

PRESCOTT WATER ISSUES
COMMITTEE MEETING
FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2010
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESCOTT WATER ISSUES COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY, May 21, 2010 in the City Manager's Conference room located at CITY HALL, 201 SOUTH CORTEZ STREET, Prescott, Arizona.

A. Call to Order.

Chairman Lamerson called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

B. Roll Call.

WATER ISSUES COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Chairman Jim Lamerson	Present
Member Steve Blair	Present
Member Lora Lopas	Present

GUESTS PRESENT: Gordon Bean; Chuck Budinger; Michael Byrd; Gary Worob, Debbie Horton; Tim Legler

C. Approval of minutes of the May 7, 2010 and May 11, 2010 meetings of the Water Issues Committee.

CHAIRMAN LAMERSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 7, 2010 AND MAY 11, 2010 MEETINGS OF THE WATER ISSUES COMMITTEE; SECONDED BY MEMBER LOPAS; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

D. Presentation by representatives of Arizona Game and Fish re lakes.

Andy Clark, Regional Fish Program Manager from Arizona Fish & Game, arrived at 9:30 a.m.

Chairman Lamerson noted that the committee wanted to take the lakes to a different level and recognized the financial impact that Fish & Game had on the area. He told Mr. Clark that they were gathering information to make a recommendation to Council concerning the lakes.

Mr. Clark brought three management plans for fisheries in Goldwater, Willow and Watson Lakes. (Exhibit A) He noted that they had been managed as warm water lakes but Fish & Game would like to add trout into the lakes for winter fishing. He said they must be sure that the money they were spending did not impact endangered species. There must be deep enough water in the lakes for good fisheries and the past ten years had good levels, for the most part.

There were a couple of species of fish that they would like to take out of Willow Lake –bullhead and sunfish. He also said that it was possible to make a lake too clean for fishing. He thought that dredging deeper channels in that lake would help the anglers.

Chairman Lamerson asked what the relationship was between Fish & Game and the Salt River Project (SRP). He said that they wanted to enhance their assets.

Mr. Clark said that collaborative efforts were good and that they had a good relationship with SRP and ADEQ. He noted that it created an opportunity to get money from different pots even though the State did not have much money at that moment.

Member Blair talked about using different motors on the lakes, other than electric. Mr. Clark noted that, from a grant prospective, gas motors were good and they could explore that. They changed the restrictions on Lynx Lake and some of the neighbors were still not over that. Member Blair said that it could open the door to fishing tournaments. Ms. Horton asked for Mr. Clark's recommendation on the size of motor that should be used on the lakes.

Mr. Clark said that they usually see 10 horsepower and below, but they may want to stay consistent and require "no wake" with any size motor. Ms. Horton thought that it would be good to standardize the requirement.

Chairman Lamerson said that there was no permit fee to use an electric motor. He asked if there were other communities who had models that they could use to formulate policies regarding the use of gasoline motors. Perhaps they could charge money that would go to an enterprise fund to take care of the lakes.

Mr. Clark said that he did not know of a State statute that required that and the City should be careful not to charge too many fees. He said that the anglers feel that they get tapped more than anyone else. He suggested that there might be a creative way to incorporate that fee into something else.

Member Blair suggested a boat and trailer fee that may be slightly higher than a parking fee. Mr. Clark said that people usually do not mind paying a fee when they could tell that their money was going toward improving the lake. He said that both Willow and Watson had good improvements and people would not mind the extra fee.

Mr. Byrd asked who would enforce speeding boats. Ms. Horton said that the City staff and volunteers would report that to the police. Mr. Byrd noted that education of the rules was always more cost effective than prosecution. Mr. Clark noted that the anglers were good at self policing those issues.

Chairman Lamerson noted that if the City created a new right for citizens, like the gas motor, there were costs involved. Mr. Clark said that he would hate to see that added cost be a hindrance to a bigger opportunity, like bringing tourists to Prescott.

Chairman Lamerson responded that when they make the lakes better, it would increase traffic. He asked if Mr. Clark had models from other municipalities who had done the same thing so they did not have to reinvent the wheel.

Mr. Worob said that there was a core group assigned by the Mayor to research and recommend best practices to the Council. He noted that each one of them had their expertise and that it was a powerful committee. They needed to legitimize the power of SRP and noted that they would not be able to do anything without them.

Mr. Clark said that he would contact SRP and noted that his focus was on the fishing side of things. He asked what the top three goals for each lake were and said that they could strategize from there. Member Blair suggested making a subcommittee to contact SRP to see how they could achieve their goals.

There was a short discussion concerning weed control. Mr. Clark said they had used matts, chemicals, dyes, machines and physical labor. It was hard to manage the lakes and sometimes they did more harm than good.

Chairman Lamerson said that it sounded like Fish & Game would like to hear what their priorities were and that Council should give them specifics sooner than later. Mr. Clark asked what the changes were from what they were currently doing. Chairman Lamerson said that they were not using the lakes as effectively as they could be. They wanted to increase visibility and usage. Perhaps they could allow motors, but he asked what the cause and effect would be.

Ms. Horton noted that she wanted to make sure that they were all working with each other to reach their goals and not be counterproductive. She noted that Fish & Game needed to agree with the City's policies. Mr. Clark asked if the Mayor and Council planned to upgrade the lakes management plan.

Mr. Byrd said that one of the functions of the committee was to look at all of the issues, look at all of the options and insure that the decisions that come out of it did not lead to unintended outcomes. He asked what would happen if they introduce gas motors. He felt that they were very early in this process. The proposal identified some of the issues they would explore. They would create a top list of priorities. He said there was an interest in having action sooner than later and they should be careful with that. Mr. Worob agreed and said that they should do their research and not get too excited about things.

Mr. Bean asked about their stocking strategy. Mr. Clark said that there were no biological limitations on the lakes. He said that the City had never been that involved with stocking, but if they wanted to change the types of fish, they could talk

about that. There was going to be a watershed plan for the Verde. There was a push to make the Upper Verde a native stream.

Member Blair asked if they had thought of family fishing days to bring more people to the lakes. Mr. Clark said that they wanted to offer licenses on line and have point of sale stations at the lakes. He noted that the government worked very slowly.

Mr. Budinger said that they were not trying to work quickly either and said that there was a lot of work to be done before everything came together. They needed to convince someone with money to help out.

Mr. Clark noted that a commissioner lived in Chino Valley and a State Senator was in Williamson Valley and the committee should take advantage of that. He said that common goals should be front and center.

Chairman Lamerson said that there was a reason why they implemented the .75 cents and noted that nothing was done that did not cost money. He agreed that they needed to sell more fishing licenses. They were creating an opportunity that did not exist and had to keep their eyes open to find the money. Ms. Horton noted that the gas motors could bring in grant money. Mr. Clark also said that they could make the argument that weed control was a part of access, which could be used for grant money.

Mr. Worob said there were many types of grants to show where the money would come from. Mr. Clark said that it was a priority for him and that they could call him any time. He noted that this area had been hard to deal with. He knew how to make it better and he wanted to do it. They were already great parks. The water contamination sign that hung over Watson Lake was one of our biggest hurdles. People thought that they could not eat the fish out of Watson and they would have to get over that hurdle.

Member Blair brought up the issue of raw sewage and how much of it actually reached the lake. Mr. Clark said that the aquatic systems process it well and use it to make better lakes. He reiterated that the lakes could become too clean and that there were no compounds at the bottom of the lake that could be stirred up to have an adverse effect on people and fish.

Mr. Worob asked what they might say to the public at this point about what they had been doing. He wanted to show the public that action had been taken. Ms. Horton said the kiosks would be shipped to them next week and that they could put information on their new signs.

Chairman Lamerson said that the public had invested millions in the assets and they wanted to use the assets to their best advantage. They wanted the public to know now that they were working on issues and that they should tell them what was different from the last Council. He noted that the past Council was able to

acquire revenue for water quality issues. They should let the public know that ADEQ said that the water quality was good. The City should also do a study of the fish and let the public know if the fish were healthy.

Mr. Budinger said that the procedure would be to get the various stakeholders together to agree on the process and they would get a better product. Member Blair said that they should have a workshop on the off Tuesdays to show what had been learned to date and what had been accomplished. Mr. Worob noted that he would be happy to draw something up to present to Council and the community. The members told him to do it.

Mr. Clark asked them if they had identified what was broken. The group said no.

Mr. Worob asked if Fish & Game would have to do an update plant study from the 2005 version. Mr. Clark did not think that there would be much of a difference. He noted that his top priority was to introduce winter time trout stocking. He said that there was a perception that if the lake was stocked, more fish would be caught and more people would buy a license. Chairman Lamerson asked what the survival of the trout would be past the winter. Mr. Clark said that it would be managed as a put and take lake and that the trout would create bigger bass.

Chairman Lamerson asked what the City could do to help out and Mr. Bean noted that the bathrooms should be open in the winter and the fish cleaning stations should be winterized.

Mr. Clark said that there was an Urban Fishing Program where municipalities bought into a system that would guarantee fish stocking. It also required the purchase of another license.

E. Future Committee meetings and agenda items.

Mr. Legler reported on the Willow Lake shock they had done with Fish & Game the previous night. He noted that they shocked an area with a six foot radius where the fish would float to the top to be studied. They were caught with nets, studied and then placed back into the lake.

There was a discussion about the possibility of grant money if they opened the lake to gas motors.

There was a discussion about carving channels in the bottom of the lakes for breeding.

Chairman Lamerson asked if they could encapsulate the information for a presentation to Council.

Mr. Worob noted that Susan Fitch from ADEQ would also have a lot of information to add.

Chairman Lamerson noted that the Mayor agreed to .75 assessment on water bills for the lakes and that the public had no idea how much money came from Fish & Game.

Mr. Worob asked if the next meeting would be June 11 at 9:30 with Susan Fitch. They all agreed. Parks and Recreation would do the July presentation.

Ms. Webb would send out a request for Ms. Fitch to speak at the June meeting. Chairman Lamerson suggested that Ms. Webb mention to Mr. Norwood that she would take over communication for the group.

A draft of the schedule needed to be emailed to members Blair, Lamerson and Lopas.

F. Adjournment.

There being no further issues to discuss, the Water Issues Committee meeting of May 21, 2010 adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

JIM LAMERSON, Chairman

ATTEST:

KIM WEBB, Assistant City Clerk