



# MAYOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON UNSEWERED AREAS MINUTES

**UNSEWERED AREAS COMMITTEE  
GENERAL MEETING  
THURSDAY, July 10, 2008  
10:00 A.M.**

**CITY HALL BASEMENT CONF ROOM  
201 S. CORTEZ ST.  
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA  
(928) 777-1130**

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAYOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON **UNSEWERED AREAS** held on **THURSDAY, July 10, 2008, IN THE CITY HALL BASEMENT CONFERENCE ROOM**, located at **210 S. CORTEZ STREET**. Notice of this meeting is given pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes, Section 38-431.02.

## **Members:**

Marlin Kuykendall, Chair	P	Jim Hazelbaker, Prescott No.	P
Michael Byrd, Prescott Creeks	P	Councilwoman Lora Lopas	P
Khristine Davenport, White Cloud Ln.	P	John Reed, Antelope Hills	A
Richard DeLaveaga, Prescott No.	A	Gary Worob, White Oak Cr.	P
Adam Gabriella, Prescott No.	A		

(P=Present A=Absent)

## **Others Present:**

Kristin Darr-Bornstien, Nicole Roden, Bruce Hilgendorf, Councilman Jim Lamerson, Marve Hanson, Councilman Bob Bell, Jim Ciaffoni, Craig McConnell, Mardi Read, Jack Richardson, Lauren Millette, Yvonne Dorman, Mayor Jack Wilson

1. Call to Order  
The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.
2. Roll Call
3. Committee Member Introductions
4. Summary of City's Activities to Date: Craig McConnell  
Craig McConnell provided a handout on the background of improvement districts and the formulation of a citywide sewer policy. Craig discussed the annexations of the four candidate areas where residents have reported problems: North Prescott, Antelope Hills, White Oak Circle and White Cloud Lane. Craig indicated that until recently the primary mechanism for installing central sewer was an improvement

district. The problem with this approach is that cost has increased dramatically. Traditionally, the cost has been assessed on private property, and secured by liens. Residents are not happy paying today's inflated prices. The solution will not be to look at different ways to implement an improvement district, which has been the City's policy in the past. There has been increased focus on this issue since January, 2008 when Council identified a City-wide policy as a top priority. During workshops held since January, 2008, Council has discussed potential solutions for the four candidate areas. But if you expand the focus City-wide, the problem is much different. The four candidate areas may cost about \$8-10 million, but City-wide could be as much as \$50 million, if the policy requires mandatory hook-ups. So, because not all areas have a problem, this doesn't make sense from a policy standpoint to mandate hook-ups if you have a large lot, etc. So we're not looking for the "quick fix", but something that extends City-wide. Going forward, another important aspect will be the water shed issue. Septic systems and leach fields can affect the creeks.

Another issue discussed during the workshops is funding. Sewer is operated as an enterprise fund, which means the money is separately accounted. When there is discussion of the "City" paying for sewer, that really means that all rate paying sewer customers would be paying.

Also discussed was the role of Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ). During workshops it was established that the Yavapai County Environmental Services Department has been delegated responsibility and authority for wastewater disposal systems. In establishing this committee, there was discussion about trying to engage the Yavapai County Environmental Services Department in a more active role/partnering in getting information that has not been available previously.

Craig indicated that public information has been developed and is available on the City website, including a Frequently Asked Questions document. Workshop materials are also on the website.

Craig McConnell reviewed the three policy options discussed during the June 17, 2008 workshop. There are two main components to possible options: financing mechanisms and connection criteria. Connection criteria becomes very important as we discuss the concept of a City-wide approach.

Improvement Districts have been discussed over the years, but there has not been much discussion about Reimbursement Districts. In later workshops concerns about water quality in the lakes and tributary watersheds were discussed, and what the implications might be if ADEQ were to step in and make certain requirements for clean up. Has it been determined what the contributors are for the water quality in the lakes? The City acquired the lakes for water supply purposes, and use the lakes for recharge, so there are water quality criteria for the water coming out of the

lakes. The lakes are a very important component of the City's overall water portfolio.

Chairman Kuykendall stated that the committee is challenged to find solutions for the four unsewered areas. If at some point, it is determined that the lakes have a problem, that would be a community wide problem. Getting factual data from the County has been difficult. Residents are reluctant to report problems.

5. Presentation by committee representatives on recommendations and desired outcome

- Prescott North
- Antelope Hills
- White Oak Circle
- White Cloud Lane

Gary Worob stated that one of the biggest long range problems is safe yield. His feeling is that we can't talk about sewer or water without addressing safe yield. You can't just look at septic as the only problem. The existing sewer system may be part of the problem as well.

Chairman Kuykendall asked if this may be reaching out of the committee's scope. Gary stated that he thinks the scope should be all encompassing. Recycled gray water and rainwater harvesting must be considered. The City is charged with making the community better. We can't just look at effluent.

Chairman Kuykendall asked Councilwoman Lopas what her understanding was as to the committee's charge. He indicated that we have to be very clear, because if the charge is broadened, more expertise may be required. Councilwoman Lopas indicated that the job it to have a plan to follow – a component of which is how sewers are impacting our water supply. We don't know. We should be thinking about the bigger picture. It's about our community as a whole, our water supply, our watersheds, our creeks and our lakes. That's the ultimate end result.

Michael Byrd stated his observation is that in the community the discussion has been focused on water quantity, and not water quality. The community is unique in that we have 8 or 9 creeks and 2 lakes - things that could drive the economy.

Craig McConnell stated that if there is interest in relating unsewered areas to a much broader water quality and quantity context, there would need to be clearly defined short and long term objectives, because some residents have immediate issues with failing septic. The committee should not work on the longer term goals at the expense of the more immediate problems.

Chairman Kuykendall referred the committee back to the charter provided by Mayor, and asked Councilwoman Lopas to make Council aware of the committee's conversation and get further direction as to the charter.

Gary Worob discussed some solutions for failing septic systems. He would like to remove the stigma associated with septic systems, and would like to offer assistance and education to the public. If residents could report that they are having septic problems, then we could provide solutions and in some cases financial aid for those who need it.

Chairman Kuykendall stated that money is the bottom line in this issue. There are limitations to what the City can contribute. In the past, funding for street lights and landfill expenses were tacked onto water bills. Residents currently on septic have not paid impact fees or buy-in fees or monthly fees.

Councilwoman Lopas indicated that we first need to identify what the problem is. Will putting in sewers help the lakes? There may be alternative systems that can be used. We need additional information to determine the direction to go in.

Chairman Kuykendall stated that we need to establish a working partnership with the County, whereby issues could be reported and addressed without homes being "red-tagged" by the County. The County needs to participate in addressing problems with the lakes.

Jim Hazelbaker stated that putting the 600 homes on sewer could provide about 230 acre feet of effluent per year. We need to discuss how residents can get on sewer. Financing is the issue. Most residents cannot afford the entire cost associated with an improvement district.

Gary Worob asked if you put everyone on sewer, have you solved the problem? We don't know what the problems are. He felt that the immediate task of the committee is to help find out what the real problems are, and then come back and address them. We need additional facts on cost and funding.

Councilwoman Lopas stated that we will be seeing a bigger problem due to aging of homes. The state now mandates that septic systems must be certified at the time of a sale.

Councilman Lamerson stated that the City has some responsibility, in that we annexed homes that we knew were on septic systems. He thinks that the scope of this committee is to make recommendations as to what level of culpability belongs to the City and what culpability belongs to the property owners. Councilman Lamerson believes that it is the City's responsibility to lay trunk lines. He stated that not all problems with the lakes have to do with septic systems. Drainage issues are a contributing factor. There are 80 year old sewer lines running up the creeks that are leaking. Councilman Lamerson stated he is a proponent of basic services, and

sewer is one of them. He is looking to the committee to make recommendations; maybe it is to fix immediate failures now. But there is a long range solution, and it is a city wide sewer.

Councilman Bell stated that he lives in the Prescott North area, and will have to recuse himself during voting. He is not experiencing problems, but is aware of issues in the lower lying areas. As to the charter of the committee, which includes focusing on a win-win solution for residents and to all residents and the City, Councilman Bell's first thought was that if all 16,800 residents would pay just .10 per day, we could improve lake quality. But many residents responded that they would not be willing to pay this. Some residents feel that they paid for their own sewer when they bought their property, and they are not willing to pay for anyone else.

Chairman Kuykendall asked the Mayor for guidance on the charter of the committee.

Mayor Wilson stated that the committee's charter could be modified, but he would want to take it back to Council to get agreement at the Council level.

Bruce Hilgendorf stated that it appears that we're looking at more than one recommendation coming out of this committee. We're looking at long term, short term, and then several recommendations under each category that will affect quality and quantity.

Gary Worob stated that Prescott has the potential to be one of the leading models in the United States. There is tremendous creativity in the community that is not being applied. We need to look at the immediate situation, and use a task force to look at immediate solutions. We also need to address the long range problems. Will we reach safe yield in the future? Does that mean that everyone needs to tie into sewer? We need to look at what we're doing in the long run. We need to look at what other communities are doing. How do we take the burden off of the City and put it onto the community? There are millions of dollars in grants available to the community.

Bruce Hilgendorf indicated that there is a need for a public education component to the committee's recommendations – forums, seminars, articles in the newspaper to help educate the public.

Craig McConnell commented on the sewer system and the contribution that the system may be making to the problem. The City does have a camera van, and regularly videos the system as a maintenance procedure. These videos were used in developing the calibrated sewer model, which ties to the capital improvement program. The City has an old leaky sewer system, and lines do run in the creek beds, and water does come into the system when creeks flow. This is why the Council approved a substantial adjustment of rates to fund a capital improvement program for relocation of lines. Rates had not been raised for decades. We now

have \$100's of millions for a rehabilitation program for the sewer system. This program will have a major impact on water quality.

Gary Worob indicated that there was a 50 +1 vote against sewer. We need strong facts to define where we need to go and make recommendations.

Chairman Kuykendall stated that if we were to take a vote for or against sewer through improvement districts, we would be shot down due to money. It all boils down to money. But, his hope is that the committee will move ahead to seek further solutions. The Council will have to direct how the committee goes forward.

Councilman Lamerson stated that the committee needs to make a recommendation to the Council, so that the Council can make an evaluation.

6. Items for next meeting and date

The next monthly meeting will be held on September 4, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. in Founders Suite B at the Prescott Public Library. If you are unable to attend, it is recommended that you send a representative.

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52.

THE CITY OF PRESCOTT ENDEAVORS TO MAKE ALL PUBLIC MEETINGS ACCESSIBLE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. WITH 48 HOURS ADVANCE NOTICE, SPECIAL ASSISTANCE CAN BE PROVIDED FOR SIGHT AND/OR HEARING IMPAIRED PERSONS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS. PLEASE CALL 777-1272 OR 777-1100 (TDD) TO REQUEST AN ACCOMMODATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MEETING.

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**CERTIFICATION OF POSTING OF NOTICE**

The undersigned hereby certifies that a copy of the foregoing notice was duly posted at Prescott City Hall and on the City's website on \_\_\_\_\_, at \_\_\_\_\_ .m. in accordance with the statement filed with the City Clerk's Office.

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**Teresa Ogle**