

Board of County Commissioners

Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: June 2, 2009

Date Submitted: May 22, 2009

To: Honorable Chairman and Members of the Board

From: Benjamin H. Pingree, County Administrator
Lindsay Stevens, Assistant County Administrator
Padraic Juarez, Environmental Administrator, Wakulla County Health Department

Subject: Update to the Board Regarding Septic Tank Permitting Within the Wakulla Gardens Subdivision and the Requirements for Maximum Allowable Lot Flow When Utilizing Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems

Statement of Issue:

This agenda request provides the Board with an update regarding the requirements for maximum allowable lot flow when utilizing septic tanks and the permitting requirements for onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems (septic tanks or OSTDS), specifically within the Wakulla Gardens Subdivision.

Background:

Chapter 381, Florida Statutes allows homes that utilize private water supplies to dispose of a maximum of 1500 gallons of sewage per day per acre of land, and homes that utilize a public water supply may dispose of 2500 gallons of sewage per day per acre of land. When determining lot flow allowance, the area of the non-compacted road right-of-way may be added in to increase the lot flow allowance. Similarly, the same area would be subtracted from the lot should the road right-of-way become paved. The road right-of-way is not utilized for placement of any part of the septic system; it is simply allowed to be calculated into the total lot flow allowance.

In addition, Chapter 64E-6, FAC requires that there be a sufficient unobstructed area on a lot that is at least twice as large as the drainfield area to be installed on the lot. This unobstructed area will allow for the placement of the initial septic system and a replacement system in the future. Unobstructed area is the area on the property that would allow for the installation of a septic system and is not hindered by structures or other features that may affect the functioning of the septic system.

Lots that use municipal water are allowed to have a higher sewage flow than those that are served by a private onsite well. Sewage flow is the amount of sewage that is calculated to come from a home. As an example, a two bedroom home puts out approximately 200 gallons per day and a three bedroom puts out approximately 300 gallons per day.

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Many lots in Unit 1 of Wakulla Gardens rely on wells for potable drinking water. All OSTDS systems must remain 75 feet from a domestic well, per State requirements. Many of the Wakulla Gardens lots are on 75'X100' (.17 acre) lots. The size of these lots would allow for a maximum daily sewage flow of 258 gallons of sewage. This would allow for a maximum of a 3 bedroom residence with up to 2250 sq ft of building area to be constructed on each lot. Although this is the maximum size residence that could be permitted on the lot, minimum setbacks must be maintained and minimum unobstructed area requirements must be met. These additional requirements may decrease the size of the home that may be placed on the lot. Attachment 1 is a site plan of a typical Wakulla Gardens lot, and includes the location of all wells within the vicinity of the OSTDS.

The Board requested that staff provide information and analysis about what the impact of infrastructure improvements, particularly road paving, would have upon the existing OSTDS within Wakulla Gardens, as well as the ability to permit future OSTDS.

Analysis:

Paving the roads will decrease the maximum allowable lot flow for lots in Wakulla Gardens. In turn, a decrease in the maximum allowable lot flow will limit the size of home that may be constructed on the lot, possibly limiting some lots to 2 bedroom residences.

If the County were to pave the roads within portions of Unit 1 in Wakulla Gardens which currently rely upon well systems for portable water, the County may want to ensure that central water and sewer improvements are concurrent with road paving, since there is a potential reduction of area that may be calculated for lot flow usage. If water and sewer are not provided concurrent with road paving, some landowners may have a difficult time installing an OSTDS on their lots for their desired house design, since the extra area is not available for calculating the lot flow allowance, potential builders and homeowners will be restricted in the size home that may be placed on the lot.

Staff Recommendations:

Staff recommends that if the roads in Unit 1 are paved, the County ensure that water and sewer infrastructure is made available to the area concurrently. This would allow the property owners to hook up to sewer and not worry about the lot flow allowances.

Should the County decide to pave the roads within Unit 1 without simultaneous installation of sewer and water infrastructure, a public meeting should be held by the Wakulla County Health Department to educate homeowners on their individual options, which may include:

1. A property may be limited in the size of home able to be constructed on-site;
2. A property owner could install a Performance Based Treatment System that is rated to

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specific treatment standards and will allow the lot flow allowance to be exceeded by varying degrees depending upon the treatment standard used.

3. A property owner could install cluster systems that remove the sewage from their lots and treat it on other lots in close proximity.

Options:

1. Approve the staff update to the Board regarding septic tank permitting within the Wakulla Gardens Subdivision and the requirements for maximum allowable lot flow when utilizing onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems.
2. Do not approve the staff update to the Board regarding septic tank permitting within the Wakulla Gardens Subdivision and the requirements for maximum allowable lot flow when utilizing onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems.
3. Board Direction.

Recommendation:

Option #1