

Nags Head Local Business Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

April 9th, 2015 Minutes

Nags Had Town Hall; Conference Room

Committee Members Present: Gayle Drummond, Jody Crosswhite, Bobbie Stager, Annette Ratzenberger, Bob Sanders, Ralph Buxton, Anne Farmer, Gus Zinovis, Commissioner Renee Cahoon, Deputy Town Manager Andy Garman, Deputy Planning Director Kelly Wyatt, Septic Health Coordinator Todd Krafft.

Public Present: No members of the public present.

Commissioner Renee Cahoon opened the meeting, welcomed committee members and introduced Todd Krafft, the Town's Septic Health Coordinator to give a brief presentation of on the Town's septic health and water monitoring program after adoption of the minutes.

Adoption of Minutes: March 26th, 2015. Gus Zinovis made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented, Annette Ratzenberger seconded the motion. The minutes were adopted by unanimous vote.

Todd Krafft updated the committee on the components of the Septic Health Program including onsite septic inspections, incentives such as \$30.00 voucher on your water bill when you have septic tank pumped, loan programs, water quality monitoring and continual education. Mr. Krafft noted that while it is controversial subject he has not noticed a substantial increase in ground water elevation in relation to septic failures. Additionally, while water monitoring has indicated fluctuating levels of bacteria it may be attributed to dog waste, wildlife, stormwater runoff, etc. and without specialized testing of DNA it cannot, at this time, be linked to septic waste. Todd stated that previous studies by the EPA had concluded that onsite septic systems were more suitable for this area than piping waste to a treatment facility.

Jody Crosswhite inquired about density issues/concerns, noting that he had numerous properties where tanks were pumped regularly and employees of septic companies had told him that the rising water table was becoming problematic. Todd Krafft noted that there are many factors to septic failures including storms, standing water, over occupancy, etc.

Jody Crosswhite noted that he was a member of the Septic Health Taskforce at the programs conception, that it was a unique and impressive program and that providing a means for property owners to know the history of their septic tanks, when it was last pumped would be most beneficial. Todd stated that there is a database of that information for anyone who has participated in the program and that they could simply contact him for that information, recommendations and updates.

When asked about the frequency one should have their tank inspected and/or pumped Todd explained that it is dependent on the use and occupancy of the home. A year round family of 4 is not as likely to

need their tank pumped as often as over-occupied, heavy rental homes. Todd explained how innovative systems often have alarm systems associated with them and that when the maximum gallons have been exceeded/over saturated the alarm will sound and the operator of the system will be notified. There are several on the island that Todd must service often.

Todd discussed with the committee how crucial regular inspections and pumping is. Explaining that through this program you can have your tank inspected for free, that if your tank is pumped you receive a \$30.00 credit on your next water bill and that in situations where the cost of your having tank pumped is too much you can apply to the septic health loan program.

Ralph Buxton inquired about whether or not additives really helped tanks, like RidX, etc. Todd stated that scientists had found no real benefit to the additives, that someone could put yeast down there system if they wanted to be proactive. Todd explained how septic systems function (BOD, Biochemical Oxygen Demand) and the hazards of putting food into your system/garbage disposal.

The committee agreed that this information should be kept readily visible on the Towns website and to consider including this information in a newsletter. Commissioner Cahoon also noted that it may be information the Visitors Bureau could have on their website.

Todd reiterated much of the concern/problem originating from over occupied homes and that there needed to be an educational piece, that realty companies and management companies and other stakeholders could be help get the information out.

Jody Crosswhite mentioned a presentation from Eddie Goodrich that discussed numerous small plants as opposed to one large. Todd stated that these were most common on golf courses and required much education in that there was a lack of understanding of gray water and its safety in certain applications. Bobbie Stager noted that this concept may be ideal for development of the Dowdy Tract in that the community could actually see/understand the benefits and safety of its use.

Deputy Planning Director, Kelly Wyatt updated the committee on the status of the nonconforming sign ordinance and passed out a draft document for review. Ralph Buxton wanted to ensure that the percentage of repair did not include monies devoted to changing the sign face, it was established that it did not. Bobbie Stager commented that her husband had experience with signage and after researching his information concurred that the price associated with the installation of pilings was minimal. Bobbie Stager expressed concern with the ordinance language in that one may claim sign damage as accidental when it was not. Deputy Town Manager Andy Garman stated that would be difficult to regulate/calculate.

Deputy Town Manager Andy Garman updated the committee on the landscaping/buffering ordinance language. He noted that the proposed amendments were in draft form and kept somewhat simple in that more detail can be included during the Unified Development Ordinance re-write. The highlights of the ordinance are that trees no longer must be spaces on 10' centers, but can be clustered. A minimum of 50% of the tree species must be evergreen, as opposed to 80% and much greater emphasis on preservation of existing vegetation. Mr. Garman felt as though this would be flexible review process

where other site improvements such as parking spaces may be taken into special consideration. Commissioner Cahoon requested that the committee read through the ordinance and make any notes/questions/concerns to be addressed at the following meeting. The committee felt as though having a professional landscaper come in and give a presentation would be beneficial.

The committee briefly discussed information provided by Principal Planner Holly White related to trolley systems – the committee was again asked to review the information for a more in depth discussion at a later meeting.

Commissioner Cahoon thanked all the committee members for their participation; the next meeting was scheduled for April 22nd, 2015 at 2:30 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.