

SEPTIC TO SEWER CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
AUGUST 8, 2019

Meeting of the Septic to Sewer Citizens' Advisory Committee of the Town of Ocean Ridge held on Thursday, August 8, 2019 at 9:00 AM in the Town Hall Meeting Chambers.

**CALL TO ORDER (00:22)**

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Hennigan.

**ROLL CALL (00:32)**

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

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE (00:45)**

Chair Hennigan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES (01:12)**

1. Approval of July 15, 2019 minutes.

Member Kirn noted that the minutes identified the Colonial-Crown-Manor Disposal System, Inc. as a private Statute 629 for-profit company, when in fact, it is a private Statute 620 not-for-profit company. Member Kirn corrected the name of the town where he was involved in sewer conversion to Chelmsford, MA.

Chair Hennigan clarified that the company he worked for listed in his bio was Battelle Memorial Institute, not Intel Corporation. Chair Hennigan also noted that on page 7 that the word "remains" should be "mains". Chair Hennigan suggested on page 8, paragraph 4 that it be made clear that the costs mentioned were regarding the Oceanfront Park.

Vice Chair Ziev noted that in his bio his wife's name is Meri, not Mary.

**Member Kirn moved to adopt the July 15, 2019 minutes as amended; seconded by Vice Chair Ziev. Motion carried 5-0.**

**DISCUSSION / ACTION ITEMS**

**1. Opening Statement by Chair Hennigan (04:20)**

Chair Hennigan welcomed everyone to the second Ocean Ridge Septic to Sewer Citizens Advisory Committee meeting. Chair Hennigan remarked that this meeting was an opportunity to outline the Committee's purpose and objectives; and most importantly, to listen to input.

Chair Hennigan explained that the Septic to Sewer Citizen Advisory Committee is a newly formed advisory panel appointed by the Town Commission of Ocean Ridge to assist Town Staff

and residents. Chair Hennigan recalled the discussion for the need of a separate citizen's committee at the April Commission Meeting that resulted in the adoption of Resolution No. 2019-09 at the June 3, 2019 Commission Meeting.

Chair Hennigan noted that the Commission recently identified an immediate need for a foundational assessment of the Towns Infrastructure as a necessary integral part of the upcoming potable water supply negotiations. Chair Hennigan further noted that the 30-year Agreement for Services with the City of Boynton Beach expires in November 2020. Chair Hennigan explained that Boynton Beach Utilities supplies the water to the Town owned infrastructure. Chair Hennigan advised that technical evaluation, by Town Engineer Tropepe, is ongoing and the report will be presented to the Committee at the September meeting.

Chair Hennigan added that the recently revised Town of Ocean Ridge Comprehensive plan in the section titled "Conservation Element" directs "an in depth look at sanitary sewer installation". Chair Hennigan remarked that the last time an assessment was conducted, it occurred between 1998 and 2000, with the final report of the then named "Utilities Infrastructure Advisory Board" being submitted in July 2000.

Chair Hennigan asserted that the Commission saw the opportunity to combine these tasks with the ongoing search for a more comprehensive solution to the problem of aging and ailing condominium Homeowners Association (HOA) septic package plants before it becomes a crisis.

Chair Hennigan expressed that as the Commission evaluates, they cannot ignore the difficult, often controversial, complications of climate and sea level rise. He emphasized that the Committee will be challenged by the comfort and security of the status quo as they measure the costs of voluntary, incremental environmental improvements and finally compare them to those of a potential dramatic, compulsory, full scale mandated transition.

Chair Hennigan summarized that both the Town Commission and Town Staff see a capable citizens committee as an efficient, effective solution to applying the required resources to these efforts. He added that the members possess a broad skill set gained through a wide range of work experiences and individual accomplishments, and they intend to collegially and constructively focus these abilities on this task.

## **2. Statement of Purpose (09:33)**

Chair Hennigan explained that he created the Statement of Purpose which was vetted by Town Staff. The Statement of Purpose proposed the following steps: Assess, Explore, Evaluate, Educate, Communicate, and Recommend.

Chair Hennigan presented the Statement of Purpose details to attending Town residents, Town Staff, and the Committee, for comment and possible adoption. (Town Clerk Note: A copy of the Statement of Purpose is attached as Exhibit A).

There was consensus of the Committee to use the Statement of Purpose as a framework with the understanding that it could be amended in the future.

### **3. Committee Discussion (22:12)**

Chair Hennigan requested feedback from the Committee regarding the Statement of Purpose and asked for any additions or changes that should be made.

Member Kirn commented that the Statement of Purpose was an excellent format and the framework looked good. Mr. Kirn had nothing to add or change.

Vice Chair Ziev appreciated the amount of effort put into the Statement of Purpose, stating it shows how much work is potentially involved within their scope. He suggested at some point to divide the Statement of Purpose between septic to sewer and water as the issues are different and there should be two tracks. He also noted that the Statement of Purpose could be seen as overwhelming due to how much is involved in the process and suggested breaking sections down into manageable chunks for better focus. Chair Hennigan mentioned that Vice Chair Ziev's concerns may be addressed in other sections of the agenda.

Member Schijns appreciated the thinking and research that went into the Statement of Purpose due to its structure, which as a consultant, he likes.

Member Lipscomb commented that the Statement of Purpose is a good roadmap and place to start. Member Lipscomb agreed with Vice Chair Ziev's comments. Member Lipscomb brought up the possible costs involved per unit and remarked that he did not think all residents would voluntarily comply.

The committee discussed conversion and the possibility of a mandate (by the Town or State) being required if there wasn't a voluntary buy-in with residents.

Chair Hennigan recognized the Coastal Star and reporter Rich Pollack and Executive Editor Mary Kate Leming for their in-depth series on Septic to Sewer.

### **4. Public Comment (37:31)**

Joe Belmonte, 5600 North Ocean Blvd., stated the work involved with this project is impressive, but feels it will take a long time to implement. Mr. Belmonte suggested that the south end of Town be converted first due to their immediate need and their past involvement to negotiate conversion.

Terry Brown, Harbour Drive South, conveyed that the Statement of Purpose is excellent but that a larger vision was missing. Mr. Brown stated there is no mandate, and that only two agencies can order a mandate which hasn't happened yet. Mr. Brown voiced concern that once a sewer pipe is added to the south end of town that new development will be sought by developers that differs from the town's vision, which is low level, low density.

John Fugo, 17 Adams Road, stated he is the president of 3-17 Adams Road HOA. He stated 75% of his time as the HOA president is spent managing the property's brand new fast wastewater

treatment system to keep it compliant. He stated that having these types of systems everywhere is not good because of the amount of time and costs involved in trying to keep them in compliance.

Betty Bingham, 1 East Ocean Avenue, stated that she objects to Boynton Beach taking over any portion of land or alleys or controlling a sewer system in Ocean Ridge.

Christine Schulte, 7 Adams Road, complimented Chair Hennigan on his Statement of Purpose presentation.

## **5. Information Gathering (50:00)**

Chair Hennigan explained that this was a question and answer session, and that the Committee at its discretion will engage in dialogue if necessary. Chair Hennigan invited representatives of condo associations who would like to speak to approach the podium.

### **a. Condo Association Status Updates by HOA Representatives**

George Lettis, President the Colonial Ridge Club, stated that Boynton Beach told Colonial Ridge Club that they needed to maintain their main line and if the main line was clean that Boynton Beach would eventually take it over. Based on that knowledge, the property scoped a line and found 372 feet of cracked pipe. After scoping the line, they lined it at a cost of \$50 per foot. They submitted a video to Boynton Beach, and they were told they were good to go by Boynton Beach. He suggested that other HOAs, Associations, and Condos do the same.

Sharon Urbanek, President of Oyster Bay, asked if everything applying to a condo in this process will also apply to a co-op. Chair Hennigan confirmed. Mrs. Urbanek offered that Oyster Bay had 20 units, one of which is for the manager, and that they are on septic and drain field. Mrs. Urbanek stated that the system was put in place during the 1960's.

Tona Callahan, Property Manager of Crown Colony Club, stated they have 148 residential units that are attached to a package plant that is shared with two other communities. She stated they use a concrete injection well system that is rated for 400,000 gallons a day. She further noted that during the peak season they operate at around 65,000 gallons per day, and during the off season they operate at around 10,000-15,000 gallons per day. Callahan stated that the system is 50 years old and in excellent condition and operated by U.S. Water. She noted that their internal pipes have been scoped and although they are in good condition, they will be making minors repairs and lining the pipes. She stated they may possibly line the whole system to prevent future damages.

Rick Schmidt, 9 Ocean Harbor Circle, stated he was representing Ocean Harbour Estates which has 15 residential homes. Mr. Schmidt told the committee that they use an in ground package plant that was built in 2002 and operated by Aqua Data. Mr. Schmidt stated the condition of the plant was very good and that they have a backup

generator system in the event of any power outages. He explained that the system has a very sophisticated programmable logic control system that controls the plant automatically that gives them issues due to age and requires occasional repairs. He was unsure of the capacity but guessed that it ran at about 25 to 40 percent. Chair Hennigan asked if they used a drain field or injection well. Mr. Schmidt replied that there are two injection wells in the system.

John Fugo, President of 3-17 Adams Road, stated they had a fast system with four tanks in the ground with two large drain fields at either end of the development that he believes were put online in 2016 and is operated by Environmental Engineering. Mr. Fugo stated 12-13 people occupy 3-17 Adams Road on average per year.

Nadine Magee, Wellington Arms, stated that Aqua Data cares for their system. She told the Committee that Lantana's beaches are currently shutdown for high bacterial counts. Mrs. Magee stated that the residents of Wellington Arms want to move forward with conversion, doing whatever is fastest and best to achieve it.

Jay Cohen, President Ocean Ridge Yacht Club, stated they have 50 units, and have an above ground rusted metal containment package plant (with a drain field) that is over 30 years old. Mr. Cohen stated they have made significant investments for pumps and pieces into the plant in the last year. Mr. Cohen explained that it would be in the Ocean Ridge Yacht Club's best interest to have the septic to sewer conversion fast-tracked. He noted that they have a well that could be utilized for transition to a sewer system.

Benjamin Bailey, representing Ocean Ridge Management which is a group of seven cooperatives in Ocean Ridge from 6823 to 6880 North Ocean Blvd, including The Ocean Club. Mr. Bailey stated they have three water treatment facilities (two are concrete) that he believes are around 50 years old. He stated the treatment plants are in good condition with no issues and they are operated by Aqua Data. The Committee asked if they used a drain field or injection to which Gary with Aqua Data replied that two plants used drain fields and the other one released into the lagoon on Spanish River Drive.

Gary from Aqua Data told the committee that his company runs 11 systems within the Town of Ocean Ridge. Gary stated that all of the systems he runs are in good shape.

Vice Chair Ziev commented to Member Kirn that he sensed that Crown Colony Club did not want to join Boynton Beach. Member Kirn directed Vice Chair Ziev to the Crown Colony Club Property Manager Tona Callahan. Mrs. Callahan stated that because the plant is in excellent condition they do not see the need to rush a decision at this point.

While discussing the dynamics of the five main communities within Ocean Ridge, Vice Chair Ziev asked Member Kirn if there was any way that the Colonial Crown Manor Disposal System given its excess capacity could add Turtle Beach and the

Ocean Ridge Yacht Club communities. The Committee discussed whether the question was outside of their scope at this time.

There was a consensus of the Committee to allow the question regarding the capacity of the Colonial Crown Manor Disposal System.

Vice Chair Ziev asked Member Kirn if the Colonial Crown Manor Disposal System could take on additional capacity.

Member Kirn replied that based on known data that the answer is yes; however, the cost of piping both communities to the plants would be very costly.

b. Residential Septic Issues by Individual Homeowners (RSF)

Terry Brown, Harbour Drive South, mentioned at the earlier meeting that someone asked about the plan of action for people who are installing expensive septic systems and could possibly have to pay for septic to sewer conversion as well, it stated that this would be a large expense to the small households in Ocean Ridge.

**6. Committee Member Comments & Discussion of Next Steps (01:23:03)**

Chair Hennigan proposed a working group model where each member becomes an active lead in a given area. Chair Hennigan distributed a document showing a division of labor among the members. All members agreed with the outline of duties given which are as follows:

Chair Hennigan and Vice Chair Ziev will carry out duties related to the Potable Water Agreement.

Member Kirn will lead regarding package plants and assessment surveys.

Member Schijns will lead regarding RSF septic and other municipality conversions.

Member Lipscomb will lead regarding networking and relationship building surrounding grants.

There was a consensus of the Committee to use the proposed working group model.

Acting Town Manager Stevens reminded the Committee that once information is gathered that it cannot be distributed to other committee members due to the Sunshine Laws, and that information gathered needs to be filtered through Town Staff.

The Committee discussed their first priority which is the Boynton Beach Potable Water Agreement. Chair Hennigan will lead the discussions of infrastructure ownership with the Town Engineer, the Town Attorney, and the Building Official. Vice Chair Ziev will lead the financial element of the Potable Water Agreement.

**7. Set Meeting Schedule (01:36:41)**

Chair Hennigan proposed that the next scheduled meeting occur on Wednesday, September 18, 2019 at 8:30AM. After discussion surrounding a regular day and time for each meeting to occur, the committee agreed to meet on Wednesday, September 18, 2019 and the third Thursday of each month at 8:30AM thereafter.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM

Minutes prepared by Assistant Town Clerk Gatewood, and adopted by the Septic to Sewer Citizens' Advisory Committee on September 18, 2019.

---

Chairman Hennigan

Attest:

---

Tracey L. Stevens, MMC, Town Clerk

**Exhibit A**

**SEPTIC TO SEWER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING, AUGUST 8, 2019**

**OPENING STATEMENT BY CHAIR:**

Welcome to the second meeting of the Ocean Ridge Citizens Septic to Sewer Advisory Committee. Our first meeting on July 15 was anything but routine. After the introduction and seating of the committee, it was quickly dominated by the Boynton Beach water/sewer presentation. Now, it is our opportunity to outline for you our purpose and objectives and most importantly to listen to your input.

The Septic to Sewer Advisory Committee is a newly formed advisory panel appointed by the Town Commission of Ocean Ridge to assist and advise them, Town Staff, and residents. This is our town taking proactive steps. Discussion of the need for a separate citizens committee began in earnest at the April Commission Meeting and resulted in the adoption of Resolution No.2019-09 at the June 3, 2019 Commission Meeting. Staffing of the Committee, one member per Commissioner as per the resolution, was completed at the July Commission meeting.

The Commission recently identified an immediate need for a foundational Assessment of the Towns Infrastructure as a necessary integral part of the upcoming potable water supply negotiations. The 30 year term of the Agreement for Services with the City of Boynton Beach expires in November 2020. Boynton Beach Utilities is the current water supplier connected to our Town owned infrastructure. That technical evaluation, by the Town Engineer, is ongoing and the report will be presented to this Committee in September.

The recently revised Town of Ocean Ridge Comprehensive plan in the section titled "Conservation Element" directs "an in depth look at sanitary sewer installation". The last time such an assessment was conducted, occurred in the 1998 thru 2000 timeframe, that's two decades ago, with the final report of the then named Utilities Infrastructure Advisory Board being submitted in July 2000. We, the Committee, collectively come to this Status and Needs Feasibility Assessment after this long interlude.

In addition, the Commission saw the opportunity to combine these tasks with the ongoing search for a more comprehensive solution to the problem of aging and ailing condominium HOA septic package plants before it becomes a crisis.

Understandably, as we evaluate, we cannot ignore the difficult, often controversial, complications of climate and sea level rise. Likewise, we are going to be challenged by the comfort and security of the status quo as we measure the costs of voluntary, incremental environmental improvements and finally compare them to those of a potential dramatic, compulsory, full scale mandated transition.

In summary, both the Commission and Town Staff see a capable citizens committee as an efficient, effective solution to applying the required resources to these efforts. This committee is composed of resident volunteers from across our Town. The members possess a broad skill set gained through a wide range of work experiences and individual accomplishments. We

intend to collegially and constructively focus these abilities on this task.

How do we transform direction into meaningful action? Let's be guided by a Statement of Purpose.