

**SEWAGE, WASTEWATER, AND SANITATION (SWS)
HEARING ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

Members

Matthew Buehler, Chair
Kenneth Lund
John Adams
Chad Carnes, P.E.
Chris Reede
Matt Smith- Alternate
Julianne Zotter- Alternate

Thursday, October 3, 2024

5:30 p.m.

**Washoe County Administration Complex,
Building B
Health District South Conference Room**

**1001 East Ninth Street
Reno, NV**

5:30 p.m.

1. *Roll Call and Determination of Quorum

The following members and staff were present:

Members present: Matthew Buehler
Kenneth Lund
John Adams
Chad Carnes, P.E.

Staff present: Latricia Lord
Josh Philpott
David Kelly

Members absent: Chris Reede
Matt Smith – Alternate
Julianne Zotter, P.E.– Alternate

2. *Pledge of Allegiance

Those present pledged allegiance to the flag.

3. *Public Comment

As no public comment was presented, the public comment period was closed.

4. Approval of Agenda – October 3, 2024

Mr. Lund moved to approve the agenda of the October 3, 2024, Sewage, Wastewater, and Sanitation (SWS) Board regular meeting. Second by Mr. Carnes, motion approved unanimously.

5. Approval of Draft Minutes – August 1, 2024

Mr. Adams moved to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2024, Sewage, Wastewater, and Sanitation Board regular meeting. Second by Mr. Lund, motion approved unanimously.

- 6. Public Hearing** – Hearing to determine whether to recommend approval to the District Board of Health for a variance for APN 021-270-18 from sections 020.075 & 020.080 of the Washoe County District Board of Health Regulations Governing Sewage, Wastewater, and Sanitation. The variance requests permission to install a septic system on an undeveloped parcel that is within 200’ of a municipal sewer connection. – **(For possible action)**

Staff Representative: Latricia Lord

Ms. Lord reviewed the staff report, the history of the project and the variance request to allow for the installation of a septic system on the relevant parcel in spite of municipal sewer being available within 200’. She indicated that the variance was specifically based on financial considerations and the fact that regulations do not allow permit for a septic to be issued when municipal sewer is so close. She covered that that the property has fractured rock and would require an engineered system, and that while not designed yet, would be required to meet all septic regulations if the variance was approved. Program policy is that staff take a neutral stance on financial hardship requests and leave those decisions to the SWS Board and Board of Health.

Greg Bischoff, contractor for the property owners, represented the variance case. He discussed the initiation of the project and how the property was very steep and rocky. The steepness precipitated the need to get an easement from Bureau of Land Management just to have reasonable access to the site where a home could be built. That site is actually over 600’ from the available sewer line and 175’ higher in elevation. They originally submitted a Building permit with a septic but it was refused because of the availability of municipal sewer – that is why the variance was requested.

He reiterated just how rocky it was and stated that he had submitted a video of the digging to demonstrate just how difficult it was. The Board acknowledged how rocky the site was. He stated that originally the homeowners wanted to hook into municipal utilities but after the road was constructed and the difficulty was encountered, they thought it might not be viable. In the end, they costed it out and it would cost \$240,000 more than an engineered septic system.

He pointed out that there was a street that was on septic currently. The Board asked about why and what type of systems they had. He replied that he didn’t know either and also didn’t know when the houses were built as opposed to when sewer was installed. He said regardless, the property owners were aware that their system would have to be a sand filter and they were working with WestEx to come up with an appropriate design.

Mr. Bischoff discussed other problems with connecting to the municipal utilities such as the “scar” that would be left from the excavation that other homeowners in the area would not appreciate. The scar, aside from being a blemish, could also lead to erosion – he cited the recent flash flooding that occurred in the area.

The conversation turned to additional costs. The County had indicated that the tie in would also require an approximately y100’ extension of the main with a manhole. These costs were not included in the estimates provided. He said that was the only way the connection would be allowed. He pointed to the estimates from Mr. Phenix, both with the sewer by itself or in a

trench with the water. He said the costs far exceeded the cost for septic installation on the property to an extent the variance was appropriate.

Mr. Buehler asked about how the design would account for erosion due to the slope. Mr. Bischoff replied that that they would have to flatten out an area for the septic and they were aware that they would have to make adjustments as needed. He mentioned that a lot of dirt would be generated during construction, and it would be used for dealing with the slope as well as daylighting issues. Mr. Carnes asked if the project had a special use permit. He suggested that the amount of earthwork could generate one. He indicated that there were additional concerns with running a pipe down the hill to connect to sewer, such as the separation of solids and liquids in the pipe. He said one way to deal with that would be install a grinder pump, creating a slurry that would help with that. Mr. Bischoff said he was aware of that concern but that in all of his discussions with engineers, no one could clearly articulate exactly how much slope was too much. Mr. Carnes brought up other potential permitting that might be required if the property was to attempt to connect to municipal sewer. Mr. Bischoff agreed and said that the extra cost would likely then exceed \$240,000 more than a septic system.

Mr. Carnes said that he was generally on board but made a couple of suggestions on the location for the septic that might work better and require less effort due to slope. He suggested that using rockery walls might be another way to deal with the slope issues as well. Discussion turned to the fact that any grading for the repair area must be done at time of installation. In the end, Mr. Bischoff acknowledged that he, and the property owners were aware that the variance was only the first step. Any other requirements for the construction would be handled – but they needed the variance to proceed.

Mr. Lund clarified that the conditions on the site were challenges for septic installation but asked Ms. Lord if there were options to engineer around those challenges. Both Mr. Bischoff and Ms. Lord responded in the affirmative.

There was some general discussion surrounding future uses for the Bureau of Land Management places for the future.

Mr. Carnes expressed his concern that whatever grading or other work that needed to be done for the construction of the system have to go through review processes for others. The question went to legal counsel if they needed a special condition for that. Legal counsel asked for clarification. Ms. Lord stepped in and indicated that there was already a Building permit in place and that all appropriate reviews would take place without any special conditions. NNPH staff would ensure that the Building departments were aware of all of the work being done for the septic.

Mr. Lund made the motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Mr. Adams. Motion passed unanimously. The hearing was closed by Mr. Buehler.

Conditions of Approval

The Board did not make any conditions of approval.

Motion

Motion made by Mr. Lund “Move to present to the District Board of Health a recommendation for approval of Variance Case H24-0003VARI (Johnson and Chris Adeyanju) to allow the permitting and construction of a septic system as requested.

Second by Mr. Adams. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Buehler closed the public hearing.

9. *Public Comment

As there were no public comment requests, closed the public comment period.

10. Adjournment –

At 6:11 p.m., Mr. Buehler adjourned the meeting.
