

Public Works Staff Report to City Council

Proposed Changes to Chapter 338 - House Sewer Contractor

Chapter 338 covers the requirements and responsibilities of a house sewer contractor, defined as a person licensed to work on both the private and public portions of a private sewer service. The Department policy has long been that the service extends from the building wall of the property being served, up to and including the connection to the public sewer or outlet, but the demarcation between private and public portions is not clearly codified.

Since Chapter 338 was adopted many years ago, it has not been revised. Over the past dozen years, the Sewer Utility has encountered numerous problems applying outdated areas of the chapter to a world and environment that has undergone considerable changes. In particular, the Sewer Utility has had problems with the following areas of the chapter:

- The qualifications to take the written exam to become a house sewer contractor are so restrictive that many contractors who qualify in other similar size cities do not qualify in the City of Saint Paul.
- The requirement that a board of examiners consisting of the Director of Public Works, the City Engineer, and the Sewer Utility Manager and others meet each time an application is submitted is not practical. This requirement was probably reasonable fifty plus years ago when many private sewer services were being constructed in the City.
- The lack of a statement in chapter 338 or any other City ordinance in which the ownership and the extent of the responsibilities of a private sewer service are clearly defined.

The proposed changes are as follows:

- Modify the qualifications so that Master Plumbers certified by DSI are eligible to take the written exam.
- Simplify the application process so that applications are submitted to and reviewed by the Director of Public Works or his/her designee.
- Include language that clearly defines the ownership and responsibilities regarding a private sewer service.