

Item 3, being:

DISCUSSION REGARDING PROPOSED ORDINANCE NO. O-1112-24 ALLOWING FOR USE OF GRAY WATER.

Mr. Ken Komiske, Director of Utilities, said the State introduced House Bill 1575 that would have allowed and regulated the use of gray water for the first time in Oklahoma; however, original language was substituted prior to adoption and the adopted language only added a definition of gray water as follows:

- A. "Gray water" means untreated household wastewater that has not come in contact with toilet waste and includes wastewater from bathtubs, showers, washbasins, clothes washing machines and laundry tubs, untreated municipal wastewater limited to wastewater captured from municipal splash pads, and water used by Fire Departments for cleaning equipment and vehicles. Gray water shall not include wastewater from kitchen sinks, kitchen dishwashers, or laundry water from the washing of material soiled with human excreta, such as diapers.
- B. The definition of gray water in subsection A of this section shall apply *only in municipalities enacting ordinances regulating the use of gray water* within the limits of their municipal boundaries.

Mr. Komiske said the statute allows municipalities to develop their own regulations for gray water. The issue of Norman allowing for and regulating the use of gray water was discussed at the City Council Study Session on January 3, 2012, and staff was instructed to draft ordinance language. He said Ordinance No. O-1112-24 would codify the definition of gray water set forth in the statutory provision and would allow a private residential user to discharge up to 250 gallons of gray water per day for the purposes of household gardening, composting or landscape irrigation, provided that the resident takes certain steps to ensure the gray water is utilized in a safe manner.

Mr. Komiske said conditions of the gray water system would include the system be constructed so that if blockage, or plugging occurred, gray water can be directed into the sewage collection system or septic tank; any storage tank for gray water must be covered; the gray water system cannot be located in a floodway; there must be a five foot vertical separation from top of ground to groundwater table; pressure piping must be identified as non-potable; gray water can not run off property; minimize the potential for contact with people or pets; no ponding; no spraying; no discharge to watercourse; not be applied directly to edible food crops; does not contain hazardous chemicals such as home photo labs, cleaning car parts, etc.; and gray water usage does not change the design of treatment facilities, such as septic systems.

Mr. Komiske said gray water may contain fats; oils; grease; hair; lint; soaps; cleansers; fabric softeners and other chemicals; elevated levels of chlorides, sodium and sulfates; and may have a high pH (is alkaline) that may be harmful to some plants. He said there are devices (pumps/filters, etc.) to help extract some of these items from the water before applying the water to landscaping and there is a lot of information to be found on websites. He said, in general, native plants, desert-adaptive plants, and drought resistant plants do better with gray water irrigation.

Mayor Rosenthal said the ordinance does not allow for any runoff from the property and gray water cannot be discharged into a waterway. She said if a property is located along a creek, is the ordinance effectively stating that the resident cannot install a gray water system and Mr. Komiske said the system will be self-policing as residents will not need a permit to discharge gray water, but staff believes citizens that do make use of the system will do the right thing and be conscientious. He said there are provisions where staff can inspect complaints of violations and enact similar fines issued for erosion control violations. Mayor Rosenthal felt additional guidance would be helpful to citizens that may want to install a gray water system with respect to property slopes or proximity to a creek. Councilmember Kovach asked if a supplementary guide could be developed for citizens with inquiries and Mr. Komiske said it was possible. He said the Environmental Control Advisory Board (ECAB) would probably volunteer to produce brochures and provide education. He said there is also a great deal of information on websites that can be incorporated into a brochure for Norman that would have more specific information. Mayor Rosenthal felt public education would be a great tool, especially for citizens already engaged in the use of "rain barrels."