Deer Ridge Homeowners Association Annual Meeting

February 25, 2024

Schyler Schubach began the meeting with an update on the ILEPA issues and our current financial situation and Considerations for where we'd like to set dues for 2024 for this year.

**Update on the ILEPA**

Since the subdivision was developed we have been required to have monthly monitoring processes for our outfalls that our homes are connected together.

Waste from each home goes through your individual septic systems. Fluid that leaves your septic tanks then flows through a tertiary sand filter, the fluid then goes through a collection pit that contains chlorine tablets, it then flows into common collection tubes. Those common collection tubes drain into the ponds at various locations. And the IEPA requires us to monitor what's draining into those ponds at those various locations. We have nine (9) outfalls for the subdivision on the current permit.

 Each month we pay to have someone who has a wastewater testing license to collect water samples from each of our outfalls. The ILEPA requires the tester to be licensed to take these samples. The individual comes out collects samples that get sent to a lab. And the results are filed with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Since the subdivision was built, we've had violations most months.

Our waste systems are not designed to meet the current standards that we're testing for. This has been an issue from the advent of the subdivision we've had over the past 25 years. We as an HOA have consistently worked with the ILEPA to find a resolution.

In 2023 the IPA turned our case over for enforcement to the Illinois Attorney General's office. Up until that time we had not had our case turned over for enforcement. We are now involved in formal enforcement with the attorney general. Conversations are now taking place with the Attorney General's office and their attorneys rather than the ILEPA. The ILEPA still participates in the process. The ILEPA are the technical experts, but it is really in the hands of the Attorney General's office to determine where to go next.

Since we were notified, we have reengaged with Farnsworth engineering. The ILEPA and the Illinois Attorney General's office are very receptive of the work we've done with Farnsworth. It's been fairly inexpensive. Jason HOA treasurer will talk about this, but we've been able to put together a budget to support these efforts.

The ILEPA is requiring a formal action plan and that plan to be filed with the state as a binding agreement. Farnsworth will be helping to draft this agreement when the time comes.

The HOA has agreed with the ILEPA to more accurately monitor the nine (9) outfalls. We have been informed that in the past our specialist was not correctly testing the samples from the outfalls. Based on the erroneous data we would like to have better, more accurate data. We have agreed to 12 months of monitoring to get a new, accurate baseline of our sample data.

To be able to correctly sample, we have agreed to purchase a dissolved oxygen and pH meter. The ILEPA also told us that the testing actually has to be done within 15 minutes of taking the sample. The purchase of the meter will help us test immediately after taking the sample.

This is something that we've never done before. We've already purchased the meter that the operator will use it. The cost was about $1,300 to $1,400. With this meter we've agreed to ensure that the testing is actually occurring as required by the IPA.

The second item we've agreed to ask our homeowners to submit to the board when they have their septic system pumped out. We will need to record the amount of sludge removed, the date serviced, and the size and capacity of your home septic system. Please submit this to Scott Shook when you have this information. We will maintain this data and use the data when we file to renew our outfall licenses. The IPA, called the report a semi annual Sludge report.

Another item that will help us to meet standards is that homeowners are also asked to place chlorine tablets into their system each month.

Based on the past data we have agreed to a 12 month sampling period. We will make sure that we're collecting the samples in a way that's prescribed by the IPA and get a new baseline of our monthly results and violations. At that point we'll have quality data we can rely on. This process gives us 12 months to evaluate what needs to be done and to work with Farmsworth for possible options.

We have begun discussing installing a small treatment system that can be placed at the end of outfalls. The systems are relatively inexpensive and might help us meet the standards. Once we establish that 12 month we will have more credible data to understand where to go next.

**Question on tablets**. Are we required to add chlorine tablets to our systems.

Reply - Yes, once a month.

**Queston**-Do I have to have my septic tanks pumped out? We are suggesting that if you have not had your system pumped in a long time, it would be our recommendation have septic tanks cleaned out.

**Question** - Did we used to have someone add the chlorine tablets to our systems. We did but discontinued that service. When the test results continue to fail that. And the cost to have them add the tablets became cost prohibitive.

**Question** What does resolution look like?

If you ask the attorney general or the ILEPA The resolution is we no longer have violations, that we have a system that meets the standards. We think that they are conscious of the fact that finding that solution may be cost prohibitive, may not ultimately be feasible.

We're a a small subdivision with limited resources. They're looking for cooperation and progress, our hope is that we are able to come to some sort of reasonable agreement again.

The next step, you know after the 12 months, we'll determine with Farnsworth. Are there any feasible solutions? You know, and you know if they're financing needed, all those next steps. But we're certainly not to that point yet.

**Question**: Back in November we discussed that the standards that were being held to is different than what it was when we built the subdivision. So, has there been any conversations with the attorney general about being grandfathered in. Because to me, I feel like we shouldn't be held to the standards 20 years later that Portland built when the subdivision was.

Reply: From the very beginning, from the very. More than 20 years ago and it was clear that that was not going to be a viable option. So yeah, we, we we were hoping for that very early on. At the same time, the EPA and the IAP made it very clear. Even into some of the town hall meetings. Unfortunately not.

**Question**: So when the subdivision was built it wasn't up to standard.

Reply: I think it was at that time, but standard standards change. This was brough up and has been part of the the early discussion 20 years ago and it was not effective. None of the none of the legal authorities productive to that argument.

**Question** - Are we testing the water in the pond?

No, the process is to collect the samples from the outfall. It's a grab the sample before the affluent reaches the pond.

**Question** - Can the HOA be dissolved?

We're not looking at that at this time. We have in the in the past talked about the option of dissolving the homeowners association. But that means that individual homeowners then would be liable for what's happening in the subdivision. It just means it would be harder for them to enforce and and go after us individually.

If we were to take that action would signal to them a real lack of cooperation. I think we would only want to do that if you know it got to the point where we were really being asked to do something that wasn't reasonable.

**Question** -How much will this all cost?

As Jason talks about it, we haven't had to spend much money to get to this point, if it gets to the point where the systems are prohibitive. We will adjust our strategy and reengage an attorney, but I think we we probably would have spent a lot more today if we had engaged in environmental attorney and we have to kind of to get this to continue to. You know to be in a place where we're not getting fined. to just figure. Out, you know. How all that's going to happen without being able to collect dues.

**Question:** So are we saying realistically that there may not be a quick and easy resolution.

Reply: I think as a board we are somewhat hopeful is we get through the 12 month that we have enough reliable data for Farnsworth to develop a system. We have had a conversation with Farnsworth to hopefully find an inexpensive system that would have maybe some UV and other technology. At the individual outfall, we would take one outfall pilot. That system again think it be relatively inexpensive. Our argument on the monitoring over such a long period of time is there is the seasonality does matter

But if it dramatically reduces our violations, you know, then maybe the IPA you know gets comfortable with that and it's. Simple. Not a lot of money in it when he gets his past. You know the especially the attorney general. Enforcement.

**Question**: Are all the outfalls the same, is there one or two that get more violations than the other ones. If so, would that be the area that you would want to come to maybe pilot? First, since you couldn't get those violations reduced.

Conclusion of discussion

2024 budget was presented by board treasurer Jason Jennings a copy of the budget can be found on the Deer Ridge Homeowners website and associated Facebook page. Suggested annual dues were suggested at $550. A motion was made to accept the dues at $550 by James Pancrazio and was seconded by Mark Carter. Motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned, 2:47 pm.