



City Council

Approval of Ordinance Amending Wastewater Regulations for Septic Systems

Agenda Date: 1/3/2017
Agenda Item Number: 4.F
File Number: 16-1209

Type: ordinance **Version:** 2 **Status:** Passed

Title

Approval of Ordinance Amending Wastewater Regulations for Septic Systems

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve the ordinance amending Olympia Municipal Code Chapter 13.08.090, regarding wastewater regulations for septic systems on first reading and forward to second reading

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve the ordinance amending Olympia Municipal Code Chapter 13.08.090 regarding septic systems.

Staff Contacts:

Diane Utter, P.E., Water Resources Engineer, 360.753.8562
Andy Haub, P.E., Director of Water Resources, 360.753.8475

Presenter:

None - Consent Calendar Item

Background and Analysis:

Background and Analysis has not changed from first to second reading.

Within Olympia and its urban growth area, there are about 4,200 septic systems. As Olympia grows, these systems can pose a public and environmental health risk. Because of this risk, Olympia has fairly strict rules regarding septic permitting. One rule is that developers cannot subdivide a property and then build on the new lots with septic systems.

In June 2016, Council approved an ordinance amending Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) 13.08.090 regarding the permitting of septic systems. This was in response to goals and strategies in the 2013

Wastewater Management Plan. The ordinance did not change the rule about subdividing lots.

However, the changes deleted a sentence saying only lots created before November 21, 2006 can be eligible for septic systems. Staff recommended the change to allow developers to combine small lots, creating a larger lot that would be eligible for a septic system.

This change created confusion in the code. It is no longer clear enough that a developer cannot divide a lot to create two or more lots eligible for septic systems. After consulting with Community Planning & Development staff and Legal counsel, Public Works staff recommends amending the OMC to re-introduce the date requirement.

The proposed amendment re-introduces the date reference from the previous code. It also clarifies that a property owner can combine multiple lots to create one large lot that is eligible for a septic system.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The amendment will clarify the regulations. This will benefit the community by reducing confusion regarding development with septic systems.

Options:

1. Approve an ordinance amending Olympia Municipal Code Chapter 13.08.090 regarding regulations to septic systems. This provides clarity in the code for septic system permitting.
2. Request staff to revise OMC amendments based on Council feedback. This will require additional time, during which the code will remain ambiguous.
3. Do not adopt OMC amendments as presented. This may result in development proposals that are not in alignment with the Wastewater Management Plan.

Financial Impact:

No financial impact anticipated.

Attachments:

Ordinance