

PRESCOTT WATER ISSUES
COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2010
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESCOTT WATER ISSUES COMMITTEE held on Tuesday, July 27, 2010 in the CITY MANAGER'S CONFERENCE ROOM located at 201 SOUTH CORTEZ STREET, Prescott, Arizona.

A. Call to Order.

The meeting was called to order at 9:32 a.m. by Chairman Lamerson.

B. Roll Call.

WATER ISSUES COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Chairman Jim Lamerson	PRESENT
Member Steve Blair	PRESENT
Member Lora Lopas	ABSENT

Staff Present: Craig McConnell; Leslie Graser; Shaun Rydell; Liz Burke.

C. Discussion of Draft Amendment to the City Code for the Water Conservation Incentives Program.

Mr. McConnell said that the budget for the Water Conservation Incentives Program was reduced from \$85,000 to \$50,000, similar to other budgetary reductions. In the case of water sales, they have been down substantially for two reasons. First, the economy has people watching their consumption closer. Second, the conservation message has gotten out and is becoming effective.

He said that Shaun Rydell was asked to go through the incentive program and figure out how it could be revised to correspond with the \$50,000 budget level. He noted that even at \$85,000 they ran out of money in April of the fiscal year.

Ms. Rydell then reviewed the proposed incentives program. She said that the Water Issues Committee is being asked to look at this, provide feedback, staff would restyle as needed, and then they would take it to Council when the Committee was comfortable with it.

Chairman Lamerson asked if they had any idea of the vacancy rates for both commercial and residential in the City, as to who was not consuming water. Ms. Rydell said that they may be able obtain that information from the annual report last year. Chairman Lamerson said that may be part of the reduction in water consumption. Ms. Rydell said that they do have an accounting of the water accounts and she is sending the same number of stuffers as in the past.

Mr. McConnell said that he would talk with Mr. Woodfill to see if they could get an accounting of meters that were active with no use.

Ms. Rydell said that she based the program on the national incentives program. She looked at the housing stock in the community as well as the housing stock built prior to 1994, looking at the potential they have to install low-flow toilets, etc. She then tracks the effectiveness.

Member Blair asked how critical that was. He thought they should be focusing on certain geographic areas and historic areas to target those houses. Ms. Rydell said that the effectiveness of the program is that it has been active; she does not need to target specific neighborhoods.

Chairman Lamerson said that if they have had 500 participants in a year, he asked where they were. Ms. Rydell said that she was mapping that information with GIS and will be able to visually present something next year.

Ms. Graser said that they know by address. Ms. Rydell said that people are voluntarily participating. They do not have to staff more people, but she was very receptive to doing a neighborhood.

Member Blair asked how often notices go out in the bills. Ms. Rydell said that they have monthly notices about the WaterSmart program and advertise on the radio. She said that it was about equilibrium. The people are responding; the limitation is from the money she has available to work with. She said that they target the tradesmen through the YCCA.

Chairman Lamerson asked what they do to someone that is not complying with the ordinance. Ms. Rydell said that they report them to Code Compliance. She said that if they can identify the address, they will do a face-to-face courtesy call. She said that if it was the Council's direction they could strengthen the enforcement.

Member Blair said that the warnings are good as it is not usually a malicious effort to waste water; it is just not checking the system. Ms. Rydell said that oftentimes they do not know there is a problem until they get their bill.

She said that they produce many written documents. They have been training irrigation auditors to help consumers better manage their water.

Chairman Lamerson said that he did not think the public was the biggest offender; it was the various public facilities. Ms. Rydell said that was a campaign worth addressing. She has talked to the irrigation professionals and the school district has been offered various tools, but she could push a bit further with them.

Ms. Rydell said that irrigation was her biggest project this year. She wants to show that better management equals big water savings and money savings.

Mr. McConnell asked Ms. Rydell if she thought that any of the changes proposed in the incentives program would be controversial with the landscaping industry. Ms. Rydell said that the public is responding positively. They were ready to apply and there is an active interest. She has not received any negative comments on the program.

Chairman Lamerson said that they need to lead by example. He keeps trying to get across that government is who the people look to for example and all over the city government is a bad example of water conservation.

Member Blair said that he thought it was knowledge. He picked up the phone to the school district about the gym having its evaporation running 24/7 when no one was in the building. He said that it is taxpayer dollars. It takes going to the supervisors and saying they need to address the turf maintenance. He said that they need to be more aggressive. Ms. Rydell said that she would put that at the top of her list. She said that she has been focusing on capacity building in a community.

Member Blair recommended that she get the County, hospital, school district, etc. and those in charge and as them for a meeting at City so they can convey how important they believe it is.

Ms. Rydell said that she has a Conserve to Enhance presentation proposed in September through the University of Arizona, working with Parks and Recreation on better management practices and that would be a good tool to get them to the meeting.

Ms. Rydell said that she has worked with the schools in the past, but she is now starting the Parks and Recreation to get a strong format in place. She will then move toward the schools. She wants to work in her own organization first as it is then easier to sell to the other organizations.

Ms. Graser said that they need to take care of their own house, and Ms. Rydell has been looking in house. She said that she was tackling it even harder this coming year.

Member Blair said that the incentives program was fine with him. He said that they should be suggesting water cisterns to new buildings. To him that is a huge value. He said that they could provide that information without it having to be in the Code.

Mr. McConnell said that they have a budget for the incentive program and this was the recommendation to the Committee. If the Committee was comfortable, then they would take it to the Council. He said that they would make the ordinance change and resume the incentive program. As of today, they are not awarding incentives.

D. Adjournment

There being no further business to be discussed, the meeting of the Water Issues Committee held July 27, 2010, adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

JIM LAMERSON, Chairman

ATTEST:

ELIZABETH A. BURKE, City Clerk