



Regional Wastewater Reclamation Advisory
Committee
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MINUTES

The joint meeting of the Citizens' Water Advisory Committee (CWAC) and Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Advisory Committee (RWRAC) was called to order by CWAC Chair Sarah Evans, and RWRAC Chair Adam Bliven, on Wednesday, January 21, 2009, at 7:38 a.m., in the Transamerica Building, Large 5th Floor Conference Room, 177 North Church Avenue, Tucson, Arizona.

I. & II. CWAC and RWRAC Call to Order

RWRAC Members Present:

Adam Bliven, Chair	Sheila Bowen, Vice Chair	John Carlson
John Carhuff	Ann Marie Wolf	
Corey Smith	Mark Stratton	

CWAC Members Present:

Sarah Evans, Chair	Bruce Billings, Vice Chair	James T. Barry
Thomas Meixner	James Horvath	Daniel Sullivan
Martha Gilliland	Martin M. Fogel	Tina Lee
Amy McCoy	Vince Vasquez	Corina A. Baca
Evan Canfield		

III. Announcements

There were no announcements.

IV. Presentation: Draft Phase I Report of the City/County Water & Wastewater Study Committee

CWAC Member Barry began by stating that the Joint City/County Water/Wastewater Study Oversight Committee was made up of four members from CWAC, four members from the RWRAC and two each from the City and County Planning and Zoning

Committees. He introduced all involved who were there today. Mr. Barry said a great quantity of information had been produced from Phase I between April and October 2008, which was condensed into a report currently being released to the public. In addition, the transcripts of the meetings were in the process of being condensed to an Executive Summary, which established a basic set of common facts. The Committee also established a number of themes.

Mr. Barry said Phase II would begin in March 2009 and end in September 2009 at which time the Joint Oversight Committee would have no further responsibility. Individual members could get involved in a regional dialogue, but the Committee's work would be done as the mandate from Mayor and Council and the Board of Supervisors would be accomplished.

Melaney Seacat of the Pima County Regional Wastewater Reclamation Department (PCRWRD) began a PowerPoint presentation of an overview of the Phase I Report. The Report was being presented for the first time at this meeting. This was a three hundred-page report but only the thirty-page Executive Summary would be discussed at today's meeting. This presentation was the first in a series of public outreach events that would include open houses. The public comment period would close on February 18, 2009, at which time there would be a presentation to the joint Planning and Zoning Commissions of the City and County. All the input received would be forwarded to the Oversight Committee for consideration. The Committee would finalize the Report which would then go to Mayor and Council and the Board of Supervisors in early March 2009.

Ms. Seacat said that Phase I was a massive data collection effort. The intent was to compile the baseline information into a fundamental body of knowledge and bring the Committee up to a common level of understanding of the key facts and information relevant to planning for a sustainable water future. Ms. Seacat stated the Phase I scope items included:

1. Current state of Water, Wastewater and Reclaimed Water Systems
2. Water Resource Assessment
3. Sustainable Water Future
4. City/County Cooperative Efforts

She spoke at length about each of these items. The Report did not include recommendations about the Phase I content, although there was a chapter in the Report covering Committee recommendations for Phase II. The Executive Summary provided the themes and concerns from the Committee's perspective as well as future issues that needed to be addressed. She said there was a series of Appendices that included meeting transcripts, a summary of all public comments, and summaries of the sustainability themes.

Ms. Seacat said, to recap, that the Mayor and Council and Board of Supervisors agreed to a joint scope of work with the goal of ensuring a continuing water source in light of the continuing pressure on the area's water supplies due to population growth. The initial focus was the identification of basic facts related to the condition and capacity of the City's infrastructure, supplies and planning issues. She mentioned one of the main incentives to this Study was Proposition 200, which had been on the ballot in November 2007. One of the concerns this Proposition set out to address was to place limitations on how Tucson Water could provide service, the amount of water it could provide and its

use of renewable resources. The purpose of this Study was to identify a common set of facts related to this issue so when policymakers made decisions, they were doing so in a more informed way. One important component of this Study was the cooperative efforts between the City and County. Management of the water and wastewater systems was separated in 1979, and to do any kind of regional water planning, it was important for these two interconnected systems to have good cooperation and coordination. Another important component of this Study was public involvement, ensuring that this process was transparent and accessible to the public. The committee meetings served as the focus for public involvement and were widely noticed. In addition, the web site provided an enormous volume of information to the public.

Nicole Ewing-Gavin, the City Coordinator for the City/County Water & Wastewater Study Committee, said she was Ms. Seacat's City counterpart in managing this Study. Ms. Ewing-Gavin continued the presentation by addressing the first of the Phase I Scope Items and discussed the following themes that were identified during the study.

- Tucson's water and wastewater systems are reliable and well maintained.
- Both City and County utilities faced increasing need for investment in maintenance, rehabilitation, and replacement.
- Tucson Water had focused recent investments on utilization and delivery of CAP water.
- Pima County Wastewater would need to make significant investments in its treatment facilities to meet new wastewater quality standards.
- While further expansion of the reclaimed water system was desirable, it would require prioritization of uses and analysis of potential funding methods.
- Growth should pay for itself.
- Energy is a significant cost of operating the water and wastewater systems.

The second set of Phase I Scope Item topics included:

- Tucson Water had a reliable and renewable water supply for the near term.
- The City faced uncertainty on a variety of fronts (droughts, global warming and climate change) and needed to be prudent with its resources.
- Expanding the Tucson Water service area must be done thoughtfully and deliberately while considering implications of extending or not extending service.
- New water would be needed in the future, and the time to plan for it is now.
- There should be strengthening of City-County and regional cooperation around water and planning issues.

Melaney Seacat then discussed sustainability, the third of the Phase I Scope Items, and addressed the following points:

- A sustainable water future must be discussed within the overall context of sustainability.
- Water sustainability involved equitable consideration of trade-offs among a variety of inter-related issues and competing demands.
- Planning for and managing growth was critical to creating a sustainable water future.
- Water conservation measures should be increased and the use and re-use of locally renewable water resources optimized. There were a variety of perceptions which needed to be addressed such as the incentives to conserve.
- Human, environmental, and economic needs for water need to be balanced. Access

- Flexible, long-range, participatory, and rigorous planning processes need to be employed. A triple bottom line process (social, environmental and economic analysis) was discussed and widely supported.
- Water pricing and financing approaches should further policy objectives.

Out of the issue of sustainability came some conceptual thoughts on how to define sustainability in the Tucson region. One of the ideas was that this was an evolving concept and whatever definition was arrived at needed to be flexible because future generations would have their own values. The definition of sustainable water management needed to link the issue of sustainable groundwater use and the provision of renewable water resources to areas impacted by groundwater overdraft.

The last chapter of the Report entitled City/County Cooperative Efforts dealt with the following four key items:

- Communication and Coordination between the City and County
- Joint Constructed Recharge Project
- Conservation Effluent Pool and IGA Amendments
- Location of Southeast Side Wastewater Treatment Facility

Nicole Ewing-Gavin briefly touched on what Phase II of this Study would entail. These topics would include:

- Adaptive Management
- Comprehensive Planning
- Water Resources & Environment

An important objective would be City/County agreement on water resource and conservation goals. There was an interdisciplinary team of City and County staff leading efforts to write technical papers, which will include joint recommendations on all these topics. These would go to the Oversight Committee as well as the public for comment and feedback. The Committee would then make recommendations to the City Council and the Board of Supervisors on these topics.

In conclusion, Ms. Ewing-Gavin acknowledged the staff and committee members who worked on this, singling out CWAC Member Barry who put in a tremendous amount of time on this project. RWRAC Member Flores, the Co-Chair was a big help as well. She thanked all the members for all the time they put in. She also thanked City and County staff members for their assistance. Ms. Ewing-Gavin said comments, questions and feedback would be greatly appreciated. This was the first group hearing the presentation and one of the most informed audiences.

CWAC Member Barry added his thanks to staff and commented on the incredible staff effort made.

CWAC Member Billings asked what was meant by 'triple bottom line'.

Ms. Seacat replied that this was the social, environmental and economic analysis. She

added there were academic departments opening up in universities on this topic.

RWRAC Member Carlson noted his concern regarding the scope of where Tucson Water served outside City limits, as nothing was mentioned of increased use due to a certain industry or population. He said this should be looked at.

CWAC Member Barry stated Tucson Water had a reliable renewable water supply. Tucson Water also had the ability to replenish (recharge) 144,000 acre-feet (AF) of CAP water, but did not yet have the infrastructure to deliver this entire volume, nor to deliver 30,000 AF of effluent. Money would have to be spent to make that infrastructure available.

Jeff Biggs, Tucson Water Director, addressed the issue of CAP allocation. He said the Utility ordered its full allocation for the first time this year. As he said at the CWAC meeting that morning, with the recent shortfall of revenues, the Utility was contemplating a strategy to temporarily sell back some of its CAP allocation. As far as a drought was concerned, the Utility's current estimation was for a drought no sooner than 2014. Abundant future snowfall could buy another few years, however.

Chris Avery spoke about CAP allocation in time of drought. There might be some diminishment in the amount of CAP water available to the City in any given year. One of the advantages to a groundwater recharge and recovery process was that one could build some groundwater recharge credits in the bank in anticipation of those lean years coming up. The Utility also thought that in times of a relatively severe drought or dire shortage, it was unlikely that the CAP allocation would be cut down to zero; there would be a proportional reduction in the CAP allocations. Mr. Avery said the Utility thought the CAP allocation was a reliable source of supply for water resources planning purposes, at least in the short term. The strategies adopted would give the Utility enough foresight to see any long-term difficulties with that allocation and adapt accordingly.

RWRAC Member Carlson said he thought there should be an emphasis on today's figures, which should be reviewed periodically and seriously at least every five years. These would give different estimates on everything from cost to population increase, rainfall and conservation. He said he also worried about the sustainability of the cooperation between City and County with regard to a combined utility district, as forty percent of Tucson Water's customers would not have a vote in this. This review should be kept as a study item.

CWAC Member Billings asked how Oro Valley, Marana and the other local water providers were involved in this process, as they all pumped from the same water table as Tucson Water.

CWAC Member Barry said the Mayor and Council and Board of Supervisors told the Oversight Committee to address Tucson Water and Pima County Wastewater and not the other local providers. The Committee agreed that this would have to go into a regional conversation, which was on the table for the future. Mr. Barry said the kinds of facts that were developed in Phase I were necessary for other local water providers to bring to the table.

RWRAC Chair Bliven said he wanted to emphasize one point about cooperation. He said he knew the County and City had not always cooperated as well as the citizens

would have liked. He said he thought CWAC and RWRAC had a responsibility to keep its delegates, Supervisors and Council Members aware that they were expected to cooperate. Mr. Bliven added it was great that everyone was currently cooperating and would like to see more regional cooperation. This was a step in the right direction.

CWAC Member Horvath said this was a comprehensive assessment of the Committee's responsibilities and obligations. This was a great first step in outlining and defining the goals that were put together with the facts brought to the table. It indicated that the community was in good shape in terms of water supply and that the needed infrastructure had to be provided in order to continue to serve the public. It was a great opportunity taken and a timely report. He added that he looked forward to Phase II.

CWAC Member Barry stated there was a difference in the Oversight Committee on how confident the community should feel about its water future. It currently was in good shape, but there could be a water shortage declared in 2017, which was not far off. He said it had taken 80 years to get Colorado River water to Tucson. The community needed to think about 85 percent of Colorado River water by 2020. Tucson Water had to think now about diversifying its portfolio to protect the existing customer base, and not about what would happen in the future through growth.

CWAC Member Vasquez said the best thing about this Study was that a lot of complicated facts were being uncovered with newspaper articles written on a very complicated issue. It was important to try and continue to unpack and unveil all the real facts and the implications of shortage on the Colorado River. It was not as if this issue would sneak up on the Utility.

Jeff Biggs, Tucson Water Director, said the Utility had done a great job over the years of maintaining its reliable water resource, but it did need to continue to look to the future. Its staff would continue to work with these Committees to ensure the public that there was a renewable water supply now and in the future.

CWAC Chair Evans asked if there were other comments.

CWAC Member McCoy said the effluent issue and the Committee's Study were mentioned earlier. She asked if the main points of this could be highlighted.

Nicole Ewing-Gavin addressed this issue and Sandy Elder, Tucson Water Department Administrator, added there was a desire to use as much reclaimed water and effluent as possible and put it to beneficial use. It came down to the fundamental question of who will pay.

CWAC Member Meixner spoke on the topic of effluent. It was his guess that this region was eventually headed to reuse of effluent water. He queried the County's efforts to get that water to higher treated levels in terms of pharmaceuticals. This issue may be 50 to 80 years off right now but was something that must currently be prepared for.

Michael Gritzuk, PCRWRD Director, said in their current program, they had to increase or improve the quality of the effluent they discharged, which was primarily to remove nutrients. The current and future processes did provide some degree of removal of pharmaceutical waste products that varied depending on what the particular compound was. There was no current requirement to remove these waste products from the

wastewater stream, but it was closely monitored. As regulations emerged in this particular area, staff would be on top of it and do what needed to be done.

CWAC Member Barry asked if effluent was going to get cleaned up to the point where the mines could use it.

Mr. Gritzuk said it depended on the use, but if only washing activities were involved, the mines could use the effluent currently discharged, which was used for irrigation of non-edible crops. He also addressed the issue of ownership of effluent. Mr. Gritzuk said the federal government owned over 50 percent of the total volume of effluent discharged. The Bureau of Reclamation owned this as a result of an Indian rights settlement. About 25 percent of this effluent was owned by the City of Tucson through agreements going back to the 1970s. Pima County owned about four to five percent. When reuse potential is talked about, the federal government owns the lion's share of this. Current discussions on this topic centered on what the government would do with the effluent they owned.

RWRAC Member Carlson mentioned another point regarding effluent was that at times, it overflowed into Pinal County. It was his opinion that this should be examined periodically.

CWAC Member Canfield asked if the issue of the conservation effluent pool could be addressed and whether the impediment to its use was mostly an infrastructure question

Mr. Gritzuk said infrastructure was an issue but before this, there was a more vital element, which was to create an agreement. There was a concept that the community would use about 10,000 AF per year for conservation efforts and projects. There was an IGA currently being drafted between the City of Tucson and Pima County, which needed to be finalized and endorsed by the respective governing bodies and then projects could move ahead.

RWRAC Member Carlson said about 20 years ago there was a proposal about pumping salt water here from the Gulf of California. Discussions addressed the residual salt and there the conversation ended. Now there was a thought that 20 or 50 years from now, there would be a desalination plant at the site with atomic energy servicing a good portion of Arizona. It was important to keep one's mind open about additional supply for the next generation.

V. Call to the Audience

No one spoke.

VI. Adjournment 8:43 a.m.