

PBAC CAG: meeting of February 8, 2007

Attendance:

Members present:

Michael Echanove

Jim Mital

Joe Spoonemore

Mark Loaiza

Dan Boone

Helen Harrington, IDWR, ex-officio

Ben McLuen

Jerry Fairley

George Grader

Kirk O'Reilly

Members Excused:

Keith Stoffel, DOE, ex-officio

Members Absent:

Guests:

Steve Robischon, PBAC

Craig Watt, U of I Student

Paul Shebmentier????

Mark Storey, PBAC

David Hall, PWCN

Bill French, PWCN

Approval of minutes:

The minutes were approved as corrected.

PBAC Report & Update (January 18 meeting): by Steve Robischon.

- Presentation, Nicole Baden: Shallow Aquifer pump testing, indicating some response north and south of the City wells. Her conclusion is that the Wanapum (shallow aquifer) is compartmentalized and anisotropic, and perhaps no amount of study will reveal all of the connectivity issues. Connectivity is not straight forward.
- CAG membership: PBAC said "lets just take this issue off the agenda for now". CAG needs to let PBAC know if it would like to increase the membership.
- DOE "earmark funds" were discussed. Guy Gregory said the "line item" had disappeared from the budget, but that the money may still be available.
- 2006 water level summaries were discussed. Levels have been fairly constant since 1992.
- Discussion regarding the letters of support for the Pullman Wastewater Re-use project from the individual entities to the Washington Legislature. PBAC will be sending a letter to key players in the legislature.
- Budget was discussed. Levels are dropping quickly, and the entities are asking for additional funding.
- Paul Kimmel is replacing Tom Townsend representing Latah County. Joe replaced Brian Johnson representing U of I.
- Next meeting next Thursday. Will discuss letters of support for the wastewater reuse proposal for Pullman. Data release issues will be discussed. Hawkins

development will be discussed. Moscow Cemetery District Water Right Application will be discussed.

Open Forum:

Steve was asked about the PBAC position on the Cemetery, and stated that it did not take a position because the water use was not considered a “new” use. He suggested that this was more of a civic issue, to be discussed by the community, as the Cemetery is a separate taxing district. Bill French discussed the cemetery issue from a conservation perspective. The conservation groups suggested that the district create a plan to water the trees but not the grass. If they agreed, the district and the City would consider agreeing, and dropping the protest.

Joe Spoonemore announced that he is a full member of the Whitman County Water Conservancy Board. Five members are on the board. Joe described the applications for transfers affiliated with the development and with the Colton involvement. Next step is to receive the hydrogeologic studies and walk the properties. Joe is concerned with the appearance of fairness, as it pertains to discussions with the applicant. The next few months will involve lots of effort to evaluate the applications.

Discussion of Hawkins and James Toyota projects in the Pullman-Moscow Corridor. Mark Storey gave a short summary of the proposed projects. The James Toyota project has completed the SEPA process and was just given approval of the Conditional Use Permit by the Board of Adjustment. The amount of water it will use is less than 5000 gallons per day, so it will be supplied by an “exempt” well. The Hawkins project has just completed the SEPA process, and will be heard for its Conditional Use Permit next week. Domestic water for the project will come from the transfer of several existing water rights, purchased under contract by the Hawkins Company. The water rights are existing water uses that will be transferred through the Water Conservancy Board process to the Hawkins Company for their development.

Helen Harrington, IDWR reported that not much new is happening at IDWR.

Michael Echanove, reports that Pullman is protesting new Washington State Department of Ecology stormwater permit provisions.

Jim Mital reported on Naylor Farms appeal of the Latah County decision to deny the conditional use for their property north of Moscow.

Conservation Presentation and Discussion:

Bill French, PWCN

Bill handed out copies of a presentation summary “Palouse Water Conservation Network, Presentation to CAG, 2/8/07”

Bill spent about 15 minutes delivering a discussion on the effects of conservation on communities. One of Bills' main points is that conservation is what you do over time to assure an adequate supply, and rationing is what you do when you don't conserve. Conservation: consists of two main areas, outdoor and indoor conservation. Also for conservation you must consider it at the utility level, consumer level, and behavioral level. Attitudes are important and can lead to changes in habits.

Bill urged the CAG to attempt to get through to PBAC and the entities of PBAC to improve conservation efforts through a cooperative pooling of resources.

Discussion regarding PBAC's Conservation Efforts:

Jerry Fairley motioned that CAG should send a request to PBAC to consider re-instating its past practice of employing a person to work on conservation issues. After a short discussion, the motion was modified to state that the reason for the CAG is to provide feedback to PBAC regarding its activities. One of the primary goals was for PBAC to step up and promote conservation, rather than merely leaving it up to the individual entities. The feeling is that this task might be better undertaken by PBAC. Additionally, CAG may want to look at alternatives to suggest to PBAC, such as hiring a consultant to make recommendations. Ultimately, this motion was dropped.

There was a significant amount of discussion regarding the original 1992 management plan language regarding conservation. It appears to the CAG that the entities are not really meeting the intent of the original language of the plan regarding water conservation. The discussion then turned to the current cost of water. The cost at the meter should really be based upon the future cost of water, rather than the current cost. This way the funds could be built up to the point where there is enough capital to build the infrastructure needed to ensure long term water delivery to the communities.

Jerry Fairley said that the CAG should ask PBAC to pressure the entities to implement tiered water rate structures. The CAG recognizes the importance of conservation, and as such, we should work together within the region to conserve the resource. This would include items such as conservation, and tiered rate structures. The essence of the discussion was that the PBAC entities need to document their existing conservation strategies and efforts, and document the effectiveness of their strategies, possibly in a summary report, and to report back to the communities. Steve Robischon reported that the PBAC entities used to prepare summaries of their action plans including monitoring, etc. However, about five years ago, the entities elected, instead, to merely be held to the pumping limits, and not worry about the methods employed to get there.

Helen Harrington suggested that the request to PBAC be tied into the IDWR order by former Director Dreher. The intent of the Director's order was to "develop recommendations for consideration by PBAC for water conservation and recommendations for implementation strategy". This became the final motion, and was adopted by the group. The final discussion on this issue was that the letter to PBAC will

ask that the entities report on their conservation efforts. The goal will to make the letter seem as inoffensive as possible to the entities comprising PBAC.

Business:

Michael said CAG will put off the “2007 Goals” discussion until next meeting.

Announcements: Palouse will be purchasing two data loggers (one through DOE) for their wells.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2007, at 7pm, Jacks Creek Room, U of I Facilities.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.