



STAFF REPORT
City of Dripping Springs
PO Box 384
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Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Submitted By: Ginger Faught, Deputy City Administrator

Council Meeting Date: July 7, 2026

Agenda Item Wording: Public hearing, discussion, and possible action to approve an Ordinance amending Chapter 24, Article 24.02, Division 5, Section 24.02.262 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Dripping Springs, relating to a local amendment to Section 1303 of the International Plumbing Code for standalone irrigation-only rainwater harvesting systems.

Agenda Item Sponsor: Mayor Bill Foulds, Jr.

Summary/Background: The City recently reviewed permitting and inspection requirements for rainwater harvesting systems that are used solely for exterior landscape irrigation and are not connected to potable water, a public water supply, indoor plumbing fixtures, or building plumbing systems. The issue arose in connection with a proposed commercial project involving an irrigation-only rainwater harvesting system.

The City currently adopts the International Plumbing Code as the City's Plumbing Code through Chapter 24, Article 24.02, Division 5 of the City Code. Section 24.02.262 contains local amendments to the adopted Plumbing Code. Chapter 13 of the International Plumbing Code regulates nonpotable water systems, including nonpotable rainwater collection and distribution systems under Section 1303.

The proposed ordinance uses the City's existing local amendment mechanism in Section 24.02.262 to add a new Section 1303.17, titled Standalone Irrigation-Only Rainwater Harvesting Systems, to the City's adopted Plumbing Code.

Purpose of Proposed Amendment

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to encourage water conservation and beneficial use of harvested rainwater by clarifying that qualifying standalone irrigation-only rainwater harvesting systems do not require a City plumbing permit solely because they collect rainwater from gutters, downspouts, leaders, roof drainage components, or exterior rainwater conveyance piping and store the collected rainwater in a rainwater storage tank for exterior landscape irrigation.

The amendment is intentionally narrow. It does not create a broad exemption for systems connected to potable water, public water supplies, building plumbing, indoor plumbing fixtures, or potable uses. It also does not waive independently applicable permits, inspections, approvals, public water supplier requirements, state-law requirements, or adopted-code requirements.

Summary of Proposed Ordinance

The ordinance would amend Section 24.02.262 by adding a local amendment to International Plumbing Code Section 1303. The new local amendment would create Section 1303.17 and provide the following:

1. Definition of Standalone Irrigation-Only Rainwater Harvesting System

The ordinance defines a standalone irrigation-only rainwater harvesting system as a system that collects, conveys, stores, and distributes only harvested rainwater for exterior landscape irrigation or other exterior nonpotable irrigation use, and that is physically separate from potable water systems, public water supplies, building plumbing systems, indoor plumbing fixtures, and potable uses.

A property's separate domestic potable water service would not, by itself, disqualify a system from the exemption, provided the rainwater harvesting system remains separate from that potable water service and from any public water supply.

2. Limited Plumbing Permit Exemption

A qualifying standalone irrigation-only rainwater harvesting system would not require a City plumbing permit solely because it collects rainwater from gutters, downspouts, leaders, roof drainage components, or exterior rainwater conveyance piping and stores the collected rainwater in a rainwater storage tank for exterior landscape irrigation.

3. On-Grade Rainwater Storage Tank Provision

A rainwater storage tank used solely as part of a qualifying standalone irrigation-only rainwater harvesting system and supported directly on grade would not, by itself, require a City permit merely because the tank stores harvested rainwater for exterior landscape irrigation, provided:

- the tank capacity is not greater than 5,000 gallons; and
- the ratio of height to diameter or width is not greater than 2:1.

The tank provision does not exempt foundations, platforms, racks, structural supports, enclosures, anchoring systems, electrical work, grading, drainage alteration, stormwater discharge, floodplain work, right-of-way work,

easement encroachments, public-water connections, building-plumbing connections, or other independently regulated work.

4. Commercial Development Backflow Requirement

For commercial development served by a public water supply, the owner or installer must provide documentation that containment backflow protection at the public-water service entrance or meter has been installed, or that the applicable public water supplier has determined that no additional containment backflow protection is required.

5. Public Water Supplier Requirements Preserved

The ordinance does not limit, waive, supersede, or determine requirements of any public water supplier. Public water supplier requirements may include customer-service inspections, cross-connection control, backflow prevention, air-gap separation, meter protection, public water supply backup, service agreements, or other requirements imposed by the applicable water supplier.

6. Noncommercial Owner Responsibility

For noncommercial standalone irrigation-only rainwater harvesting systems, the City would not require proof of notification to the public water supplier as a condition of the plumbing-permit exemption. However, the property owner remains responsible for determining and complying with any applicable public water supplier notification, service agreement, customer-service inspection, cross-connection control, backflow prevention, meter protection, or other public-water-supplier requirement.

**Commission
Recommendations:**

N/A

**Recommended
Council Actions:**

Adoption.

Attachments:

Draft ordinance