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Repar--Comments for 9/21 meeting on sewer

1 message

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To: leana <leana@ci.stevenson.wa.us>, Stevenson <citycouncil@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

Cc: Ben Shumaker <ben@ci.stevenson.wa.us>, carolyn <carolyn@ci.stevenson.wa.us>

Dear City Council and City Administration,

I really think there should be a moratorium on new connections to the sewer system outside City limits. We need to build out the sewer system within the City limits before extending it outside. Infrastructure needs maintenance and in a small City, with a small number of City staff, maintenance is, and should be, an ongoing process. We probably need a spreadsheet of all our infrastructure so we can clearly see what infrastructure we have in the City, how it is being maintained and on what schedule, and any updating that is and will be required and a schedule and cost for the updates. I applaud the staff for putting maps together for this meeting. We have a hodge podge of sewer and non-sewer areas and our City needs to get sewer into the non-sewer areas within City limits.

We probably got into a hole because development costs many years ago were not high enough to anticipate maintenance costs for 30 to 40 years for development and the infrastructure needed to support this development. Live and learn. Maintenance costs increase every year so why not development costs?

We are building a \$12,000,000 sewer plant thanks to the taxpayers of America and the State of WA. Thank you! Residents are being charged \$153.50/month and the city seems to think that they can keep increasing this amount on the 1400 residents, every few months. This 153.50 (116/month is for sewer, I believe) is one of the highest costs for sewer and water in WA State. It cannot continue to increase without causing hardship in our small rural community. Increasing utility costs to heights where they cannot be paid stresses community and its members. There has to be an end in increases. Raising the costs of Water and Sewer so that our municipality looks like it's trying to raise enough money for the next upgrade in 25 - 35 years to the Sewer plant is not sustainable in such a small community. It just really frustrates people.

And, all these increases don't even begin to address the issue of upgrading the Water Treatment Plant. An issue for another day.

Also, the City should stop giving waivers to people who live within City limits and who want to put in septic instead of connecting to sewer. Everybody within City limits should be on sewer. Septic fields get old and they fail and as far as I know

septic is not inspected yearly or thoroughly (that means lab tests and physical tests to determine whether the tank and field are still viable) in WA state. People use so many chemicals these days that I suspect septic fields fail more often than we know. And as far as I know septic fields aren't inspected for failure (leaking tank!).

There are methods that we can come up to help people connect to sewer. We don't want to bankrupt anyone. The cost can be a doable monthly fee and the total amount owed added to the deed so that the cost is passed on to future owners, or a very low percentage loan that can be repaid every month and the total, once again, being added to the deed so it is carried forward to future owners. There are ways we can do this, we just have to work together to come up with a plan that is equitable to everyone, City and residents.

Let's take care of the infrastructure we already have and plan for the infrastructure we need within City limits before we go looking to expand outside City limits.

Thank you.

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