



HARVARD BOARD OF HEALTH

Community Septic Management Program Betterment Loan

Policies and Procedures

General Information

The Town of Harvard Board of Health has received funding approval from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to prepare and administer a septic system repair program in accordance with G.L. c. 111, § 127B ½. This program, referred to as the Betterment Loan Program, will enable the Town of Harvard (Town) to provide financial assistance in the form of low interest loans to homeowners with failing septic systems. The loan will be paid back to the Town in the form of a Betterment placed as an additional line item on the real estate tax bill over a 15 year term.

The Betterment Loan

Under G.L. c. 111, § 127B ½, a community may create a loan fund that has been authorized by Town Meeting vote. The Board of Health may then loan the monies in the fund for approved costs associated with connection of a structure to an existing sewer main, or replacement or upgrade of a failed septic system. A Betterment Loan is created through an agreement between the Town and the homeowner. The agreement is recorded at the Worcester County Registry of Deeds. The Town recovers the funds lent by assessing annual betterments on the property tax bills of those who avail themselves of this program.

The homeowner agrees to repay all monies advanced by the Town plus interest at a rate of two percent (2%). The betterment becomes a municipal lien on the subject property, which will take priority over all existing mortgages or liens in the event loan payments are not made as scheduled.

Financial Assistance Terms

Financial Assistance consists of a two percent (2%) loan which the homeowner pays back four times a year with their real estate tax payment. Loan repayment is spread over a 15 year time period. Loans may be paid back early, without penalty.

Eligibility Requirements

This Betterment Loan Program is available only to residential properties. Condominium properties are eligible. The existing septic system must be documented as failed. The homeowner must be in good financial tax standing with the Town. Households with incomes exceeding \$150,000.00 require approval by DEP.

Application Process

Applications are available at the Board of Health Office and online at www.harvard.ma.us. Completed applications, once submitted to the Board of Health and required information is verified, shall be reviewed by the Health Agent and placed on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled Board of Health meeting. The Harvard Board of Health will utilize the map titled Town of Harvard, Approved Well Head Protection Areas (based on MassGIS data) and current wetland delineation data to provide an outline of environmentally sensitive areas. Other areas not within these defined zones shall be determined by the Board, on a case by case basis, whether to warrant consideration due to their special features and characteristics which may present a condition which is deemed a public health hazard or concern. In making these decisions, distances to aquifer protection areas, areas of critical Environmental concern, rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, wetlands and/or their resource areas, and protection of the ground water may be considered. The Board of Health shall review the application packet and available resources and take action to approve or deny an application under the Betterment Loan Program. If the application is denied due to lack of funds, the application will be kept on file to be reconsidered pending availability of future funds. Once the application is approved, a Betterment Loan Agreement will be prepared and executed. The Betterment Loan Agreement will be recorded at the Worcester County Registry of Deeds by a member of the Health Department. The cost of recording the agreement will be paid by the property owner directly to the Registry of Deeds.