

April 2016

On-Site Septic and Water Systems by Peter Rimbos, Corresponding Secretary

On Monday, April 4, the Area Council held its regular monthly meeting. Topics included: (1) On-Site Septic Systems; (2) On-Site Wells; and (2) Area Council Election/Citizen Survey Results.

On-Site Septic Systems

Robin Hill, On-Site Septic System (OSS) Program Manager with Seattle and King County Public Health, discussed septic systems and health impacts. Public Health's role is help to ensure the safety of septic systems which treat wastewater for those homes and buildings are not connected to public sewer systems.

Ms. Hill mentioned there are ~90,000 OSS in King County with more than a third installed before modern safety standards. There are an unknown number of failing systems, which contribute to water contamination of drinking water wells, surface and ground water, marine waters, and shellfish beds.

It was recommended OSS owners not flush household chemicals, diapers, solid food, etc. into there systems. It is recommended systems be inspected at least every 3 years and pumped when needed. Unfortunately, due to limited funding, Public Health at this time can only respond to technical requests and provide oversight of polluted areas. Sustainable funding sources are being sought to provide an OSS program to benefit OSS owners, perform proactive inspections, and prevent contamination from failing systems.

Public Health is updating its OSS Management Plan, which was last updated in 2007. The Plan includes a prioritization of work tasks to meet citizen needs. A Work Group--which includes of representatives from: OSS Service Industry, Government Agencies, Building Industry, Homeowners, and Businesses--has been tasked over the next 6 to 8 months to help in the Plan update, as well as identify potential sources of sustainable funding for the OSS program. Area Council member Warren Iverson is participating on the Work Group and provides periodic reports at Area Council monthly meetings.

More information can be found at <http://kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/wastewater.aspx>

On-Site Wells

Lynn Schneider, Health & Environmental Investigator, also with Seattle and King County Public Health, discussed private wells and arsenic testing. Public Health's role is to prevent communicable disease and illness associated with drinking water from small public and individual private water systems. It has regulatory oversight for small public water systems (Group B) serving 2-9 connections and individual private wells. The Washington State Department of Health regulates the larger public water systems with ten or more connections.

Ms. Schneider mentioned a particular concern regarding drilling a new well. If arsenic is detected above the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standard of 10 parts per billion, the County does not allow you to treat it and, thus, will deny a permit for the well. King County opted out of the Group B public water system program, so regulation is under the State Department of Health, which strictly applies the EPA standard. Ms. Schneider stated there are isolated areas where such Arsenic levels might be found, such as mountain and coal mining areas (the State Department of Health provides information on Arsenic at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/334-156.pdf>).

More information can be found at <http://kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/ehs/water.aspx>

Election/Citizen Survey Results

Rob Morris, Chair of the Area Council's Recruitment, Outreach, Survey, & Election Committee, along with Shannon Evans, a Senior at Tahoma High School, presented results of our recent Election/Citizen Survey. The Area Council thanked Ms. Evans for her excellent work and due diligence and wished her well in her upcoming freshman year at the University of Washington.

After all Election/Citizen Survey results are analyzed, they will be published on the Area Council's web site and in local newspapers.

Annual Community Service Area Meeting

On Wednesday, May 4, from 7 to 9 PM King County will hold its Annual Greater Maple Valley/Cedar River Community Service Area Meeting at

the Hobart Church (27524 SE 200th St). The meeting will be hosted by the King County Executive's Chief of Operations, Rhonda Berry. In addition, King County Councilmember Reagan Dunn and King County Sheriff John Urquhart will be speakers. Members of the Public will be able to speak with representatives from King County Departments such as Transportation, Permitting, Public Health, Natural Resources & Parks, etc., as well as pick up valuable information.

Next Area Council Meeting

Meetings are held the first non-holiday Monday of each month. The next meeting will be May 2. A Public Comment period at the beginning of each meeting provides an opportunity to voice issues of concern to Area Council members and government officials in attendance.

