

***Town of York ~ Planning Board
Septic System Inspection Ordinance Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes ~ March 27, 2014
York Public Library***

Present: Lew Stowe (Chair), Peter Smith (Secretary), Wes Cook, Priscilla Cookson,
Leslie Hinz, Mike Kleist, Rob Rockwell, Helen Rollins

Absent: None

1. Chairman Lew Stowe called the meeting to order at 10:08am. There were no members of the public in attendance.
2. Lew noted that a “parking lot” list of open items that fall outside of the scope of our current objective was distributed along with the minutes of our last meeting and that he intends to add to this list as warranted during subsequent meetings.
3. Meeting minutes for March 20th were approved after a suggestion from Helen to remove the statement in item #7 to wit; *“Mike pointed out that, if it’s that difficult to get an inspector to attend a meeting for one hour during the winter months, it’s likely to be just as difficult to get them out to do a septic inspection on short notice when a property transfer is dependent upon it.”* Other committee members disagreed, saying that the statement was “pertinent, important and a red flag.”
4. Lew introduced Bob McDonald, a Certified Professional Septic Inspector from *Omni-Spect Home Inspections*. He was asked to address the following questions:
 - 1) *What role does a Certified Inspector have in septic inspections?*
They are authorized to perform inspections and report on the results.
 - 2) *How would you designate the proper person to do inspections?*
I would choose a Certified Inspector over a Licensed Site Evaluator (who would end up hiring a Certified Inspector to perform the inspection anyway).
 - 3) *What would that person be expected to do during the inspection itself?*
See Bob’s presentation notes for details – see #8.
 - 4) *How does a person obtain the appropriate qualifications?*
The best way would be to attend a GSDI training class in New Hampshire – see #8.
 - 5) *What’s the difference between a Licensed Site Evaluator and a Certified Septic Inspector?*
A Licensed Site Evaluator is a Soil Scientist/Engineer whose role is primarily to design new systems or corrections to failed systems.
5. Leslie noted that there are 539 Certified Septic Inspectors currently listed in Maine. It’s believed that there are only 8 Licensed Site Evaluators (Soil Engineers) in Maine.
6. Bob explained that the state of Maine requires successful completion of a one-day class every five years to maintain certification to perform a Level 1 inspection. He further explained the steps of a Level 1 inspection in great detail, including what documentation is required for each step.
7. Bob then went on to describe a Level 2 inspection which is required by the State of New Hampshire. Primarily, the differences from Level 1 relate to more aggressive physical incursions into the system.
[Note: a typical inspection costs \$250 - \$300]

8. Bob offered to provide a copy of his notes which are part of a PowerPoint presentation used in a Granite State Designers and Installers (GSDI) training class from New Hampshire.
9. Lew asked “How do the results of an inspection get back to town authorities?” Wes pointed out that Maine state law specifically states that inspection report must not be provided to anyone except the client who requested and paid for the inspection, especially not to the town.
10. Leslie pointed out that the town has a list of qualified inspectors, but does not provide recommendations.
11. Bob recommended that the town create a list of all certified septic inspectors located south of Saco and send them a questionnaire asking “What do you do when you perform an inspection?” Based on the responses, create another list of only those who described activities that are consistent with a level 2 inspection.
12. Rob commented that it’s likely that inspectors who operate out of New Hampshire would be interested in work in Maine.
13. The group started to review the individual items in *Article 13-A.3.C – Inspection* until Pete asked Bob if he would be willing to review the list himself and send us his comments on any that could be improved. For example *Article 13-A.3.C.3.b* should include “*condition of the input baffle.*”
14. Rob shared his concern that, even if we have a perfect process and methods, if there is no requirement for the inspector to give a report to the town, the ordinance has no “teeth” in it. Leslie will contact the state plumbing inspector and someone at DEP to find out what the reasoning is for the alleged state law and if it can be overridden by home rule. Pete suggested that we may need to ask the York Town Attorney for additional advice or ruling.
15. After thanking Bob for sharing his wisdom with us, the group returned to the task of reviewing the ordinance language in detail, starting at line #68 of the working copy. Leslie noted that she is keeping an official version with all of our agreed upon updates annotated.
16. Starting at line #80, the following updates were identified:
 - a) #81 change *Licensed Site Evaluator* to *Certified Septic Inspector*
 - b) #85 change *identifies corrective actions* to *identifies the need for corrective actions*
 - c) #85 insert *any required corrective action must be prescribed and designed by a Licensed Site Evaluator/Soil Engineer and meet York Plumbing Code requirements.*
 - d) #88 remove *date of property transfer, or within 3 years of the and if no property transfer occurs*
17. The review was suspended at line #148 due to meeting time constraints.
18. Our next meeting will be at 10:00am on Thursday, April 3rd at the York public Library.

Meeting adjourned at 12:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Smith, Secretary