

Borrego Water District
MINUTES
Conservation Standing Committee
Wednesday, November 4, 2009, 9:00 a.m.
806 Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Attendance: Director: Shimeall
Staff: Rich Williamson, General Manager
 Wendy Quinn, Recording Secretary
Public: Jim Engelke Beth Hart

CALL TO ORDER
INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of October 7, 2009 were approved as written.

CURRENT AGENDA ITEMS:

The Luckman property was discussed, and whether any steps should be taken to effect the cessation of the nursery operation, which is in violation of the zoning. Jim Engelke reported that the Community Sponsor Group had tried without success, and DPLU declined to enforce the zoning. Rich Williamson agreed to review the code and see if additional mitigation might be required.

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

- Report of Irrigation seminar/plans for future workshops (gardeners and/or general public)

Mr. Williamson reported that an irrigation seminar was held on October 31, and 18 people attended. Jerry Rolwing is planning another in the spring with a local speaker who will concentrate more on desert landscaping.

- Update Budget for FYE 2010

Mr. Williamson suggested distributing water saving devices to the public. He showed a low flow shower head and a "water pebble," which indicates when the shower has been running for five minutes. Mr. Williamson will test the devices, obtain a price for 100 to 200 packets, and talk to motel operators about installing the shower heads. Allison Burns will also be consulted regarding potential Proposition 218 requirements. It was suggested that the District charge \$10 for the packets, and then in six months if water use declined the customer would get a \$20 rebate.

Mr. Williamson suggested calculating the cost of the conservation incentive program per acre-foot of water saved in a year. The cost is probably much less than what we would have to pay to purchase water. Eventually the District may consider selling storage capacity in our aquifer. In exchange for storage, the user would have to treat the extracted water, including that used in Borrego Springs.

- Water use under Tiered Rates

Mr. Williamson reported that only 100 out of 2,000 District customers have exceeded Tier 1 water usage so far. He will continue to evaluate the results of the program.

2. CONSERVATION COMMITTEE MONITORING DUTIES

- Review of irrigation audits

Mr. Williamson reported that Scott Messersmith and Tom Fredericks are alternating in the performance of irrigation audits. Most of those audited require backflow preventers or anti-siphon valves.

- Status of Conservation Incentive participants

An updated chart was distributed.

- Toilet rebates, Irrigation audits, Turf removals

Turf removal approvals were requested by Jerome Ledal, Richard and Margaret Drye, Donna Hands and Marilyn Walsh. The Committee approved all.

Beth Hart inquired about the status of the parcel fees. Mr. Williamson explained the process, during which the District would work with the Registrar of Voters. If voters representing more than 50 percent of the assessed valuation of properties within the District object, the fee could not be implemented. The District's financial consultants will present various scenarios whereby the desired revenue could be realized. Director Shimeall asked whether the fee would be based on the size of the parcel, the assessed valuation or both. Mr. Williamson envisioned it would be tied to zoning; i.e., how many dwelling units per acre could be built. The matter will be considered in greater detail during the budget process.

3. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Director Shimeall announced that the State Senate has passed one of four parts of a water bill and is now addressing the Delta issue and groundwater management. Mr. Williamson reported that a court case is pending relative to the smelt in the Delta and the perception that the smelt are being favored over humans in the environmental impact statement.

Mr. Williamson reported that he spoke at a recent Water Smart conference regarding our water credit mitigation program. He further announced he would be meeting on November 19 with the other members of our Integrated Water Resource Planning group, DPLU and the San Diego Resource Conservation District.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m. The next regular Conservation Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 2, 2009.