

City of Afton
3033 St. Croix Trl, P.O. Box 219
Afton, MN 55001

Meeting Date May 18, 2016

Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee

To: Natural Resources and Groundwater Committee members
From: Ron Moorese, City Administrator
Date: May 18, 2016
Re: Septic System Compliance Inspections

Background

Washington County Public Health staff indicates that approximately 90% of septic systems built before 1972 are non-compliant with current standards. A much smaller but still significant percent of septic systems built in the later 1970's and 1980's are also non-compliant. However, there are very limited regulations in place to require the inspection of these systems to determine if they are compliant. There are currently two events that trigger a required compliance inspection. One is when a property is being sold and the other is when there is a building permit application for improvements to a house and the value of the improvement is 50% or more of the value of the existing house. Both of these triggers occur at a time when resources are available to pay the cost of replacing a non-compliant septic system.

NRGC Input Requested

The City Council is considering whether to adopt local regulations to put in place additional triggers for septic compliance inspections to accelerate the identification and replacement of non-compliant septic systems, and is requesting input from the NRGC regarding whether this is a good idea, and if so, what types of events could be used as triggers for compliance inspections. One option discussed by the Council is whether to reduce the threshold value of the building permit trigger to \$50,000 or another amount, rather than 50% of the value of the house. Washington County Public Health staff also indicated some cities are requiring mandatory inspections of septic systems, either in targeted areas or on a periodic basis.