



Water Services Advisory Commission

Glendale Council Chambers
5850 W. Glendale Avenue
October 1, 2014
6:00 P.M.

FINAL MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER – 6:00 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL: Present: Chair Ron Short, Vice-chair Jonathan Liebman, Commissioners Robert Gehl, Ruth Fauls, Roger Schwierjohn, and John Sipple
Absent: Commissioner Paul Romanek

Staff: Craig Johnson, Jennifer Campbell, Javier Setovich, John Henny, Doug Kupel, Amanda McKeever, Dan Hatch, Mark Fortkamp, Anthony Weathersby, Thomas Relucio, Hayme Amaya, and Sally Melling, Recording Secretary

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2014

Comm. Sipple moved and it was seconded by Comm. Schwierjohn to approve the minutes with the minor revisions.

Action: APPROVED 6-0

John Gehrs, N. 61st Drive, asked why draft copies of September 3, 2014 meeting minutes were not available to the audience. Craig Johnson stated staff will research with the City Clerk on the minutes policy. Should any further revisions be needed, they will be presented to the Commission at the November 5, 2014 meeting.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Craig Johnson, P.E., Executive Director

Mr. Johnson explained there has been a citizen request to televise the Water Service Advisory Commission meetings. He explained that staff will bring forth the request as a new item of business at the November 5, 2014 meeting for Commission discussion and direction

Action: Information only, No action required

V. URBAN IRRIGATION STAFF PRESENTATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Water Services Deputy Director Doug Kupel, PhD, presented information on the following items:

- Background on Urban Irrigation
- Early water history
- Recent water history from 1914-1992

- Recent Council interest and activity
- History of Citizen Task Force on Water and Sewer and Water Services Advisory Commission
- Urban Irrigation Expenses and Revenues

When Dr. Kupel completed his presentation, he offered to answer any questions the Commissioners may have, and there were no questions from the Commission.

There were nineteen speaker cards submitted and seventeen people spoke.

The public comments were as follows:

- Bart Turner, N. 57 Drive, lives in Thunderbird Estates which is the northernmost site receiving urban irrigation. His neighbors who are not currently receiving irrigation want service restored, while non-customer neighbors appreciate value added by irrigation. He stated that he is generally pleased with the program and wants it to continue. He introduced the concept of a touchstone connection to the community, and stated irrigation is one such touchstone connection item. He stated other city programs (such as the reading program at library or the wedding program) do not return their entire costs and does not feel irrigation should be considered as a 100% cost recovery item. He feels the city has not lived up to its obligation of maintenance, is not living up to their responsibilities for line repairs, that the city has disconnected portions of line rather than maintain them, and that no new customers can attach to the system. Mr. Turner feels the accounting numbers aren't accurate or thorough enough to ensure full confidence in program costs. He concluded that he appreciated the change of venue for meeting.
- Jessica Koory, W. Morten, stated that SRP water is a property right. She stated that the city has not maintained the lines. She said that Salt River Irrigation is now being paid to provide maintenance but questioned if this is being done. She feels Glendale is eliminating or discouraging customers from getting irrigation water so the city can buy water at very low rates to use for its own purposes, she asked if that was the plan. She said irrigation rates have been included in the proposed water rate increase, but irrigation water is untreated and flows down pipes. She feels if the city paid back \$25 million borrowed from Enterprise Funds, there would be no need for any rate increases. She requested irrigation water be left out of any rate increases. She called for an audit of irrigation budget and listed numerous benefits to the city by irrigation. These included putting oxygen into the air and replenishing the water table which prevents land cracks and sinking. She wants an interactive dialogue between the Commission, staff, and the public. She will continue to fill out comment cards in hopes of being heard.
- Robin Berryhill, N. 59th Lane, wants meetings continued at Council Chambers and wants televised meetings, and for there to be more meetings. She said the city's Map Department has an irrigation map book. She requested a copy of the entire book but her Public Records Request was denied under the Critical Infrastructure Information Act of 2002. She disagrees with the denial. She feels irrigation pipes should be repaired before the return of the system to homeowners under city Ordinance 27. She said homeowners do have water rights to land and that her property is classified as a Class A land. She said three-fourths of the town sites get, or are able to get, irrigation but one-fourth of the town sites (Sonorita

and the Barrio) do not, or cannot get, irrigation. She said the city laid pipes and closed open ditches in the 60s and certain areas were denied water.

- Anita Dietzman, Morten Avenue, feels all of the city benefits from irrigation. She said that the water used for irrigation is cheaper Salt River Project (SRP) water, and that potable water must use 7 times more water to equal the volume of irrigation water. She agrees with the previous statement that irrigation replenishes the aquifer. She said Murphy Park trees are no longer irrigated and appear stressed or dying. She said the Sonorita area was denied irrigation 50 years ago and ditches were bulldozed, and that the area is now a dust bowl. She does not want the effects of losing irrigation. She stated that the city is responsible to deliver, maintain and repair system per ordinances and resolutions. Ms. Dietzman stated we are one city; everyone can enjoy the many services offered in different areas of Glendale and even if she doesn't use certain areas, budgets should not reflect just the areas she uses. The irrigation budget is one instance of her statement. She said the Salt River Irrigation contract should be based on only the actual number of users and the budget should reflect the same cost for water that SRP charges to city, but the city charges a much higher rate. She feels any properties that received prior service should be allowed back on system. She said the city has built-in a system failure if it limits number of customers, will not allow new customers, or raises the rates so high current users cannot continue the service. She stated pipes leak in number of areas and have been neglected for years. She concluded by asking if there are any federal or other grants are available for irrigation projects.
- Margie Connell, W. Harmont Drive, requested a copy of the meeting staff report presented. She feels water services and irrigation are separate situations. She said irrigation belongs to the land and that it does not seem right that irrigation is put in with water and wastewater topics. She has received irrigation for 50 years and has seven huge trees that have helped the city to clean the air.
- Bud Zomok, N. 58th Drive in the Catlin Court historic district, stated his request for irrigation service was denied when he purchased his home seven years ago. He asked if he is allowed to have irrigation. He served on the Citizen Water Task Force and clarified that the Task Force felt there was not enough information to make a recommendation to Council on irrigation. He then presented three options to reduce fixed costs losses on irrigation: eliminate the system, raise the customer rates, and add more users. Mr. Zomok questioned that there have been no studies done to add more users. He suggested a survey be done to canvass possible users versus actual users. He pointed out that the last monsoon event showed effects of surface water versus irrigation water on large tree root balls very well. He stated that of the many trees that were toppled and there were none in Murphy Park that were toppled.
- Margaret Gonzales Ledesma, NW Market Street, was born & raised in the Sonorita area. She knows there are rumors or stories that there is no canal there, never was, but she knows there is an irrigation canal that runs along Market Street. She confirmed there was a canal and it is still there. Ms. Ledesma's parents were told irrigation water was not available to them, although it was right across the street from her home. Her parents should have had rights to it. She has many questions on the secrecy surrounding the issue of long ago. She stated she received a post card and questioned why the meeting notices were sent to "Current Resident". The city had to have put in large pipes under the street so there must

be large canals located under the streets. She again questioned why all these water issues were kept a secret. She feels more meetings should be held on the issue.

- Keith Streibling, W. Loma Lane, stated he and his wife are residents of Thunderbird Estates. Their neighborhood recently went historic, and his property was previously irrigated, but now is on city water. His property needs lots of water. He would love to be restored back to irrigation as his water bill during the summer is \$300-\$400 a month. He grew up in the neighborhood and feels a commitment to area and city. He reiterated that he would love to have property irrigation restored.
- Adelina Gonzales, W. Stella Lane, stated she currently gets irrigation and loves it. She constantly receives many comments about how green her yard is and the shade from her many trees. She wishes she had had irrigation when growing up in the Sonorita area. When the ditch by her home had water flowing in it, her mother would say it was for the farmers. Unfortunately, they could never use any of it. The neighborhood was dry and dusty, and she wishes the neighborhood had had opportunity to use the water. She said it would have flourished. When she was small, she fell in canal and broke her collar bone. She concluded with the hopes Council will continue to be forthcoming with information.
- Mike Scott, N. 62nd Avenue, presented several issues he has concerns with. He feels repair estimates of irrigation system at \$7 million are too high as current available technology is better. Digging up the system would not be necessary and new techniques make it possible to blow in liners and not have to dig up the system. He has spoken to SRI several times and feels the majority of problems in system are the gates which do not operate properly. He suggests the city get three bids from outside sources to get good cost estimates. He notes that there is apparently high interest from the turnout tonight which could be a way to get more money, up to 50%, and a way get more people. Mr. Scott concluded that if the cost of irrigation is going to more than double, he'd rather go back to SRP.
- David Grove, N. 61st Avenue, said his property has gotten irrigation since 1948. He feels irrigation is important for past and future generations. He stated the need to keep running it as it is and keep fixing it as it breaks. He knows places that leak are repairable and the cost is not that much. He would like to see those areas that have gotten off getting irrigation water delivery be unblocked and get people back on system to help support it. He waters 50 trees on his property with irrigation. He said if the costs are \$151,000, and the revenues brought in are \$80,000, then \$70,000 is lost. He said some departments in the city lose that much or more. He would like to see the city bring more people in on system. He also feels if what had been for the 1992 study had been broken up into 22 years, we wouldn't be in this situation.
- Cameron Berryhill, N. 59th Lane, is currently enrolled at Glendale Community College and taking a history class, and is studying the author Jack Swelling, who observed ancient canals built by Hohokam culture. Mr. Swelling felt by reconstructing ancient canals, water could again be delivered to the valley. Mr. Berryhill stated water is tied to SRP lands per the Kent Decree. He had heard of Arrowhead Reclamation Plant in the north part of Glendale and wondered why there was no reclamation plant in the south of Glendale. After reading Mr. Swelling's work, he realized south Glendale area does have reclamation area: it is the Salt River Valley. He said it was the first reclamation project in the nation. The Salt River Water Users Association provides the raw water and irrigation for the Salt River

Project (SRP) lands just as Central Arizona Project provides water for lands off SRP land boundaries. He believes accounting methods need to be revisited. He said the budget should include not only accounting of Arrowhead Reclamation Plant but amounts for the SRP reclamation lands, and accurate listings of true revenues and expenses of each. He said this would make for a clearer picture of how the cost of water in Glendale is handled. He requests the Commission review this further and make recommendation for such implementation to staff.

- John Gehrs, N. 61st Drive, referred to Irrigation FAQ document question #10 “Why haven’t more repairs and maintenance been made to the irrigation system?”. He pointed out the \$7 million dollar cost in 1992 study is to replace all 25 miles of pipe. He said only certain portions are damaged and the problems appear to be with valves and gates. He asked what the 1992 study repaired or replaced specifically. He asked that the facts be looked at to determine what the study entailed.
- Claudia Milohniek, W. Ocotillo Road, stated she is a 22-year resident. She stated that in 2008-09 or 2007, irrigation rates were increased to pay for the pedestrian walkway bridge over 101 at 59th Avenue. She now questions what the money is going for if the bridge is paid for. She states nothing is leaking as she has only seen the corner gate two houses down from her in need of repair. She asked that broken items be fixed. She would like to know how the city separates the costs of the nine schools in the Glendale Union High School District from residential item costs. She stated the cost of repairs is extreme if there are no repairs needed.
- Curt Decker, W. Carol Avenue, said he is a lifelong resident. He has personally repaired and installed valves and repairs in the system so yards can be watered. Mr. Decker informed the Commission that the system valves and parts are not found in Glendale. He stated that valves, covers, and cement pipes are available from a vendor in south Phoenix. He feels if owners could just get the parts, they would repair their lines so they could get water. He has noticed past owners have indeed covered and cemented over irrigation connections. He would like to know if it is possible to open those connections for more users to get on system.
- Mark Black, W. Vista, stated he and his wife are 35-year city residents. He pointed out how evident it is when people stop using irrigation. He stated that an improper repair is always done in the alley just north of his house and this poor repair results in a constantly leaking site. Mr. Black feels getting rid of urban irrigation would be a bad deal.
- Joe Moreno, N. 61st Lane, feels the big question is: what is going to be done? He asked if we subsidize the people who get irrigation. He feels if we all can’t have it, then nobody should have it. He stated the alternative is: for those that have irrigation, they should pay for it.

Comm. Schwierjohn stated they have heard conflicting information about substantial leaks in system versus no leaks. Mark Fortkamp, Water Services Superintendent, answered Comm. Schwierjohn, and explained there are certain areas that leak more than others. Mr. Fortkamp said Salt River Irrigation does weekly repairs and there is an on-going repair list. Vice-Chair Liebman requested a copy of the repair list.

Chairman Short requested clarification on the city's policy for customers getting on system or being denied. Doug Kupel responded that if a residence is within the irrigation service area, a determination needs to be made if water can be safely delivered, i.e., berms and pipes in good condition. If a residence's irrigation system is found to be in good working order, then the customer will pay for installation.

Commissioner Gehl stated the neighbor located behind him did get the cap pulled and did get irrigation restored to his home.

Vice-chair Liebman asked if there was a checklist for homeowners available on-line. Director Johnson stated he did not know of one that was on-line but will check into it.

Chairman Short requested a summary report be presented at the November 5, 2014 Commission meeting.

Action: Information only, No action required

VI. CALL TO THE AUDIENCE

Chair Ron Short reviewed the opportunity for audience members to address the Water Services Advisory Commission.

One person spoke:

- Robin Berryhill, N. 59th Lane, requested the Commission look at the whole picture of urban irrigation and the townsite. She pointed that on the irrigation map, one-quarter of the town sites do not receive water, the Barrio and Sonorita. She stated the city is responsible for providing water to townsite lots if they are allowed to get it. She requests this be considered as a future agenda item. She wants future meetings held in the Council Chambers and requests that they be televised since this is a very important topic.

VII. NEXT MEETING: November 5, 2014, 6 p.m.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – **Motion to adjourn** was made by Comm. Faulls, seconded by Comm. Schwierjohn. Comm. Gehl asked about location. Craig Johnson replied information would be forthcoming after direction from the City Manager. **Motion approved** by voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Melling, Recording Secretary