

Sirs,

Please accept this email as my formal objection to the proposed changes in the subject ordinance.

I have resided in the Highwood neighborhood for the past 31 years. As a result, I am very familiar with this ordinance, since my property has been subject to this ordinance since its inception as a consequence of the recommendations of the Highwood task force.

My objection is the recommendation to extend the period for inspection and pumping from 2 to 3 years. This change can only lower the reliability of the systems and increase the probability of operating problems and/or system failure.

I am well aware of the problems the city has had administering this ordinance. However, the conclusion that the problems are due to staffing shortages is true by consequence of the city's inability to develop compliance procedures and processes that result in adherence to the ordinance. During more than one two year cycle I have had to call DSI to get the required forms, make payment, etc., etc.

I do not think that increasing the complexity of the current ordinance and reducing staffing is a formula for improving the situation.

I think the size of this problem should be kept in mind also as there are a very small number of systems in the city and there have been no major issues with these systems, to my knowledge. My neighbor's system failed a couple of years ago, but was replaced with an upgraded system in the ensuing weeks. If a system fails, the owner/occupant must rectify the situation as my neighbor did, or as anyone with a normal sewer connection would have to do if their sanitary drain failed. And a system failure is no more of an environmental catastrophe than a conventional sanitary sewer system failure.

The inspection requirement has not proven effective to catch system problems, and certainly will not improve going to a three year cycle. Since most systems are trench systems, there really is nothing to inspect...if the system is draining properly, it is operating properly. Reliability and longevity come from ensuring the system does not become plugged, hence pumping every two years is preferred.

I realize that these systems are difficult for the city to administer. However, here in Highwood we have no practical city sewer option given the terrain. This of course is exactly the situation for most outstate properties, perhaps the city could learn something from their colleagues in the more rural settings. I am pretty sure one conclusion would be that the city is way ahead of their colleagues in terms of the overall quality of their installed systems.

A simplified compliance process could yield the benefits the city seeks. First, send a bill biannually for the septic system maintenance and water test. Have the owner send it back with

payment, along with a receipt for the pumping and water test results. Continue to have the pumpers document the pumping as they do now when they unload. If necessary, the city could verify compliance in this manner. Once every two years for a handful of systems.

One additional question is what is the specific change in septic tank sizing/liquid capacities?

Thank you in advance for considering my comments. Please consider the opportunity here to simplify rather than complicate, and to keep in mind the goal to have these systems well maintained.

Sincerely

Steven C. Jones
22xx Douglynn Lane E.
St. Paul, MN. 55119