

Approved Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
July 19, 2022

Participation by videoconference

Attendees:	Bruce Douglas	Denise Johnson-Terk
	Sheri Young	Justin Willis
	Ernie Christianson	Mark Bannon
	Carl Fuller	Bryan Harrington
	Justin Willis	Roger Thompson
	Eric Deratzian	Craig Jewett
	Jeanne Allen	Karen Adams
	Cristin Ashmankas	Mary O’Leary
	Gunner McCain	Catherine Bryars
	Scott Stewart	Dick Bachelder
	Lisa Stevens	Steve Revell

Scheduled meetings:

Note: The meeting scheduled for August has been cancelled.

September 20, 2022	Virtual
October 18, 2022	Virtual
November 15, 2022	Hybrid
December, 20, 2022	Virtual

Minutes:

The draft minutes of June 21, 2022 meeting were reviewed and accepted as drafted.

Currently proposed Changes to the Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules (WW Rules):

Bruce said that he has not finished the updates. He is getting the increased staffing in place that is needed to administer the funding now available from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is requesting 5 additional staff for a 5-year period to handle the new workload. There is approximately \$15,000,000 approved to replace or upgrade failed water and wastewater systems. About 250 applications have been identified as candidates for assistance. The next step is for DEC Environmental

Enforcement Officers to make a site inspection and determine if the water or wastewater system qualifies for a grant. DEC estimates that the funding will cover at least 750 systems. The money will be paid directly to the designer and the installer. Sheri asked if the designer will be paid for their work up-front. In some cases, the cost of the site investigation and design preparation can be paid up-front. If the project is approved for construction the money can be paid during the project based on the amount of work that has been completed.

Innovative/Alternative (I/A) Systems:

The DEC Regional Engineers said they have been getting questions about a requirement that all I/A systems have a septic tank sized in accord with the April 12, 2019 Wastewater and Potable Water System Rules (WW Rules) prior to the I/A system unless the equivalent capacity is included in the I/A system. The original approvals for I/A systems were based on the design package submitted by the manufacturer that were referenced in the approval documents and not all the approved system have this capacity. There are concerns that not everyone involved in the design and installation of the I/A is aware of this requirement. The DEC said that service providers doing maintenance and annual inspections have reported a need to pump some I/A systems at very short intervals of 2-3 months. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) discussed this information and the designers present indicated that they have not experienced this problem. TAC members suggested a return to the original approval requirements unless a determination is made as part of a renewal review that a particular I/A system needs additional storage capacity prior to the treatment part of the system. The DEC noted that the WW Rules allow for a smaller septic tank based on a case specific analysis. Justin asked if the Regional Engineers are authorized to make this decision. Bruce said he will try for a global solution, probably returning to the original approvals in the meantime. Sheri said that it is important that designers be notified of any concerns that are being discussed so they can provide good service to their clients.

Failed System Guidance Document:

Mary O'Leary discussed her progress on preparing a guidance document to help decide if, and how, a wastewater system has failed. A document prepared by the State of Georgia was used as a starting point. The checklist is currently 13 pages long and is targeted at Licensed Designers and new DEC staff. The checklist includes sections on site characteristics, history of operation and maintenance, and the type of building and its occupancy. Ernie asked if the checklist included questions about wastewater strength. The current draft does not include this topic. The checklist is under review by the Regional Engineers and some Licensed Designers. Once the checklist is finalized, the DEC will provide training to Licensed Designers. The training will include credit towards the required continuing education for Licensed Designers. Sheri recommended that the training be done during the winter. Karen suggested that the checklist be sent to the local Health Officers.

The checklist could be modified for routine inspections and a checklist could be created for use by system installers.

Alternatives to Current Requirements for Water and Wastewater Systems:

The TAC discussed this topic and identified a list of issues that need to be reviewed:

1. Buildings without piped water. This category might include an onsite well with a hand pump, water hand carried from an off-site potable water system, a non-potable source, or other options.
2. Wastewater flow reduction which might include composting toilets, water reuse systems, or other options.
3. How to manage the disposal of material from composting toilets.
4. If the toilet waste is separated, how to dispose of the remaining wastewater?
5. Should the current design flows be changed? This would include the flow per bedroom or another category in the WW Rules. The two-bedroom minimum requirement should be reviewed.
6. What are the concerns if a person with a non-traditional water or wastewater system wishes, or needs to because of aging or health issues, upgrade to a traditional system?
7. Should there be a minimum lot standard while also allowing non-traditional water and wastewater systems to be installed?

The Eco Sanitation Group is continuing their work. The primary focus is on composting of fecal matter and will result in a best practices document.

Other Topics:

Karen said that in Colchester she is dealing with requests to add accessory dwelling units to existing single-family residences. This often requires that the existing well pump be replaced because the current WW Rules require a 5 GPM capacity per living unit. This seems excessive. Justin and Steve said they were dealing with the same issue and agree that the existing requirement is excessive, and that the TAC should review this.

Bruce noted that while the Regional Offices are pretty much fully staffed at this time, there are processing more than 3,000 applications per year which is near the historical maximum. With the expected increase in workload from the DRPA funding, it is important to get additional staffing in place as soon as possible.

Bruce discussed his plan for a hybrid meeting in November and asked for input on when and where. Steve said just pick a date and go with it. Ernie suggested the Montpelier Room at the National Life Building because it is large enough to have some separation between attendees.

Bruce will notify the well driller TAC members that we will be discussing water design flows and alternative systems at the next meeting.

As decided at the last meeting, there will be no meeting in August.