

## Concerned council dotes on aquifer



BEN WOLOSZYN/Boomerang photographer Matthew Rusk, left, and Tim Wand of All In One Septic pump a tank Wednesday at Cathedral Home for Children.

By Karla Pomeroy  
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Albany County officials outlined their concerns over the Casper Aquifer Protection Plan to Laramie city council members during a work session Tuesday night.

Councilor Seth Carson said he asked for the work session to find out where the county was in the process of adopting the Casper Aquifer Protection Plan (CAPP) and the regulating resolution. He said he wants to make sure that the county does not stop moving forward with the process. "I have no idea where to measure your commitment in passing something," Carson said.

The city approved its regulating ordinance on first reading and postponed second reading until May 20. third reading, along with approval of the CAPP, is expected June 3.

Carson said he wanted to know whether the county would support the East Laramie/Albany County Wastewater Feasibility Study and the recommendations that will come from the city. The wastewater feasibility study would evaluate the Casper Aquifer water quality within the down gradient of subdivisions within the Casper Aquifer Protection Area, evaluate the costs and risks associated with residential septic systems and alternative wastewater disposal systems, determine whether and where alternatives to on-site wastewater disposal are needed, examine alternatives to on-site wastewater disposal systems and evaluate both fiscal and engineering aspects of the alternatives for areas within the Casper Aquifer Protection Area that need waste disposal systems other than septic systems.

Albany County Commissioners Chairman Tim Chesnut said the county residents living in Sherman Hills and other similar areas have invested a lot of money in their septic systems, and those systems are working well right now. "They don't want the city dictating what they are going to do. That's what a lot of the problem is right now. They live out there because they didn't want to be part of the city."

County residents want the study, he said. "I don't think most people feel that it's feasible to run city sewer and water out there because you're going to do more damage to the aquifer with blasting the rocks than having septic systems on it," Chesnut said.

Chesnut said that while he could not speak for the other two commissioners, moving the plan and resolution forward was his top priority. He said water quality is important to the county since the Casper Aquifer supplies

about 80 percent of the water for county residents. He said he likes the proposed changes, including removing the sunset date for septic systems and replacing that with the feasibility study. “A few of the people I’ve talked to, this is going to ease their heartburn,” Chesnut said.

Community Development Director Peter Wysocki said that while the city and county will continue to work together on the plan, he anticipates differences between the city ordinance and county resolution, one that new septic systems will not be allowed within city limits per the city ordinance, while the prohibition does not exist in the county resolution.

Before discussion began Tuesday night, Wysocki outlined the changes that were approved by the city council May 6. Later in the meeting, he said that another change that would be recommended came from Kimberly Starkey, who wanted the words “unincorporated area of Albany County” removed from the city ordinance where it states that: “An aquifer protection overlay zone has been established within the incorporated city of Laramie, Wyoming and unincorporated area of Albany County.” He said the zoning ordinance that the city is adopting only applies to the city limits and not the one-mile subdivision jurisdictional boundary. In a meeting with the Laramie Area Chamber of Commerce, Hanson said the city would have to adopt a charter ordinance to extend the authority past city limits.

Chesnut said he is also hearing concerns about property values being damaged due to the moratorium and the uncertainty of whether septic systems would have to be replaced. Regarding other issues in the plan and resolution, he said the commissioners would take the advice of the Albany County Planning and Zoning Commission.

Albany County Planning and Zoning Commission Chairman Cheri Frank said the commission has not moved the plan and resolution forward because it continues to receive new documentation and more changes, which prompt more public input and new discussion.

The Planning and Zoning Commission was scheduled to meet Wednesday.

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