

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING OF THE LANCASTER PLANNING COMMISSION

April 21, 2014

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CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Vose called the regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INVOCATION

Pastor John Meadors of Christian Life Assembly.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chairman Hall.

ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioners Cook, Crist, Malhi, Terracciano, Vice Chairman Hall, and Chairman Vose.

Absent: Commissioner Harvey.

Also present were the Assistant City Attorney (Jocelyn Corbett), Associate Planner (Chuen Ng), Associate Planner-Environmental (Jocelyn Swain), City Engineer (Michelle Cantrell), and Recording Secretary (Marion Coleman); there were six people in the audience.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Terracciano and seconded by Commissioner Malhi, to approve the Minutes from the Regular Meeting of March 17, 2014. Motion carried with the following vote (6-0-0-1):

AYES: Commissioners Cook, Crist, Malhi, Terracciano, Vice Chairman Hall, and Chairman Vose.

NOES: None.

ABSTAIN: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner Harvey.

PRESENTATION

2. THE IMPACT OF DROUGHT IN THE ANTELOPE VALLEY

Los Angeles County Waterworks (LACWD) representative Craig David (Area Engineer) conducted the PowerPoint presentation; representatives Greg Even (Water Development and Water Resource Section) and Dan Lafferty (Principal Engineer) were also present to answer any inquiries from the Planning Commission.

Craig David explained that LACWD does not have an arsenic water treatment facility; he has observed two types of treatment from visiting another facility: (1) a white iron-oxide powder (costly procedure; facility has to be built and maintained); and (2) resin treatment.

Craig David and Greg Even expounded on several methods for arsenic treatment that are available, such as the In-Situ arsenic treatment (cheaper; soil has limited life), ground water treatment (preferred method), and “Black Box” treatment (quickest but expensive).

LACWD representatives Craig David, Greg Even, and Dan Lafferty described arsenic contaminant level of 10 parts per billion as having 10 droplets of arsenic in an Olympic-sized pool. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) dropped the compliance level from 50 parts per billion over 8 years ago, which the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) also adopted.

The LACWD representatives stated that Chromium-6 in their service area is ‘naturally-occurring’; chromium-6 in Hinckley from the Erin Brokovich movie was from a man-made source. LACWD 40 service area is in a geological setting in which chromium-6 occurs naturally as a part of the geological process, and will create a challenge as LACWD works towards compliance with CDPH’s goal of maximum contaminant level of 10 parts per billion.

The LACWD representatives stated groundwater-banking mechanism is in place, and currently has 10,000-acre feet of banked water. They commented on the Water Demand Plan’s Voluntary Conservation household threshold, water availability requiring new developers to purchase water supply entitlement, and water usage trends.

In comparing water usage by an individual farmer versus an individual homeowner, farming is far greater, as does overall agricultural pumping in comparison to municipal pumping from the Antelope Valley groundwater basin. While a reduction in agricultural pumping may make more water available, municipal suppliers must have groundwater extraction capacity and pipeline capacity to make use of available water. The LACWD representatives clarified the origination of water supply as illustrated in the pie chart slide.

Vice Chair Hall inquired regarding the ongoing water lawsuit, to which the representatives responded that once a judgment is made, only those who are party to the lawsuits, and have acquired rights during the lawsuits, will have rights to pump from allocated groundwater. Dan Lafferty explained the process further and later spoke about the adjudication process.

In reference to the Delta smelt and migratory birds, Vice Chair Hall inquired whether ecological importance is placed above consumer’s water needs. Dan Lafferty explained how the

State tries to balance divergent competing interests, and the importance of both sides, through programs such as the Big Delta Conservation Plan. Greg Even stated that trend of increasing drought will drive water prices and the need for water desalination. Dan Lafferty brought up the importance of building the infrastructure necessary to deliver the water from various resources (e.g. State water project during normal (rainfall) years, well water system) in order to meet consumer demand.

Commissioner Terracciano inquired about the Memo of Understanding (MOU) between LACWD and AVEK. Dan Lafferty explained how this agreement is used as a mechanism for a developer to acquire new water supply. Chairman Vose clarified that LACWD collects the fee, and commented on developers' ability to secure water will-serve letter through conditional use permit application process.

Chairman Vose inquired whether LACWD-40 has water reserve and its source(s). The representatives stated that the only water stored is in the water bank, and that there are two sources of water supply; they explained how the balance between committed demand and existing demand determines available supply.

Responding to Chairman Vose on will-serve letter commitment, and on the letter from the (Los Angeles County) Public Works Director for withdrawal of water commitment to cities, the LACWD representatives stated they uphold commitment to unexpired recorded maps only, and provided clarification on the initial intent of the program, from the agency's perspective, to allocate water to cities.

Discussion on water demand and rules on equitable distribution ensued. LACWD stated that rules on water distribution would be applied equally, but the rules would depend upon the severity of the situation.

Speaker Maria Paesano expressed that she does not feel there is a drought issue; it is the way the water is being used. She stated in 1966 there was a "pinch drive" (chemicals and bombs were dropped in wells which contaminated the whole area); many farmers left the area, because they could not use the water and the wells dried up. This drought occurred for approximately 20 years. She commented on Topco resources used for petro chemicals, gas processing, reservoir engineering, drill and well. She stated water was drained on I-395 to use the minerals and resources, which killed everything in the area; same happening in the Lancaster area.

Chairman Vose acknowledged that Brian Ludicke was on an assignment.

DIRECTOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

COMMISSION AGENDA

Chairman Vose mentioned that he attended the sPower groundbreaking on April 10, 2014, and stated that the Summer Solar photovoltaic project the Commission previously approved is in good standing; dust problem and other concerns are under control on the site.

Chairman Vose acknowledged Robert Neal for his presence and for arranging the presentation by the Los Angeles County Water District 40.

PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR - NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Vose declared the meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m., to the Special Meeting for Agenda Review on Monday, May 12, 2014, at 5:30 p.m., in the Planning Conference Room, City Hall.

JAMES D. VOSE, Chairman
Lancaster Planning Commission

ATTEST:

BRIAN S. LUDICKE, Planning Director
City of Lancaster