What are the drawbacks of Sanitary District status?

There would be legal costs (estimated at $2,500-$10,000) associated with petitioning the Circuit Court for Sanitary District status. In order to become a Sanitary District, court approval must be secured. The Warren County Board of Supervisors must approve the annual budget, tax rate, and any building impact fees.

Currently there are 11 sanitary districts in Warren County. They include:

- Blue Mountain
- Cedarville Heights
- High Knob
- Lake Front Royal
- Linden Heights
- Riverside
- Shangri-la
- Shenandoah Farms
- Shenandoah Shores
- Skyland Estates
- South River Estates

How do we get started?

The residents of the subdivision must circulate a petition for the creation of a Sanitary District. Interested registered voters who reside in the subdivision should sign the petition. Once the required amount of signatures have been obtained, an attorney may draft the necessary paperwork to file the petition for the creation of the Sanitary District.

Planning Department

The mission of the Office of Planning is to assist the community in developing the County to its best potential. Our staff evaluates and implements policies to support the goals of the community as it prospers and matures. The office is responsible for the review of development applications such as rezonings, special use permits, comprehensive plan amendments, zoning approvals, and zoning appeals and variances. Zoning approval is required prior to the construction of any new structure and any new business in an existing building.

The Warren County Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Ordinance can be found on our website at:

www.warrencountyva.net

Sanitary Districts

Warren County Planning Department

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What is a Sanitary District?

A "sanitary district" is a special taxing district allowed by the Code of Virginia. The governing body of a Sanitary District has the following powers and duties:

- To construct, maintain and operate water supply, sewerage, garbage removal and disposal, heat, light, fire-fighting equipment, power, gas, streets, parking lots, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, community buildings, community centers and other recreational facilities for the use and benefit of the public in such sanitary districts.
- To acquire by gift, condemnation, purchase, lease, or otherwise, and to maintain and operate such systems.
- To levy and collect an annual tax upon all property in such sanitary district.
- The power to abate nuisances within the district.

How is a Sanitary District Created?

The Circuit Court of any County, upon the petition of 50 qualified voters of a proposed district, or if the proposed district contains less than 100 qualified voters upon petition of fifty percent of the qualified voters of the proposed district, may make an order creating a sanitary district. The order shall create the boundaries and powers for such district.

How would Sanitary District status affect the Board of Directors and our current fees?

The Warren County Board of Supervisors would be designated as the governing Board of the Sanitary District. The Board of Directors would submit an annual budget and proposed tax rate to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

Once a subdivision is designated as a Sanitary District, the subdivision governing body could waive the annual fees currently paid to the Association.

What are the benefits of becoming a Sanitary District?

There are a number of benefits that the residents of a subdivision would receive from becoming a Sanitary District. This list of benefits includes:

- Sanitary District status will not affect the privacy of roads, gate, pool, etc.
- The ability to establish uniform fees throughout the entire subdivision (Some subdivisions have different covenanted rates.)
- All lots, including those owned by a developer, would be subject to Sanitary District taxes.
- Sanitary District taxes would be collected by the Warren County Treasurer's Office, thereby increasing the collection rate and freeing the subdivision Association from the burden of collection. Currently the County charges a fee of 5% plus $350.00 for collecting the Sanitary District tax, much less than collection firms charge for collecting on delinquent accounts.
- Sanitary District fees are treated as taxes and are therefore deductible on one's Federal Income Tax Return.
- For the majority of homeowners, Sanitary District taxes would be collected along with County taxes on one's mortgage escrow throughout the year.
- Sanitary District tax rates could be set up on a tiered system to allow for a lower rate for undeveloped lots.
- Impact fees could be required to be paid by builders prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- Sanitary District status would make a subdivision eligible for various State and Federal disaster relief funds and allow us to acquire surplus government property.
- The ability to raise additional revenue to make necessary improvements to the community.
- There would no longer be a need for the Board of Directors to place liens on property as any unpaid Sanitary District taxes would be have to be paid before the sale of any property. The Association could lose unpaid fees if there is no lien placed on individual properties when they are sold.
- Sanitary District status can provide stability for a subdivision and can likely increase property values for all property owners. It could also improve the credit status of our community.

Can a Sanitary District be dissolved?

The Code of Virginia contains provisions to abolish the Sanitary District at any time by order of the Circuit Court .