tanks would meet the requirement for that if they decided to add one but it is noted a garbage grinder is not planned. Also noted there is no basement planned.

Nick: we have no objection to having two 1000 gallon septic tanks for a 3 bedroom house with no garbage grinder for a big Allegan mound style like this. Our only remaining objections are the 4 feet of sand. It needs to be specified that it needs to be 4 feet above existing grade. The third objection is the slope of the land itself, it needs to be addressed on the mound itself as it is laid out flat.

Randy: towards the NW corner everything slopes approx. 16 inches. From north to south there is a 16 inch drop. Drops from east to west, basically the SW corner. About ¼ of the drain field site is 16 inches high and everything slopes towards the road. If it is 16 inches lower that would make 10-11 feet longer on the slopes towards the west. Needing closer to 7 feet of sand instead of 5.

Nick: we're looking to ensure the area where the drainbed is located is not cut down in order to accommodate for the slope in the natural topography but rather kept at the high elevation and 4' ft. minimum and then as the land tapers down there is more sand for the system underneath.

Judge Dewane: What is the health risk of not building this mound system to specifications of the Berrien County Health Department?

Nick: potentially not having proper treatment of the sewage effluent and if it bleeds out then you can have raw sewage discharging onto the ground. Not being able to contain the waste properly. We are looking for more settling time in the septic tanks so that the solids separate. The cleaner we can get the effluent, treated in the main septic tanks, the better it is for the

drain bed to do its part to further treat the waste water before as it is returned back to the ground.

Appeal Board Decision:

Peg Kohring motioned to approve a 7:1 “Allegan style” mound system for a 3 bedroom home with two (2) 1000 gallon septic tanks, a 500 gallon dosing tank with alarm and with the mound 4 feet above existing grade across entire area of mound, including where it is lowest. Second by Judge Dewane, unanimous approval of all attending members.

11:13 am Meeting Adjourned