

October 16, 2017

Committee/Staff Report to Council - Re: Septic System Re-inspection

From: Septic Re-inspection Committee

For Consideration by Council on October 24, 2017

A proposed Septic System Re-inspection Program (*a program intended to identify and prevent problems before adverse consequences occur*) was presented to Council on February 28, 2017. The proposed program although initially supported by Council was halted to allow further deliberation and consultation.

On March 28, 2017, Council requested that the Septic Re-Inspection Committee (SRIC) provide a supplementary report to address three questions/issues:

1. Statistical data for costing major repairs and projected failure rates,
2. Administration and enforcement costs,
3. Haulers concerns/comments

This report was prepared and presented to Council for consideration on June 13, 2017.

At the February 28 meeting, Council also established a sub-committee of three Council members to investigate funding sources to assist a property owner who might experience severe financial hardship should their sewage treatment system require major repairs or replacement.

In addition, Council then requested the Committee advertise and hold Open House sessions for the purpose of explaining the proposed program and to obtain public input. Two such sessions were held: August 5, Kennebec Community Hall, Arden and August 16, Soldiers Memorial Hall, Sharbot Lake. These sessions were well attended with 31 and 33 members of the public attending respectively.

Summaries of the comments, suggestions and concerns raised at these sessions were then provided to all Council members for their consideration in the September 12, 2017 Council agenda package.

Also, the public was encouraged to submit at their convenience any additional comments, suggestions and concerns to the municipality at septic@centralfrontenac.com or to individual Councillors.

This input, as outlined above, has been received and considered by the SRI Committee.

As a result of this consultation process and in responding to Council's various questions, the SRI Committee remains *fundamentally in support of the program proposal submitted to Council in February 2017*. (Program details are contained in the previous Report to Council.)

The proposed program is a preventative rather than a reactive measure where actions would only take place after a serious problem(s) develop.

There are however, suggested adjustments to the proposed program:

1) that the program be the "**On-site Sewage System Assessment Program**" **and that it be extended to include all classes of sewage systems.**

2) that provision be made for more persons to be trained and authorized by the municipality or Principal Authority to perform assessments as would be done by the Pumpers and Haulers.

3) that the Visual Assessment form (to be completed by the pumper/haulers and other appointed qualified licensed assessors under the program) include a recognition of all sewage system types which may exist on a property; i.e. Classes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. (See Attachment A)

4) that if, within 5 years of program start-up, there is NO INFORMATION received about a known occupied/developed property, then the Township and/or its designated Principal Authority under the Building Code Act may initiate *a property inspection under existing methods and means already available to the municipality under the Building Code Act.*

It is understood by the SRI Committee that implementation of a separate "Mandatory Re-Inspection Bylaw" under the Ontario Building Code Act (OBC) **may not be required** where sufficient justification exists for an official inspection after the 5 year voluntary compliance window.

5) that the Township request Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) provide, on a recurring/routine basis, sewage system assessment information regarding those commercial operations that fall over the 10,000 litres/day water use criterion. This will expand the local data base

and assure area residents that such operations are in compliance with regular system maintenance requirements within the municipality.

All other program requirements and procedures outlined in the Report to Council of February 28, 2017 remain supported by the SIR Committee.

In summary these include:

- 1) There will be two phases to the program:
Phase 1 - Data Collection - Voluntary Phase (5 years)
Phase 2 - Follow-up as required and available under existing legal means
- 2) All occupied/developed properties in the Township fall under the program.
- 3) Pumpers and Haulers wishing to provide services within the Township are to be licensed under a By-Law (Municipal Act) and be trained to provide a visual Assessment regarding the condition of a property's on-site sewage treatment system(s) - any and all class systems should be identified at pump-out.
- 4) Those wanting only an assessment and not a pump-out of their tank may do so by utilizing existing service providers; e.g., KFLA Public Health, Mississippi Rideau Sewage System Office (Conservation Authority) or *additional assessors* trained under the program. (*Note: strict Conflict of Interest requirements will be required and applied.*)
- 5) Cost for an Assessment is to be paid by the property owner. (Current estimated costs for the filing of an Assessment Report range from \$25 to \$100 if combined with a routine Class 4 tank pump-out and \$100 to \$300 if a stand alone assessment is requested.
- 6) Visual Assessments will be done on standard forms with Green, Yellow and Red designations and all resulting assessments are to be filed with the municipality (See. Attachment **B**).
- 7) Information/education about system operations is to be encouraged and maintained through the Township's website "Septic Sense" and through handouts provided by those performing Assessments.

The SRI Committee remains convinced that **the proper maintenance of a septic system reduces the risk of negative health and environmental impacts, and can significantly increase the lifespan of the system.**

Literature and related evidence examined by the Committee (over a period of several years) strongly supports the reasons why both the system owner and the Township **need to know** that a septic system is operating properly.

These are to;

- protect human health, (e.g., the migration of dangerous strains of bacteria like E-coli),
- protect water resources (e.g., the excessive migration of nutrients like phosphorous),
- lengthen septic system life,
- reduce current and future costs, and
- protect property values (for the owner and municipality)

The SRI Committee also believes that the implementation of good local environmental policies are more effective and less expensive - for all - than restoration efforts.

Recommendation

That the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Central Frontenac support the proposed "**On-site Sewage System Assessment Program**" including those adjustments outlined today, and

that staff be directed to prepare a draft Licensing Bylaw for Pumpers and Haulers and other potential Assessors wishing to participate under the program.