

**Minutes of the July 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Sawyer County  
Tourist Rooming House Sub Committee  
Board; Sawyer County Courthouse/Virtual**



**Voting Committee Members Present (X)**

- Ginny Chabek – Chair
- Phil Nies – Vice Chair
- Tweed Shuman
- Stacey Hessel
- Chris Rusk
- Gary Nathan
- Matt Dale
- Cheryl Treland
- Kris Viecceli
- Martin Hanson
- Ryan Cari
- Laura Rusk

**Non-Voting Members Present**

- Lynn Fitch
- Jay Kozlowski
- Eric Wellauer
- Matt McKay
- Julia Lyons
- Doug Mrotek
- Andy Albarado
- Brian DeVries
- Rick Peters
- Julie McCallum

**Others Present**

- Le Sedlacek
- Brittney Ingerhall - Virtual
- Mike Nylund - Virtual
- Amy Stalter - Virtual

**Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**– Chair Chabek called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Roll call was taken; quorum was met.

**Certification of Compliance** with the open meeting law was met.

**Public Comments** – Linda Zillmer, Le Sedlacek, Brittney Ingerhall, Mike Nylund, Amy Stalter

**Minutes from the previous meeting dated:** June 20, 2023

Motion to approve made by: Ms. Treland Second by: Mr. Nies

Motion carried without negative vote.

**Scope of Committee -**

Brief statement by Jay, Eric, & Matt - Mr. Kozlowski advised that the committee was formed by Sawyer County Supervisor direction and recommendations will be forwarded to committee level and/or the full Board. Mr. Wellauer advised that he has reached out to state agencies involved in licensing tourist rooming houses and septic systems. There are specific occupancy recommendations on record that need to be considered regarding septic requirements. He would like to see this committee develop septic system guidelines based on occupancy. Matt McKay, environmental health technician, reported that one of his responsibilities is that of licensing and he would like to have the tools to address complaints that come to his department. He provided several examples of complaints that he has received. Matt Dale advised that they follow the current lodging code based on cubic footage when advertising rental. Eric Wellauer advised that another State code also needs to be considered that does not seem to be used in determining current occupancy capacity. Ms. Chabek stated that using septic system capacity may be a reasonable tool for helping determine future occupancy capacities.

Other area ordinances have been reviewed for comparison, though they do not seem to accurately reflect Sawyer County situations. Two things can be considered (size of rooms for how many people are allowed and how many people are allowed on the septic system installed). Mr. Hanson asked if the County could categorize the complaints received and use the data for decision making by this committee; however, Mr. McKay can only document areas that can be addressed by ordinance or statute, so documenting historical data may be difficult. It was questioned on whether the original build occupancy requirements of a domain should be considered, and whether domains are rezoned commercial to be TRHs after they've been occupied as a residence. They are not currently rezoned. Mr. DeVries addressed road placement and access on some TRH properties and wondered if road maintenance might be considered within the scope of this committee. A private road maintenance agreement could cover several concerns and would be a recorded document. Education must be a part of any result of this committee.

Rebecca Roeker, corporate counsel, provided an overview of what some other counties are doing, such as taking a zoning approach or an environmental health approach. WCA is also working on a model ordinance at this time and it is in the drafting stage. The County will need to contemplate how much legal risk it wants to assume in regulating TRHs. Chapter 66.104 is a Statute that needs to be considered when developing any regulation measures. Statutes 72 and 73 also should be reviewed. Contractual relationships between the county and owners should be minimal, if not avoided entirely.

Water quality also needs to be part of the review process of this committee. Ms. Chabek stated that the goal of the committee is to develop a recommendation for the County board based on regulations/licensing involving county jurisdictions of zoning, environmental health, health & human services, land records and education, then forward those recommendations to the Board.

A motion was made by Mr. Nies; second by Ms. Rusk to approve these areas as the scope of the committee. Motion carried without negative vote.

#### **Northwest Sanitary Pumping Update (Holding Tank vs Conventional) -**

Kris Viecceli reported on what they are seeing in regards to service calls their company deals with in septic systems. They are seeing very high holding tank volumes and recommends requiring working alarm systems. Annual alarm checks should be considered. Alarms should not be silenced by renters, but that is happening. Wireless remote alarms could by-pass the silencing process. Some rentals are requiring weekly attention of holding tanks and she would like to see permitting for these systems reduced in the future. Pumping frequency is becoming a concern; they are seeing about six emergency calls each week for holding tanks for some year-round rooming houses.

#### **Options for Sewer System Sizing -**

Documents identifying holding tank design options for commercial, residential and hybrid sizing were shared with the committee. Mr. Kozlowski suggested the committee create some type of hybrid version of the occupancy of non-holding tank information provided. Residential sizing could be used for holding tanks as a measure for occupancy. Resorts that have been converted to condos are another type of domain that may have to be included in this committee.

Mr. Kozlowski addressed the process that would have to be used to moving from residential status to commercial status in zoning. Ms. Roeker reviewed potential legal impacts of this option.

#### **Future Agenda Items -**

educational opportunities, resort definition, timelines of enforcement, road maintenance agreements, WCA model ordinance, presentation from a TRH owner

#### **Adjournment – 11:49 am**

**Next Meeting:** August 31, 2023      **Time:** 10:00 am      **Location:** Board Room  
Minutes recorded by Lynn Fitch, County Clerk