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ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

WASTEWATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

JANUARY 11, 2011

ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS BOARD ROOM

1160 E. 1ST AVENUE, CHICO

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- I. Preliminary Items
 - A. Call to Order

Nick called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.
 - B. Role Call and Determination of Quorum

Lauralyn Lambert, DC Jones, Chris Hartman, Nick Weigel, Jan Hill, and Bill Dinsmore were present. Ken Shuey, Rick McCauley, Rick McCauley, and Buddy Nottingham were absent.

A quorum was established.
 - C. Introduction of Guests

Priscilla Rawlings, Will Arnold, and Doug Flesher attended as alternates to members present. Brad Wood, Mike Elliot, and Patrice Sullivan attended as guests. Brad Banner and Vance Severin attended the meeting on behalf of the Public Health Department.
 - D. Review of Minutes

The minutes from the December 7, 2010 meeting were reviewed. DC made a motion that the minutes be approved. Chris seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.
 - E. Agenda Review

Brad reminded the committee and guests of Doug Fogel's retirement dinner at Basque Norte planned for Saturday, January 8. It promises to be the social event of 2011. Dress in government-casual.
 - II. Non-Action Items
 - A. Brad distributed an announcement for the Certified Wastewater Professionals Workshop and reviewed the agenda with the committee. The workshop will be led by our advisory committee and will include on the agenda a panel representing five surrounding jurisdictions.
 - B. Brad explained that work to develop an alternate to IAPMO certification is temporarily on hold until a comprehensive package of fee modifications are developed by EH to take before the Board in coming months.

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- C. After discussion, the group agreed that the next regular advisory committee meeting will be by the second Tuesday of March, March 8, 2011. Meetings will be scheduled quarterly thereafter on the second Tuesday of the month, unless matters arise requiring more frequent meetings.

III. Action Items

A. Draft Exceptions to Watertightness Testing for Septic Tanks

1. Brad presented a draft proposal to exempt new septic tanks from watertightness testing in certain cases. The group did not agree with the proposal. DC recommended that the technical justification for continuing to require the testing be clearly stated by the committee. Justification discussed for continuation of testing in all cases included the following:
 - a. The integrity of the septic tank is a primary concern in septic system installation;
 - b. Treatment taking place in the soil is short circuited effluent discharged from a leaking septic tank;
 - c. Leaking septic tanks pollute groundwater and are a public health hazard;
 - d. Leaking tanks allow intrusion of water into the tank that can compromise the drainfield; and
 - e. Septic tank testing can be deferred until after the water source is installed if desired by the applicant.
2. Jan made a motion to leave the existing Manual language in place without insertion of an exemption. Bill seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Draft Prohibition of New Permanent Secondary Dwellings Utilizing Seepage Pits

1. Brad presented the draft prohibition, based on the logic that if seepage pits are not allowed for parcel splits, they should not be approved for new secondary dwellings.
2. Lauralyn pointed out that zoning places restrictions on the approval of secondary dwellings. Nick reminded the committee that, in the past, the committee has opposed use of on-site wastewater regulations to control land use decisions. Chris pointed out that the requirements in the Manual are very detailed and restrictive, so secondary dwellings should be allowed if all the Manual's requirements are met. Bill and Jan expressed concern that seepage pits are the least desirable type of septic system due to their potential to discharge wastewater into the aquifer.
3. Bill made a motion to approve the draft prohibition against use of seepage pits for secondary dwellings. Chris seconded the motion. The motion failed on a tie vote, 3-3, with Bill, Jan, and DC voting in favor of the motion and Nick, Chris, and Lauralyn voting against the motion.

C. Draft Exceptions to Requirement for Pressurized Distribution Following Supplemental Treatment.

1. Brad presented draft exceptions that would allow gravity dispersal following supplemental treatment under certain conditions and explained that pressurized distribution can add thousands of dollars to the installation cost of a septic system.
2. Mike discussed the rationale for pressure distribution, explaining that without it the supplementally treated effluent is discharged into the first portion of the drainfield and the needed additional treatment in the soil will therefore not take place.
3. DC made a motion to leave the existing Manual language in place without insertion of an exemption. Jan seconded the motion, and the motion passed 5-1, with Bill casting the dissenting vote.

D. Draft Wastewater System Repair Interpretation

1. Brad asked the committee for comment and feedback on the draft repair interpretation.
2. The subject of septic tank watertightness testing was discussed, as was the issue of whether there are differences between a interpretational policies relevant to bank certification upgrades vs. failing system repair. Paradise's repair procedures were referenced a number of times and a good model to follow. Brad was asked to explain Butte County's repair process.
3. Nick asked Brad to prepare for the March meeting the following:
 - a. As suggested by Bill, a revised draft that is written in terms of when things will be required, rather than in terms of when things will not be required.
 - b. As suggested by Chris, the forms and written procedures followed by Butte County for repairs (such as the Site Assessment Form).
4. Nick asked the committee to review the revised draft as soon as it is prepared by Brad while it is fresh in people's minds and to jot down notes and comments to bring to the March meeting.

IV. Agenda Preparation for Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for the second Tuesday of March, March 8, same-time, same-place.

V. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.