

# Septic Re-inspection Programs

Township of Douro-Dummer

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Peterborough  
Public Health

# Septic Re-inspection Programs?

- 2 different types of septic re-inspection programs
- Ontario Building Code (OBC) refers to these programs as, “*Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Programs*” (Section 1.10 of Division C of the OBC)

# ***“Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Programs”***

- 1. Mandatory** Maintenance Inspection Programs
- 2. Discretionary** Maintenance Inspection Programs



# Mandatory Maintenance Inspection Programs

- Mandated by the Province (under the OBC)
- “Vulnerable areas” identified under the Clean Water Act, 2006
- Particularly vulnerable areas = areas close to municipal drinking water wells
- 124 properties identified within Peterborough County and City



# Mandatory Maintenance Inspection Programs (2)

- 15 properties identified in Douro-Dummer
- These sewage systems must be inspected every 5 years
- The cost is \$325.00 per inspection under County of Peterborough By-law # 2016-85

# Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Programs

- Legislative authority comes from clause 7(1)(b.1) of the Building Code Act, 1992
- These programs are organized by Municipalities and the respective Principal Authority (Peterborough Public Health)
- Purpose is to identify failing or 'high risk' systems that would not be identified through Mandatory Maintenance Inspection Programs

# Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Programs (2)

- The cost is \$325.00 per inspection under County of Peterborough By-law # 2016-86
- The Municipality determines how to best collect the fees

# Why Peterborough Public Health?

- Peterborough Public Health (PPH) is the **‘principal authority’** under the Building Code Act
- Responsible for enforcing Part 8 (Sewage Systems) of the Ontario Building Code
- PPH houses the historical files relating to existing sewage systems
- Operates an extensive up to date database



# Why Peterborough Public Health? (2)

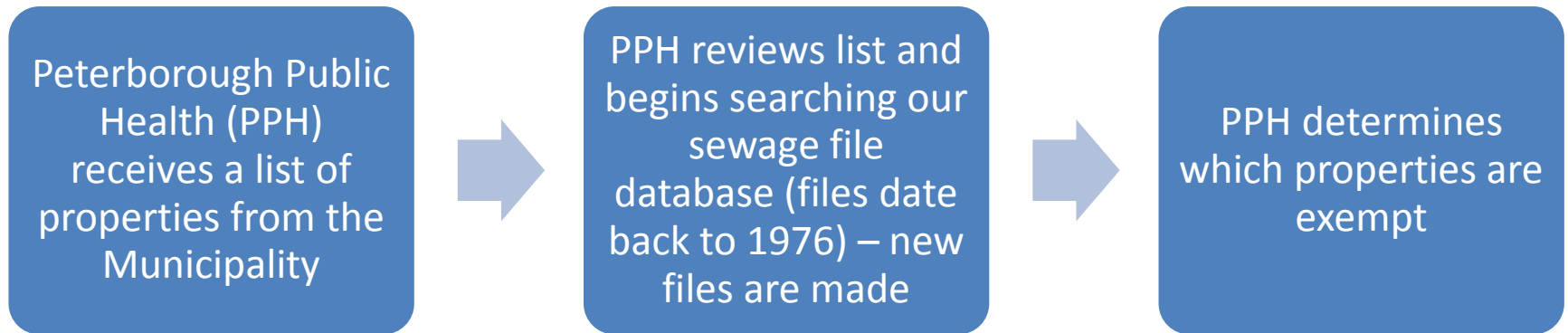
- Public Health Inspectors (PHI's) - educated at accredited post secondary schools and Certified through the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors
- PHI's involved in the PPH 'Safe Sewage Disposal Program' have further qualifications under the Building Code Act

# Why Peterborough Public Health? (3)

- PPH can use the **Health Protection and Promotion Act** in addition to the **Ontario Building Code** to resolve issues in relation to sewage
- PPH has the tools, staff and knowledge to provide this service



# Overview of the Process



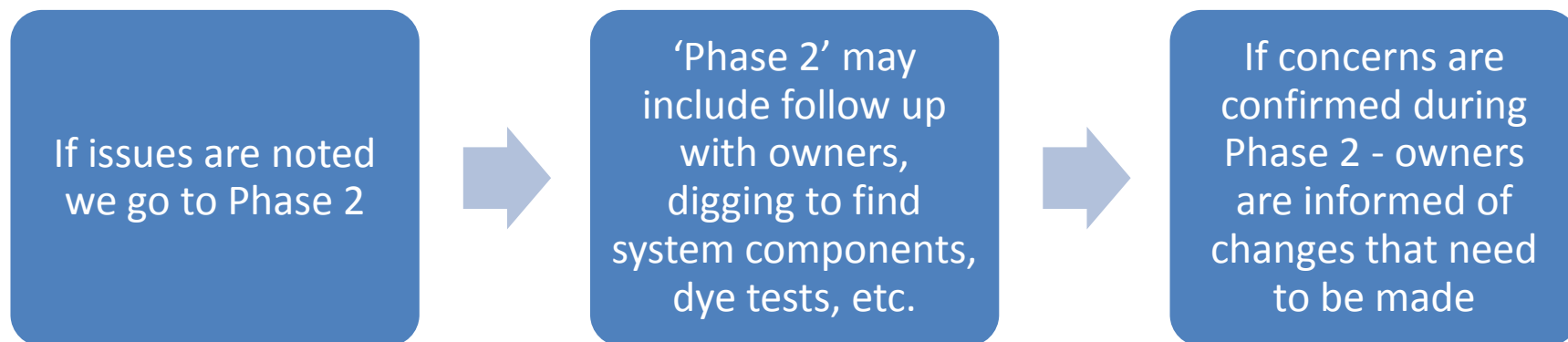
# Overview of the Process (2)



# Overview of the Process (3)



# Overview of the Process (4)



# Overview of the Process (5)

- PPH will follow up to ensure the required changes are made.

# A 'Closer Look' at the Inspection Process





# Phase 1 – Maintenance Inspection

- PPH receives list of properties to be inspected from Municipality
- Begin to search our sewage database (back to 1976)
- Looking for information on the systems to be inspected
  - Sewage system permits
  - Change of use permits (for certain renovations, additions, new outbuildings, pool construction, etc.)
  - Rezoning or minor variance comments, etc.



# Phase 1 – Maintenance Inspection (2)

- PPH identifies properties that are exempt from the program

Exempt from this program:

- Septic systems installed within the last 5 years
- Septic systems that fall under the Mandatory Maintenance Inspection Program (Source Water Protection Areas, began in May 2014)

# Phase 1 – Maintenance Inspection (3)

- Day of the inspection
- Looking at the information we have to locate the components of the septic system
- Visual inspection
- Looking for signs of failure:
  - Ponding or spongy ground
  - Unpleasant odours
  - Dead spots, etc.



# Phase 1 – Maintenance Inspection (4)

- Looking for things that could put the system at a high risk for failure
  - New construction
  - High traffic area over leaching bed
  - Gardens planted over leaching bed, etc.

# Phase 2 – Follow-Up Maintenance Inspections

- May be required where there's missing information about the system
  - System location is unknown
  - Size/type of tank unknown
- May be required due to signs of failure or the system is at high risk for failure

# Phase 2 – Follow Up Maintenance Inspections (2)

- Phase 1 inspections will generally avoid disturbance to the soil or the system
- Phase 2 inspections may be more invasive and might include:
  - Uncovering and opening the septic tank
  - Locating and uncovering a portion of the leaching bed
  - Conducting dye tests, etc.



# Phase 2 – Follow Up Maintenance Inspections (3)

- If a failing system is identified then corrective action will need to be taken by the property owner
- Corrective action may include:
  - Having the septic tank pumped
  - Having a blockage removed from within tank
  - Having a new tank, leaching bed or system installed



# Phase 2 – Follow Up Maintenance Inspections (4)

- Not out to cast blame on property owners
- Goal is to identify failing or ‘at risk’ systems and take corrective action
- Ultimately the property owner does have a legal responsibility to maintain their septic system so that it is functioning properly





# Why?

- *Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Programs* are designed to catch the failing or 'high-risk' sewage systems that would not otherwise be identified under the *Mandatory Maintenance Inspection Program*
- All areas (not just areas around municipal wells) are vulnerable to contamination



# Why? (2)

- Will give PPH the opportunity to educate property owners that are unfamiliar with sewage system maintenance
- The effect of a failing sewage system can extend far beyond property lines



# Ultimately...

- To ensure that sewage systems are being properly operated and maintained
- Failing sewage systems pose a serious **public health** risk as well as being a serious threat to our **natural environment**



# Questions?

(Thank You)



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