

**SEPTIC TO SEWER CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**SEPTEMBER 18, 2019**

Meeting of the Septic to Sewer Citizens' Advisory Committee of the Town of Ocean Ridge held on Wednesday, September 18, 2019 at 8:30 AM in the Town Hall Meeting Chambers.

**CALL TO ORDER (00:24)**

The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Chair Hennigan.

**ROLL CALL (00:34)**

Assistant Town Clerk Kathie Gatewood led the roll call which was answered by the following:

Chair Neil Hennigan	Present
Member Ron Kirn	Absent
Member John Lipscomb	Present
Member Roy Schijns	Absent
Vice Chair Arthur Ziev	Present

Let the record show that Member Ron Kirn and Member Roy Schijns were absent with notice.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (00:55)**

Chair Hennigan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES (01:15)**

1. Approval of August 8, 2019 minutes.

Chair Hennigan requested the minutes to include his opening statement as Exhibit A.

**Vice Chair Ziev moved to adopt the August 8, 2019 minutes as amended; seconded by Member Lipscomb. Motion carried 5-0.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT (02:36)**

Chair Hennigan called for public comment, there was none.

**DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS**

**1. Town Engineer Report (03:21)**

Town Engineer Tropepe introduced Adam Swaney and Lou Aurigemma as part of the team who helped to prepare the report. Mr. Swaney is a business partner with Engenuity Group who will be speaking about cost estimate and conceptual layout of different types of systems. Mr. Aurigemma is a professional engineer who works with Engenuity Group occasionally on projects, such as, septic-to-sewer conversion. He has over three decades of experience in government with respect to treatment facilities, he was the City Engineer for the City of Coral Springs at a 125,000 population, the Utility Director for a town with a population of about 60,000; and also, the Executive Director for the Riviera Beach Utility District. She said that Mr. Aurigemma will be speaking about the different types of systems, rates and how utilities charge residents.

SEPTIC TO SEWER CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

Town Engineer Tropepe explained that Town discussions of septic-to-sewer conversion started over 20 years ago with an Environment Committee. She said during this time Hurricane Irene greatly affected the Town and the focus changed to storm water management. She said today sea-level rise and changes in our environment are at the forefront. She noted that recent legislative sessions have introduced legislation to address algae blooms, which is a big task. She furthered stated that several scientists that have gone before the legislature and have explained that in their opinion there is a direct link between septic systems and algae blooms; especially when the septic systems are located densely within each other near water bodies.

Town Engineer Tropepe told the committee that it's important that we have on the record and have people in the audience and residents understand the three different options the costs associated with it and where we need to go from here so with respect to single-family residences. She stated there are approximately 730 single family homes and to date Town Staff have received virtually no complaints with respect to people's individual's septic tanks and they seem to be managing them fine. She explained that in recent years new residents have been installing advanced treatment systems which are very complex and expensive septic and drain field type systems. She said the systems cost approximately \$40,000 to install. She predicted that moving forward more residents will install these systems as bigger and more extravagant single-family homes are built. She stated that Ocean Ridge has over 900 multifamily units with approximately 15 package plants.

Mr. Swaney began the slide presentation discussing cost estimate and conceptual layout of three different types of systems. Mr. Aurigemma further discussed the slide presentation with information on rates and how people are charged for conversion.

Town Clerk Note: The referenced slide presentation can be found on the Town's Website.

**2. Treatment Plants & Septic Systems Profile Draft Report by Member Ron Kirn (01:39:30)**

Chair Hennigan informed the Committee that Member Kirn has collected information about package plants from open comments of the prior meeting and reaching out to communities within the town. He said Member Kirn has compiled the information into a preliminary report that will be presented at the next meeting.

**3. Committee Member Comments & Discussion of Next Steps (01:41:56)**

Chair Hennigan invited Town Engineer Tropepe to the next meeting to discuss the other half of her report regarding potable water. He also stated Member Kirn will present his report at the next meeting.

Acting Town Manager Tracey Stevens stated there were previous questions from the public regarding another town or cities ability to annex any portion of the Town of Ocean Ridge. She said the Town received a legal opinion from the Town Attorney, Brian Shutt. She read the following legal opinion into the record:

SEPTIC TO SEWER CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

Annexation in Florida is governed by Florida Statutes Chapter 171. Section 171.043 provides the requirements that must be met for an area to be annexed. Paragraph (1) of section 171.043 reads that only unincorporated areas may be annexed; no part of an incorporated area may be annexed. Thus, unless the Town of Ocean Ridge decides to un-incorporate and not be a City, another municipality may not annex any part of the Town of Ocean Ridge regardless of how many services they provide to the Town.

Public comment: Jerry Lower, 2 Harbour Drive North, asked if any of the sea level rise concerns with underground lift stations and related construction are included in estimates based on keeping roads at the current height or are we accommodating a predicted sea level rise of some form. Chair Hennigan asked to expand the question further by inquiring if there is a difference in vulnerability between vacuum and gravity systems. Town Engineer Tropepe stated that over the years the Town has raised roads in low elevation areas. The challenge is a constructability issue because the Town cannot adversely affect homes that were built in the 1950s, and that they can only raise to a certain elevation before those residents would not be able to use their driveways. Mr. Lower asked if the proposals that they are outlining take into account a potential 1 or 2 foot sea level change or will the Town need to come back in 20 years to re-engineer and raise the levels of these things as roads have to be raised. Mr. Swaney stated the proposals so far have not been designed to that level and that this is a conceptual phase but that this subject matter will be included in future proposals. Mr. Lower asked if a shared vacuum system where one property overloads the system would have potential to impact other properties on the same system and would a setup be created where each individual property has their own rather than sharing. Town Engineer Tropepe said vacuum pits were a challenge and when they design systems they take into consideration sea-level rise and peak flows. Mr. Lower asked which types of systems being proposed is most or least impacted by potential power outages. Mr. Swaney stated the vacuum system is the easiest because no electricity is required for vacuum pits. He said the only power source needed is at the pump stations which will have backup systems. Mr. Lower asked if backup generators would be incorporated into the system. Mr. Swaney confirmed.

Rich Schmitt, 9 Ocean Harbour Circle, asked if abandoned systems fall into a community association's responsibility to deal with or is it included in the cost estimates to take care of the old systems. Mr. Swaney replied that cost estimate is only considered the cost of converting the wet well tank itself and it is assumed everything else would remain as-is. He said if someone wanted to remove any other infrastructure associated with the package plant there would be an additional cost. Mr. Schmitt asked if the state or county required associations to fill or remove abandoned plants or tanks. He also asked if someone had an injection well would it fall onto the associations to take care of the costs to remove them. Town Engineer Tropepe replied that costs would be negotiated and become a discussion item as the committee moves forward. Mr. Schmitt suggested that associations be given advance notice if they are required to incur abandonment/removal costs of systems.

Betty Bingham, 1 East Ocean Avenue, inquired if there was any differential in cost if Ocean Ridge runs its own pipes compared to Boynton Beach owning their own pipes. Mr. Swaney replied that the town cost share and the city cost share will have to be integrated into the negotiation.

SEPTIC TO SEWER CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES SEPTEMBER 18,  
2019

Nancy Hogan, 37 Hibiscus Way, asked if a range of expected cost has been calculated for homeowners. Mr. Swaney replied that the costs were on one of the presentation slides.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:17 AM

Minutes prepared by Assistant Town Clerk Gatewood, and adopted by the Septic to Sewer Citizens' Advisory Committee on October 17, 2019.

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Chairman Hennigan

Attest:

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Karla Armstrong, Town Clerk