



CITY OF HARRISONBURG COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

409 SOUTH MAIN STREET, HARRISONBURG, VA 22801

OFFICE (540) 432-7700 • FAX (540) 432-7777

July 30, 2021

**TO THE MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA**

SUBJECT: Consider a request from Virginia Self Storage Partners II, LLC for the City of Harrisonburg to provide sanitary sewer service onto property at 2557 East Market Street within Rockingham County

**EXTRACT FROM MINUTES OF HARRISONBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING HELD ON: July 14, 2021**

Chair Finnegan read the request and asked staff to review.

Ms. Banks said that per Section 7-2-4 (b) of the City Code, all uses located outside City limits, other than residential uses involving fewer than ten units, requesting to be connected to the City's water and sanitary sewer infrastructure, shall be reviewed by Planning Commission and then forwarded to City Council for final approval or rejection. This request is for a non-residential connection; thus, Planning Commission review and City Council approval is necessary.

The subject parcel is located east of the City, directly across the City/County jurisdiction boundary line along East Market Street. The parcel is identified as tax map 109-(3)-4A and is zoned B-1, General Business District within Rockingham County. The subject property has been connected to the City's water infrastructure since receiving approval in 2006. If the applicant's request to connect to the City's sanitary sewer infrastructure is approved, the applicant would connect an existing facility, containing a restroom and bath house, to City service and remove an existing outdated and failing septic system and drain field currently serving the site.

When reviewing previous public utility application requests, staff has discussed that the City should be careful about extending more utilities into the County, as it may contribute to using the City's available water and sanitary sewer capacity, which could be detrimental to future development within the City, and it may indirectly lead to development around the edge of the City that we do not desire. The Department of Public Utilities has completed the preliminary review of the request and has offered technical approval for extending City sanitary sewer service to the subject property located in Rockingham County. There is an existing sanitary sewer manhole approximately 350 feet west of the subject property, within the City limits, where the applicant

would connect. This would require the installation of a private sanitary sewer pump, which is understood by the applicant.

Staff has no concern with this connection to the sanitary sewer infrastructure and is supportive of the removal of a septic system and drain field from the environment.

Staff recommends approval of the request.

Chair Finnegan asked staff to provide information regarding requests from the County.

Ms. Banks said that we get a few of these a year. They can be just for water connection, sewer connection or both. In the City Code, if it is for a residential development that is fewer than 10 units, it does not have to be reviewed by the Planning Commission. Otherwise, the Planning Commission has to review the request.

Chair Finnegan asked is it fair to say that the benefit to the City is not having failing septic systems on the boundaries and that the costs are paid by the person making the connection?

Ms. Banks said that is correct.

Chair Finnegan asked if there were any questions for staff.

Commissioner Whitten asked if the manhole is in the median and whether easements were required.

Ms. Banks said that easements are already in place.

Councilmember Dent asked where on the site the bathhouse is?

Ms. Banks said that the applicant can answer that question.

Chair Finnegan asked if there were any more questions for staff. Hearing none, he invited the applicant or applicant's representative to speak to their request.

Jo Higgins, representing Virginia Self Storage Partners II, LLC, came forward to speak to the request. Virginia Self Storage Partners own the Harrisonburg self-storage facility that was originally built in 1988-1989. The septic field that is there now was thought to last forever, but the problem was identified in 2006 when we bought the adjacent property. All of this used to be one piece owned by Joe Bowman all the way to Boyers Road. Then it was divided over time. Our property straddled the City-County line. We did not envision that there would ever be a problem. When the property was subdivided, an easement to the manhole was part of the subdivision. From where the green line turns (referencing the map on the PowerPoint), that is the service road that runs up to Joe Bowman Chevrolet. That manhole is immediately in front of Larry Martin's building (2511 East Market St). It is right on the edge of the pavement, but this is a private service road. The easement goes out past Joe Bowman to Chestnut Ridge Drive. We have an access easement in that direction and all the utilities easements that serve the smaller parcel. The septic is here

(referencing the map on the PowerPoint). When the original facility was built in 1989-1990 there was a pipe in two places under the driveway. This was not as developed, and it was before runoff requirements were imposed to detain pre-development and post-development flows. Over time, the runoff now runs through our site across our septic field, so it is inundated with stormwater. It has water on top of it. It is probably working, but it is flooded. The lifespan of it has been shortened. It has been there almost 30 years. The runoff from over here (referencing the map) comes through the site down this hill, into two pipes and comes through right where the septic field is. I do not think that was originally intended. They were supposed to be more separate. The inundation of water has become a problem. We had this shown on the site plan in 2006. This manhole is the way we would come. The water line taps off the road here, comes down here, runs through our site and all the way over to this point. We have City water lines almost to the other side. At the time we did this, Public Utilities required that we provide an easement all the way to the next property line. I had objected to it, but we cooperated to make that work. We have had City water for some time. This here in the road, this box, is an upgraded water vault where the City and County share meters in both directions. At one time it only metered from the City into the County. Now, we have cooperated and paid half the expense of the vault so that it could be increased. We gave the City the water and sewer easement they needed to create a larger vault so that they can meter the City going to the County and the County going to the City if there was ever a pressure problem. We have been cooperating with City Public Utilities for long time. We hope that they would consider us favorably in this case.

Councilmember Dent asked where the building is that has the bath house.

Ms. Higgins said that there is no bath house. In this building, there is a two-bedroom apartment on the second floor because the manager lives on site. On the lower floor is an office, we have a single bathroom. None of these storage buildings have water or bathrooms. They are not required. In the last six months we have used less than 1,000 gallons per month of water.

Councilmember Dent said that answers her question. I see that the green line goes right to the line of the property where you would need the access to the sewer.

Ms. Higgins said yes. It would have to be a forced main that can go up and down. We cannot get to the manhole by gravity. We cannot get to County utilities. It is a long distance. Stone Ridge would be the closest. Between us there is Mystic Lane and to the east is Boyers Road which has been cut off. Stone Ridge has the closest utilities and that is a long distance. We are in a pocket where it would take a long time and a great expense to get utilities from the County. We hope you can consider us favorably and I can answer any other questions.

Chair Finnegan asked if there were any questions for the applicant's representative.

Chair Finnegan said that we have done a few of these during my time on the Planning Commission and we typically approve them. We do not want the City surrounded by failing septic systems. The infrastructure is paid for by the applicant.

Commissioner Byrd moved to recommend approval of the request.

Councilmember Dent seconded the motion.

Chair Finnegan called for a roll call vote.

Commissioner Hull	Aye
Commissioner Orndoff	Aye
Councilmember Dent	Aye
Commissioner Byrd	Aye
Commissioner Whitten	Aye
Chair Finnegan	Aye

The motion to recommend approval of the request for sanitary sewer service passed (6-0). The recommendation will move forward to City Council on August 10, 2021.