

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF
THE TORRANCE WATER COMMISSION**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance Water Commission convened in a regular session at 7:05 p.m. on Thursday, April 21, 2005 in the West Annex meeting room.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Commissioners Deemer, Gonzalez, Haddon, Hoffman, Lew, Warner, and Chairperson White.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Public Works Director Beste,
Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden,
Project Manager Dettle,
Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich, and
Metropolitan Water District Director Wright.

3. FLAG SALUTE

Due to the lack of a flag, there was no Pledge of Allegiance.

4. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

MOTION: Commissioner Haddon moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. Commissioner Deemer seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5A. MINUTES FROM MARCH 17, 2005

MOTION: Commissioner Gonzalez moved for the approval of the March 17, 2005 Water Commission meeting minutes as submitted. Commissioner Deemer seconded the motion; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

7B. PRESENTATION BY WATER REPLENISHMENT DISTRICT REGARDING WEST BASIN GROUNDWATER OPERATIONS AND PROJECTS

This item was considered out of order.

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden introduced Water Replenishment District General Manager Robb Whitaker who in turn introduced Director Rob Katherman and Assistant General Manager and Chief Engineer Mario Garcia.

Assistant General Manager Garcia provided an overview of the Water Replenishment District (WRD) with a power point presentation. He described the two basins, West Coast Basin and Central Basin, that WRD aligns and manages, noting that the area covers 420 square miles, 43 cities, and a population of more than four million. He stated that the area uses 730,000 acre feet of water, one-third of which is groundwater and two-thirds is imported water.

He provided a brief history of the groundwater basin from the 1900s to 1950s and the overdraft that occurred with increased demand, resulting in drastically reduced water levels and intrusion of seawater. He advised that WRD was formed in 1959 to provide artificial groundwater replenishment to make up for this overdraft and to protect water quality. He stated that court adjudication in the 1960s limited allowable pumping and that the Los Angeles County Flood Control District installed injection wells along the coast to stop the saltwater intrusion.

Responding to Commissioner Gonzalez's inquiry, he explained that the Water Master, who is the State Department of Water Resources, is responsible for auditing what is pumped by each agency.

He explained that WRD manages the Basins by replenishing groundwater, preventing seawater intrusion, monitoring groundwater quantity and quality, and preventing contamination.

Director Katherman added that WRD's engineering and groundwater monitoring reports are available on their website at WRD.org.

Assistant General Manager Garcia described the types and costs of replenishment water that WRD has access to: storm water, recycled water for spreading, imported water for spreading, recycled water for barriers, and imported water for barriers. He stated that they would like to use more recycled water in the barriers but that there are regulatory limitations.

In response to Commissioner Deemer's inquiry, General Manager Whitaker explained the history of the spreading grounds that are owned and operated by the Flood Control District, and WRD's goal to get more water into the ground when seasonal water is not available and to extract more use out of the spreading grounds.

MWD Director Wright discussed MWD's consideration of a treated water surcharge to smooth out the demand by agencies and to level out the peaks.

Assistant General Manager Garcia described the Rio Hondo spreading grounds, the San Gabriel River and spreading grounds, and the clay layers that are formed in the confined aquifers. Different ways to protect the area from increased pressure from developers was briefly discussed.

At Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden's request, General Manager Whitaker explained the difficulty of getting recharge in the West Basin, the separate adjudication, and the geological differences between the two Basins.

Responding to Commissioner Deemer's inquiry, WRD staff explained why water could not be stored in the Palos Verdes hills.

Assistant General Manager Garcia showed a map of the West Coast Barrier, Dominguez Gap Barrier, and Alamitos Barrier as well as tables depicting seawater intrusion in the coastal aquifer with pumping, no pumping, intrusion advancing, and pumping and injection. He stated that injection wells were built to create an artificial mound to stop further intrusion and to replenish the inland basin, and that the Goldsworthy desalter was constructed to remove saline. He noted that there was an estimated 250,000 acre feet of brackish water trapped.

In response to Commissioner Hoffman's inquiry, he stated that the Goldsworthy desalter was built with expansion in mind.

General Manager Whitaker initiated a discussion on the requirement to maintain 1,000 parts per million chlorate.

Assistant General Manager Garcia described the system of groundwater monitoring wells throughout the Basin. He provided details on the Groundwater Quality Protection Program, the Safe Drinking Water Program, and Data Management: GIS and Modeling. He referred to tables depicting the results of groundwater management in the Central and West Coast Basin key wells as well as WRD Annual Reports on Groundwater Basin Conditions. He concluded his report with WRD's future challenges that include: to identify Basin storage opportunities, increase Basin utilization, ensure drought protection, ensure high quality groundwater, continue public education, and minimize replenishment costs.

General Manager Whitaker defined conjunctive use and the various types of water that can be used for it. He described the water storage at Diamond Valley Lake that has 800,000 acre feet capacity. He stated that groundwater basins in the WRD area have a storage capacity of nearly 500,000 useable acre feet. He discussed benefits of conjunctive use that include increasing water quality and reliability as well as lowering the cost of water supply.

In response to Commissioner Deemer's inquiry, he compared storage capacities in San Fernando, San Gabriel, and Pomona basins.

He discussed disagreement among the pumpers regarding storage authority and control and WRD's decision to move forward to adopt interim rules. He stated that the Board has started a public hearing process and was expected to adopt an ordinance for the rules and regulations on May 18, 2005. He described how the interim rules would benefit the City of Torrance, read sections from the appellate opinions, and provided a summary of storage regulations under the interim rules.

Chairperson White initiated a brief discussion on the danger of privatization.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6A. SUBCOMMITTEE STATUS REPORT ON DEVELOPMENT OF WATER COMMISSION WORK PLAN

Chairperson White presented the Water Commission Work Plan and welcomed comments from Commissioners. Commissioner Deemer suggested revising the Goals section to include safe water supply, but it was determined not to add it. Commissioner Hoffman suggested adding "water conservation" under Water Resources in the Information Areas section and deleting the wording: "The Commission is not involved in operation and budget detail or decisions" in the Commission's Role section.

MOTION: Commissioner Gonzalez, with a second by Commissioner Warner, moved to accept the Water Commission Work Plan as amended to be forwarded to City Council. The motion passed 5-2 as reflected in the following roll call vote:

AYES: Commissioners Deemer, Gonzalez, Hoffman, Warner, and Chairperson White.

NOES: Commissioners Haddon and Lew.

Commissioner Haddon stated that he voted “no” because he wanted the Work Plan to state that the Commission was not involved in the operation and budget detail or decisions, adding that he was in agreement with everything else in the Work Plan.

Commissioner Lew stated that the Commission Mission Statement did not include involvement in budgetary issues, but that he was comfortable with the rest of the Work Plan.

Commissioner Hoffman stated that discussions at previous Commission meetings centered on financial reporting and not on operation or budget issues.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7A. CREATION OF WATER CONSERVATION SUBCOMMITTEE

Commissioner White appointed Commissioners Hoffman, Gonzalez, and Deemer to the ad hoc subcommittee on Water Conservation and they accepted.

MOTION: Commissioner Gonzalez moved to nominate Commissioner Hoffman as Chairperson of the Water Conservation Subcommittee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Deemer; a voice vote reflected unanimous approval.

8. WEST BASIN WATER ASSOCIATION REPORT

Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich reported that major topics of discussion at the last meeting included increased water levels, West Basin’s preparation of a Conservation Master Plan for the West Basin Municipal Water District, West Basin workshops last month regarding water rate increases, and the Urban Water Management Plan.

He stated that WRD discussed a baseline plan to optimize the use of the West Basin and reduce long-term water costs. They also reported on the proposed interim rules to govern the conjunctive use program. He advised that the Department has not officially gone on record to support the interim program, awaiting official concurrence from the City Manager’s office. He stated that it would be a six-way agreement that was a statement of goals and objectives rather than statutory rules and regulations.

Public Works Director Beste added that staff was questioning WRD to ensure that the interim rules were in the City’s best interests.

MWD Director Wright initiated a brief discussion centered on acquiring Exxon/Mobil’s unused pumping rights.

9. MONTHLY DEPARTMENT REPORT

9A. DEPUTY PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Deputy Public Works Director van der Linden requested that the Commission accept and file the report.

Responding to Commissioner Deemer’s inquiry, Senior Administrative Analyst Schaich explained that expenditures were below trend due to six vacancies and a lag in expenditure reporting.

MOTION: Commissioner Warner moved to accept and file the Deputy Public Works Director's Report as submitted. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Deemer and passed by unanimous voice vote approval.

9B. MWD DIRECTOR'S REPORT

MWD Director Wright distributed photographs from the inspection tour to the Colorado River. He compared the tour to previous trips, and asked Commissioners to offer any comments or suggestions.

Chairperson White and Commissioner Hoffman stated that the tour was very educational and enjoyable.

10. ORALS

10A. Commissioner Hoffman thanked MWD Director Wright for arranging the inspection tour.

10B Chairperson White distributed an April 3, 2005 article regarding the saving of habitat along the Colorado River aqueduct.

10C. Chairperson White stated that she attended a water privatization meeting put on by the League of Women Voters and distributed the executive summary.

10D. MWD Director Wright discussed an MWD 50-year program to restore habitat along the Colorado River and explained incidental take.

11. ADJOURNMENT

At 9:35 p.m., Commissioner Gonzalez, with a second by Commissioner Haddon, moved to adjourn the meeting to Thursday, May 19, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the West Annex Commission Meeting Room.

Approved as Written May 19, 2005 s/ Sue Herbers, City Clerk
