

**Borrego Water District
MINUTES
Conservation
Standing Committee
Wednesday, March 5, 2008
9:00 a.m.
806 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004**

Attendance: Directors: Mendenhall, Shimeall, Smiley
Staff: Richard Williamson, General Manager
 Jerry Rolwing, Operations Manager
 Wendy Quinn, Recording Secretary
Public: Jim Engelke Maris Brancheau, *Borrego Sun*
 Rudy Monica Jim Wilson, CCCD
 Larry Johnson, CCCD Bob Moore
 Robert Bull, CCCD Alex Nagy+, CCCD
 Francisco Murillo, CCCD Jane Daniels

1. TIERED WATER RATES

- Rams Hill HOA's tiered rates – Incentive money for removing citrus trees under the turf removal program.

Jerry Rolwing reported that the Rams Hill Homeowners Association had asked whether they could get a conservation investment subsidy for removing citrus trees rather than turf. Director Smiley asked whether the trees were on turf, which would have to be watered anyway if the trees were removed. Mr. Rolwing did not believe they were on turf. Director Smiley agreed to provide a formula to calculate the water use for citrus as opposed to turf.

- Christmas Circle – Ginger Dunlap-Dietz to talk about the possibility of removing a portion of the grass and replacing with ceramic tiles.

Jim Wilson reported that Ginger Dunlap-Dietz had not attended because the Christmas Circle Board wanted to meet with her first. Mr. Wilson introduced Bob Moore, who is in charge of gardening and park maintenance at Christmas Circle. A plan is under consideration whereby the wide sweep sprinklers around the perimeter, which sometimes water the pavement, would be moved to the interior of the park and replaced with "pop ups." Mr. Moore estimated the cost at \$5,000 to \$6,000. If a one-foot paved border were installed, the sprinklers would still have to be moved, and another \$4,000 to \$5,000 in expenses would be incurred, plus labor. In addition, the park would have to be graded so the water wouldn't run onto the street. Mr. Wilson requested that the Board consider the sprinkler modification as mitigation and assist financially. Mr. Moore pointed out that the sprinkler modification would not reduce the amount of water used significantly, but at least it would be watering the turf and not the street. Mr. Rolwing suggested considering an MP Rotor Sprinkler Head, and pointed out that the \$15,000 allocated by the Board for conservation might assist in the project. Discussion followed regarding the possible perimeter pavement, which the Christmas Circle Board continued to oppose. Director Shimeall asked whether it was necessary to water the park as much as was being done currently, but Mr. Moore replied that the grass wilted when irrigation was reduced. Rudy Monica pointed out that if the border

were paved, irrigation costs under the tiered rates would not increase so much. Mr. Wilson cited the park's benefit to the community and the economy. He suggested an irrigation efficiency audit. Director Smiley recommended the Mission Conservation District in Fallbrook, which conducts such audits for the agricultural community free of charge. Mr. Rolwing added that certain fertilizers can reduce irrigation requirements.

Discussion followed regarding the possibility of exempting Christmas Circle from the tiered rates. Director Smiley explained that Proposition 218 prohibits exemptions. However, he suggested charging Christmas Circle at the commercial rate, rather than irrigation, so the rates would be based on historical usage. Mr. Wilson pointed out that commercial enterprises such as the farmers' market, Borrego Days artists and crafters and the Circle of Art use the park. Although the Christmas Circle Board is a nonprofit organization under 501C3, Rich Williamson did not believe a commercial entity had to be "for profit." Director Smiley recommended asking Allison Burns for a legal opinion. Mr. Moore suggested charging a small fee for use of the park, if that would facilitate a commercial designation. Mr. Williamson noted that perhaps golf courses should also be considered commercial.

Mr. Williamson recommended that the District meet again with Christmas Circle representatives and review cost estimates associated with paving the perimeter, as well as the possibility of a commercial designation. He noted the public relations benefit in showing conservation efforts at the park. Mr. Wilson offered to submit a letter to the District requesting financial assistance, and agreed to arrange for an irrigation efficiency audit.

2. CONSERVATION INVESTMENT SUBSIDIES

- Jerry to talk about a conference he attended on Sustainable Water Sources: Conservation & Resource Planning.

Mr. Rolwing distributed tips from a recent AWWA water sustainability conference. He explained the "water sense" program, whereby labels are provided for water saving appliances that have been proven effective.

Jim Engelke brought up the problem of water leaks, particularly in older homes, and wondered how they could be located and repaired. Director Smiley noted that there are companies that locate leaks from the surface using a listening device. Mr. Rolwing suggested this be tied into the irrigation efficiency audits. Mr. Williamson suggested the leak detection also be conducted on the District's lines. Discussion followed regarding the pressure control valve requirement in ID 4 and the fact that many residents are not aware of it. Mr. Williamson suggested the valves be installed next to the meter so they could easily be identified.

3. PROGRESS REPORT ON CIMIS STATION IN BORREGO

Mr. Rolwing reported the CIMIS station is operational and collecting data, and the phone line is in place. He had not been able to reach Sergio Fierro of the State Department of Water Resources to arrange for the rain gauge and instruction on equipment maintenance.

4. REVIEW FOLLOWING POLICY

Mr. Williamson reported he was still awaiting the County's response on the latest proposed following policy.

5. CLOSING

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next Conservation Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 2, 2008 at 9:00 a.m.