Neskowin sewer issue runs into May election

By Ann Powers editor@northcoastcitizen.com

Hills of Neskowin (HON) residents won't be withdrawing from the Neskowin Regional Sanitary Authority (NRSA) without the approval of the special district's voters in May.

The HON Homeowners Association (HOA) petitioned the Tillamook County Commission to remove the subdivision from NRSA's boundaries and fees at the board's regular Nov. 2 meet-

HOA representatives argued HON has never, and probably won't in the foreseeable future, receive direct services from the sewer authority because each parcel has its own separate septic system. Nevertheless, HON residents have been required to pay taxes because their homes are within district boundaries.

A majority vote from the commission agreed it wasn't feasible for NRSA to provide direct services to HON in a timely manner.

But, a counter district petition presented to commissioners at a subsequent public hearing, trumped that determination. The request now goes to the next available election, which is May 16, 2017, according County Clerk Tassi O'Neil.

County Counsel William Sargent told commissioners in order for there to be an election on HON's withdraw, the county needed written requests by no less than 15 percent of the electors, or 100 electors (whichever is the lesser number), registered in the sewer district, according to.

district, according to.

O'Neil said a minimum of 39 signatures was required to put it on the May ballot. She verified 44 of the 48 submitted with the petition.

Nevertheless, John Metschan, HOA treasurer, said the law is on their side and the commission's decision should stand.

"We were able to make our case at the last hearing and of course the commission determined that in their opinion providing service to



Headlight Herald/Ann Powers A vote on whether the Hills of Neskowin subdivision can withdraw from the

(HON) was not feasible," he state law stating district dwellsaid. "Our primary case is ers must directly benefit from that were not anxious to leave services provided. the district, but rather we are Sargent explained the

concerned about provisions of

Oregon State Law that specify

that only those that are directly

statute (ORS 450.840) is pretty

Metschun added the HOA

attempted to modify its agree-

ment to stay within NRSA

boundaries, but not be taxed

unless residents were being

directly benefited. That way, if

there was a time in the future

the sewer services they would

have that option and pay for it.

Shelley Stoll said sewer servic-

- like school districts receiving

"The Neskowin core area

store, park, hotels, condos and

bus stop are located is used by

the commission, dated Oct. 25.

all," Stoll wrote in a letter to

"The service NRSA provides

sewage from many businesses

and hundreds of homes spill-

ing into creeks, the wetlands

and flossing into the ocean."

the county for an opinion on

HON's interpretation of the

HOA officials also asked

eliminates the possibility of

where the post office, café,

es benefiting the greater good

should be taken into account

tax revenue form people who

don't nave children.

don't have children.

request. NRSA Board Chair

District officials denied that

HON dwellers could utilize

served should be taxed. The

clear."

special district petition ruling takes precedence in sending it to a vote of the people. "It is the proper procedure

to take," he said, "There were sufficient requests for an election filed, as provided by ORS 198.875(2), at the time of the final hearing."

HOA representatives argued that an election would not be fair, since a majority of the special district's voters live outside of HON - and would win the majority vote.

Withdraw request history

Documents show HON was first platted in 1997, with each property approved for its own on-site septic system. The subdivision has nearly built out to full capacity with approximately 60 parcels - each

proximately 60 parcels - each with separate, fully functional, septic systems.

Homeowners said there has been no need for NRSA to install a sewer line for those properties since HON was established.

In addition, district voters approved a bond in 2005 for water system improvements required by the state. Because the subdivision lies within NRSA's boundaries, HON residents were required to pay the permanent tax rate.

Neskowin Regional Sanitary Authority will be on the election ballot in May.

HOA representatives said

the subdivision's total contri-

bution has amounted to approximately \$100,000 since the tariff was first levied. NRSA's Annis Leslie said the bond was retired in 2015 and the tax revenue is currently going into a reserve

Out of eight projects outlined by priority in NRSA's future plans, the one affecting HON is number five on the list - a Highway 101 trunk sewer extension. En-

for the district's 10-year

gineering experts estimated it would cost roughly \$1.8 million, and district officials said the trunk line is "developer driven" by preliminary plans for a trailer park north of HON.

The line's installation would also require excavation of the subdivision with no direct advantage to that area, according to subdivision dwellers.

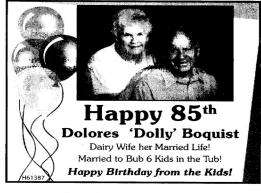
Moreover, NRSA could not give commissioners a timeline for the project's implementation.

"It's a very misguided taxation of an unjust nature." said Jim Blasius, HOA president. "It's a perfect example of a greed tax."

SAVE YOUR PIANO INVESTMENT -TUNE IT ONCE A YEAR!

> Associate Piano Technician Tuning & Repair

ESSONS FOR: Caryn Backman (503) 842-6865





MORTGAGE QUESTIONS?

You'll Like Our Answers