

WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
SISTERS CITY COUNCIL
520 E. CASCADE AVENUE
OCTOBER 08, 2009

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lon Kellstrom Mayor
Bill Merrill Councilor President
Sharlene Weed Councilor
Pat Thompson Councilor

STAFF PRESENT:

Eileen Stein City Manager
Brad Grimm Public Works Director
Lisa Young Finance Director
Kathy Nelson City Recorder

ABSENT:

Jerry Bogart Councilor

ABSENT:

Eric Porter Comm. Dev. Director

GUESTS:

Joe Stutler Deschutes County Forester
Todd Heisler Deschutes River Conservancy Executive Director
Alan Unger Deschutes County Commissioner
Patrick Griffith City of Bend Water Specialist

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kellstrom at 6:00 p.m.

A. Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

Joe Stutler, Deschutes County Forester provided background on the 2003 Healthy Forest Restoration Act which was the basis for the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) for communities across the nation. He stated that every acre of Deschutes County is covered by a CWPP now.

Forester Stutler used a map that showed where every fire over 100 acres or more had occurred in the last 109 years. He stated from 1900 to 2000 there were only 125,000 acres burned while there have been 180,000 acres burned in just the last eight years. He stated this increase in acreage that has burned points to the need for fuels reduction work to be done.

Forester Stutler stated the protection plan for the greater Sisters area was one of the first plans to be completed and this current update is to make the plan consistent with other plans that have been created since. He stated it also incorporates the evaluative criteria that has been established. He stated that all the regional plans have been developed in the last four years and Deschutes County has received \$6 million in grants and treated 173,000 acres for fuel reduction. He stated the most important statistic is that Deschutes County has not lost a home to forest fire since 2003.

Councilor Merrill commented that several years ago he received a pamphlet describing what he as a homeowner should do in order to make his home less susceptible to forest fire. He asked if the pamphlet was still available and if so, if it could be redistributed to area residents. **Forester Stutler** stated the 2004 pamphlet on defensible space standards was sent to every landowner in response to SB 360 (2003). He stated over 70% of landowners complied with the recommendations from the pamphlet. He added if a homeowner chooses not comply and a fire

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begins on their property, the land owner can be held liable up to \$100,000 for damages. He stated the process to rate properties is beginning again with public meetings beginning in November and at its completion homeowners will receive an updated pamphlet about protecting their homes and defensible space.

Manager Stein stated Sisters received a grant through the University of Oregon Watershed Program for its first community plan and through Project Wildfire has been able to change the methodology criteria to access fire danger and create the updated CWPP.

Forester Stutler stated the County just received another \$2.2 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and an \$880,000 grant from the Federal government for biomass production. He stated the County will continue to apply for grants and that Project Wildfire and the Greater Sisters Area CWPP are good public education tools.

Manager Stein told the Council about the fuels reduction work that has occurred at the City's wastewater treatment plant over the last few years and complimented Project Coordinator Paul Bertagna for coordinating these efforts. She stated a resolution to endorse the CWPP would be on the regular meeting agenda later this evening.

Councilor Thompson voiced his opinion on how important it is to use local people to perform local jobs such as fuels reduction and Forester Stutler agreed. **Forester Stutler** stated each year a pool of qualified contractors is assembled and each one has a tie to the community. He stated he awards contracts on the best value for the community and not necessarily the least expensive bid.

Mayor Kellstrom thanked Forester Stutler was attending the workshop.

B. Deschutes Water Alliance (DWA) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Manager Stein stated previous briefings by staff on the City's water issues have lead up to the presentation on the Deschutes Water Alliance (DWA). She introduced Deschutes River Conservancy (DRC) Executive Director Todd Heisler, County Commissioner Alan Unger and Patrick Griffith from the City of Bend to brief the Council on the DWA regional pilot water program. She stated the MOU is being presented to the Council at the regular meeting for approval later in the evening.

Commissioner Unger stated the Central Oregon Cities Organization (COCO) has been at the table since the inception of the DWA along with the Deschutes Basin Board of Control, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, DRC and Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson Counties. He explained that the DWA was formed under a federal grant in 2004 to conduct supply and demand water studies, to develop a pilot water bank and to develop the mitigation statutes adopted by legislative action. He stated the mission of the DWA is threefold:

- Improve stream flows and water quality for the benefit of fish, wildlife and people.

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- Secure and maintain a reliable and affordable supply of water to sustain agriculture.
- Secure a safe, affordable and high quality water supply for urban communities.

Commissioner Unger stated the Deschutes Basin is the second largest watershed in Oregon at 10,700 square feet and encompasses Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Wasco and Sherman Counties. He discussed how precipitation is distributed in the basin with most coming in the form of snow melt from the mountains. He explained that the low permeable rock is covered with lava that acts as a giant sponge to transport ground water from the south end of Deschutes County to the north end at Lake Billy Chinook. He stated when in the 1990's the Oregon Water Resources Department declared a moratorium on new groundwater permits, it became apparent there was a need to identify new ground water sources and to create mitigation rules.

Commissioner Unger described the Deschutes Basin groundwater mitigation program explaining that permit applications must offset new water use by returning surface water to the Deschutes River or a tributary. He discussed the breakdown of ownership of water rights in the Deschutes Basin with 90% of the rights owned by agricultural interests which include irrigation districts. He compared irrigation and municipal diversions by season and discussed the need to balance water use by irrigation districts, cities and rivers during peak water demand.

Deschutes River Conservancy Executive Director Todd Heisler discussed the interests of local government in making certain there is an appropriate supply of drinking water, river health and recreational assets are maintained, agricultural needs are met and production of hydropower is still possible. He stated analysis has determined the demand for "new" water by 2025 will be 260,000 acre feet and discussed how water will need to be redistributed by means of conservation, reservoir management, water transfers and leasing. He discussed canal piping projects that are underway by several local irrigation districts.

Mr. Heisler explained that the DWA Water Bank is set up to perform the following:

- Create a transparent marketplace with willing buyers and willing sellers
- Create a predictable supply
- Counter speculation and hoarding
- Moderate price fluctuations
- Strengthen irrigation districts
- Facilitate transactions across jurisdictions

Mr. Heisler discussed the DWA Bank results of instream transfers that have occurred by means of mitigation transfers and restorative transfers and the stream flow restoration. **Commissioner Unger** discussed the need for a regional solution to address societal needs, address the problem at the appropriate scale and create assurances that water needs will be met. He stated the purpose of the DWA is to create a forum to discuss regional water issues, speak as one united voice and develop solutions across jurisdictions to insure everyone's water needs are met.

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Commissioner Unger stated the proposed signatories for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) includes local irrigation districts, cities, counties, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the DRC, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Water Resources Department. He stated that although the signatories will have no authority it will convey the agencies are acting as a united voice.

Mayor Kellstrom stated that all the conversation seemed to be related to surface water. **Mr. Heisler** stated that surface water relates to ground water mitigation in that it looks at how to find surface water supply that can be used for mitigation purposes. **Mayor Kellstrom** asked who determines the ground water supply. **Mr. Heisler** explained the estimates are made by Oregon State scientists.

Councilor Thompson commented that all water ends up at the bottom of the flow whether it is ground or surface water and since there is a lot of water the issue is how to manage it. He stated it is all about where the water is going to go in the ground and who gets to use the water along the way. He stated the City is in good shape and asked what DWA is bringing to Sisters. **Mr. Heisler** stated water is a regional issue and each city has a current and future need and everyone needs to work together to protect all water quantity problems in the region. He reemphasized the DWA will provide the right forum to address everyone's issues on allocation. **Mayor Kellstrom** stated he appreciated Mr. Heisler's comment that clarified there is not a scarcity of water and the issue is more political in nature.

Mayor Kellstrom questioned the staff report where it stated that "*further, it should be made clear, including to federal, state and other funding agencies, that the DWA is the forum where binding water policy in the basin is made, funded and enforced*", and asked if that was the direction the DWA was taking at this time. **Commissioner Unger** stated initially the DWA is looking to be collaborative in solving problems and finding a regional water plan. He stated after the plan is in place the DWA will look for funding opportunities, work to speak as one voice and work together to create an enforceable policy. **Mr. Heisler** stated what DWA doesn't want is a competitive environment. He stated the DWA is the evolution of water management and DWA will serve a broader sense of purpose to speak as one voice.

Councilor Merrill noted that all the voting members of the DWA are consumers of water and non-voting members and stakeholders are groups and agencies interested in the protection of fish and wildlife. He asked why that was so. **Mr. Heisler** stated the non-voting groups and agencies elected not to be voting members. He added the DWA is the forum for local government to address their water related objectives.

Commissioner Unger extended an invitation to the Council to attend the DWA kick-off meeting on October 12th at noon at Deschutes County.

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Mayor Kellstrom thanked Commissioner Unger, Mr. Heisler and Mr. Griffith for attending the workshop.

C. City Manager Update

Due to lack of time there was no City Manager update.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Nelson, City Recorder

Lon Kellstrom, Mayor