

UPPER VERDE RIVER WATERSHED PROTECTION COALITION
PRESCOTT, ARIZONA
AUGUST 22, 2007

MINUTES

A MEETING OF THE UPPER VERDE RIVER WATERSHED PROTECTION COALITION WAS HELD ON AUGUST 22, 2007 in the Prescott Municipal Building, 201 S. Cortez Street, Prescott, Arizona.

Chairman Fann called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.

ITEM NO 1. Introductions, Awards and Presentations

Members present:

Mayor Karen Fann, Town of Chino Valley, Chairman
Councilman Mike Flannery, Town of Prescott Valley, Vice Chairman
County Supervisor Carol Springer, Yavapai County
Mayor Rowle P. Simmons, City of Prescott

Members absent:

Ernie Jones, Sr., Prescott-Yavapai Indian Tribe
Dewey-Humboldt Representative

Staff present:

John Rasmussen, Yavapai County
Jim Holt, City of Prescott

Guests present:

Prescott City Councilman Bob Bell
Prescott City Councilman Bob Luzius
Prescott City Councilman Jim Lamerson
Starr Bennett
Ed McGavock
Jim Lawrence
Leon DeKing
Thomas Slaback
Candace McNulty
Linda Campbell
John Zambrano
Lou Bellisi
Joanna Dodder

Joanne Oellers
Michelle Harrington
Liz Faller

ITEM NO 2. Call to the Public

Consideration and discussion of general unscheduled comments from the public: Those wishing to address the Coalition need not request permission in advance. Any such remarks shall be addressed to the Coalition as a whole and not to any member thereof. Such remarks shall be limited to three (3) minutes unless additional time is granted by the Chair. At the conclusion of the unscheduled comments, individual members of the Coalition may respond to the item addressed at the discretion of the Chair, or they may ask Staff to review the matter or ask that the matter be placed on a future agenda.
[Committee]

Joanne Oellers, representing the Center for Biological Diversity, said that she was there representing their membership, both nationally and within the State of Arizona, to request a change in the meeting time from 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon to the evening so more citizens can attend.

Ms. Oellers asked that, anticipating that this item may not fit into the agenda later, the communities and Coalition that are committed to saving the base flow of the Verde River consider developing a habitat conservation plan on a regional level. She said that there are some conversations going on, but it seems there would be an opportunity to work together on a regional plan. She said that if there were presentations being proposed by Arizona Game and Fish or US Fish and Wildlife, that the Coalition might sponsor those and invite the other councilmembers and mayors to attend so the word can get out in an efficient manner. If they could, she asked if that could be on the next agenda for a decision or vote.

Chairman Fann said that it is probably too soon for a vote, but they could definitely consider it for a future agenda. She said that today they are discussing the selection of a consultant so it would be great to get them on board and make them part of the process.

Mark Holmes said that everyone should have received a Water Conservation survey that is part of the Central Yavapai Water Conservation Partnership through the Bureau of Reclamation Grant and they would encourage everyone to take one and fill it out. He said that it is a mail in and are trying to get them in by October of 2007.

He also noted that the survey will be on line with the County website the first week of September and could be filled out there as well.

Chairman Fann asked how they are being dispersed. Mr. Holmes said that in Chino Valley they are sending them in the town's first newsletter (8,500); similarly they are being inserted in water bills and periodic mail outs.

Chairman Fann asked how they will determine if they're getting a cross section of the citizenry. Mr. Holmes said that they are going to do this through survey methods. There is always that possibility that someone take several; at this point they're hoping to get 1 in 50 returned. He doesn't know exactly how they are going to rank and score the different aspects.

He said that the person overseeing the program is Shaun Rydell with the City of Prescott, who was actually awarded the grant and it is being worked on through the partnership group.

Member Springer said that she has never heard of Central Yavapai County Water Conservation Partnership. Mr. Holmes said that it is an ad hoc group, with no official charter or bylaws, made up of volunteers from different municipalities. He said that it is the same group that basically put on the Project WET water festival. They try to bring to light regional conservation issues.

ITEM NO 3. Approval of Minutes – July 25, 2007 Meeting
[Committee]

Vice Chairman Flannery noted that the minutes should be amended to reflect that he is now a Councilman with the Town of Prescott Valley rather than Vice Mayor.

MEMBER SIMMONS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS AMENDED; SECONDED BY VICE CHAIRMAN FLANNERY; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ITEM NO 4. Selection of Consulting Firm as Coalition Program and Project Management – Direct Staff to negotiate contract with highest ranked firm.
[Committee & Staff]

Mr. Holt said that on August 13 they had presentations from the two firms which responded to their request for qualifications. The panel that listened included the Chair and Vice Chair of the Coalition and staff members from Prescott, Chino Valley, Yavapai County and the Yavapai Prescott Indian Tribe. The two firms were Burns & McDonnell and Burgess & Niple. Each firm was given the opportunity to give a 30 minute presentation and they also did a question and answer. The evaluators evaluated the

presentations as well as the written submittals and Burgess & Niple was ranked the first of the two firms.

Member Simmons said that he recently heard of a Burgess & Niple setting up an office here and asked if this was the same firm. Mr. Rasmussen said that he had understood that they were going to join in some space with Civiltec on Willow Creek Road.

Mr. Holt said that based on the evaluations they are asking for direction of the Coalition to begin discussions with Burgess & Niple, and enter into negotiations for a contract. If for some reason they would not be successful in bringing those negotiations to a conclusion, they would go to the second ranking, or they could confer with the Coalition and make sure they were comfortable with proceeding.

Member Simmons said that he was happy to hear they were going to have an office here.

MEMBER SIMMONS MOVED TO DIRECT SRSTAFF TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH BURGESS AND NIPLE; SECONDED BY VICE CHAIRMAN FLANNER; PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

ITEM NO 5. Staff evaluation of Mr. Mechanic's proposal
[Committee & Staff]

Mr. Holmes said that staff has evaluated Mr. Mechanic's proposal from the last meeting. The concepts that Mr. Mechanic outlined in his presentation such as safe yield issues, Upper Verde River flow requirements, various management plans, protection of private property rights, and the possible next steps are valid points to consider both through a project program and project strategy basis. One key component identified within both program and project management aspects, is the involvement of stakeholders, the public, organizations or agencies essential for success.

Mr. Holmes said that the Coalition approved staff's recommendation to move forward with a technical consulting firm to manage the Coalition's program and projects. The staff working group would propose that the Coalition board postpone Mr. Mechanic's proposal at this time until the consulting firm is on board and up to speed, and then have them incorporate it into a set of tasks to be assigned. He said that at the last Coalition meeting there was a mention of incorporating safe yield into the Coalition's mission. They would suggest that it and other suggestions received in the past be brought to the consulting firm once they are on board.

Member Springer said that she thinks that Mr. Mechanic's suggestion is a good one and she thinks the Coalition is the correct organization to add the goal of safe yield to its mission statement. She said they have talked about the idea of safe yield for almost ten years; to this point in time no one has done anything. It is time for those that have been selected to lead to start leading and say that if they don't form a structured organization to address the issue she'd ask "if not them, who and if not now, when?"

Member Springer said that she appreciates Mr. Mechanic bringing it forward and they should not delay. It doesn't mean they have to embark on a specific project at this time point; she agrees that they have their plate full getting organized with the new consultant. It doesn't mean they have to take an action on a project simply to make the decision that it is the responsibility of the Coalition to take on the task of achieving safe yield by 2025. She urged that they have that item on the next meeting's agendas for action.

Chairman Fann clarified that on the next agenda Member Springer would like an action item to add to the mission statement of the Coalition an additional task of working toward achieving safe yield in the Prescott AMA by 2025.

Chairman Fann said that she also agreed that since they do have someone coming on quickly that they take the suggestions of Mr. Mechanic and others received in the past and let the new firm get their arms around it.

Mr. Mechanic said that he appreciated Member Springer's comments. He said that he was not clear about the staff's report and what it was saying. He asked if it is because they don't have time to work on it because they're working on other things, or is it because they think the consultant needs to take this on. Mr. Holmes said that from his perspective, with a full-time consulting firm they will have the time to look at the best way to handle a subcommittee if it's required or a working group, or certain activities, versus the limited time that staff is trying to put in from their level.

Mr. Mechanic said that he understands that position but they all worked on the safe yield report and the safe yield report calls for the parties to get together; it didn't call for a consultant to decide what to do. He said that the Coalition members and staff are the stakeholders and they need to get together. He asked, in response to Mr. Holmes' comments, if they were planning to pay for a full-time consulting firm. He said that every time they get the consultant together they are costing money and he didn't think that

getting the stakeholders together to sit down and discuss solutions is something they need a consultant at.

Mr. Mechanic said that he would support the idea of the Coalition going on record to add safe yield to its goals and then very quickly going ahead and starting the meetings. He clarified that his presentation was not to say that the Coalition should add safe yield to its goals. He was saying that the work group should work on reaching safe yield and also management decisions to protect the Upper Verde River and there's been no discussion of that today. He believes that one work group should handle both issues.

Mr. Holmes said that he may have used "full-time" loosely. What he intended was that they will be giving more time than he and his counterparts have been able to. He said that the GUAC safe yield report identified a number of potential issues and possible solutions and he agrees with Mr. Mechanic on many aspects that he is recommending. One key component that staff believes the consulting firm with a team of experts will be aggressively writing grants and looking for money to bring additional funds. If safe yield becomes a major focus outside of the realm of the six projects already identified, then they will pursue it.

Chairman Fann said that one of the things, when they went through the interviews, was they asked a lot of the questions with how familiar they were with the issues in the region because it was extremely important that they have a firm that was willing and able to work with the various groups around here, and that is one of the reasons that they are recommending Burgess & Niple. She said that they very much want to incorporate a lot of that because it goes hand in hand.

Member Springer said that one aspect of Mr. Mechanic's presentation that she didn't agree with was the formation of a working group. She thinks it is the responsibility of the Coalition to make those decisions. She said that they have all kinds of water groups and they should solicit the suggestions from those groups and have public meetings. From the input they gather from the other water groups, many ideas have been done before somewhere else and the Coalition needs to prioritize those ideas and then turn them over to the consultant and ask them for their opinion on those choices and how they would actually implement them.

Councilman Lamerson said that he would like to thank Member Springer for her leadership and vision. He wanted to remind the body that while it is a fairly represented body of elected officials, that they are not the only elected officials that represent their water users. They also have a Legislature and a Corporation Commission that should be included in the process.

John Zambrano said that his understanding is that they are looking at the consultant to answer some very technical questions about recharge and how to manage that recharge. He said that what the safe yield subcommittee report calls for is more in the way of politics and administration. It is hard to see how a consultant would tell them to divide up the natural share, etc. He said that they need to start out with the political structure, bringing in all of the parties and have them represented.

Chairman Fann said that Burgess and Niple have done a lot of this already with different water groups and issues. They are not just consultants; they are going to be very much a part of the working staff. Chino Valley's water staff spends easily 60 hours a week doing the rest of his job because of the all of the water issues going on in Chino Valley and she would venture to guess that the other communities' staff members face the same demands.

Mr. Zambrano said that it wouldn't be appropriate for the consultant to get into the political area of sharing natural recharge, etc. and if they did, then they are not representing all of the water users. Chairman Fann said that if they are able to negotiate a contract with Burgess and Niple, she would wager that it is one of the first things they will say is the need to get all of the parties together.

Mr. Mechanic said that he wanted to clarify that he was not saying the working group should make the decision; he was suggesting that the Coalition would make the decisions. He was suggesting a work group to make recommendations to the Coalition. He doesn't know that the Coalition members have the time or expertise to start negotiating what Mr. Zambrano was talking about, and that is a lot of horse trading and discussion involved.

Member Springer said that she had previously said they should solicit ideas from all of the groups through public hearings.

Mr. Holmes said that he would estimate 60 days from now to have a signed contract. Mr. Mechanic said that he can understand getting the consultant on board. If they have to wait, then he understands; they have waited awhile already. He said he would try to be patient.

Chairman Fann said that the consultant did say they would be getting public input, particularly through the water groups. Mr. Mechanic said that if the Coalition can make a decision on how to reach safe yield by 2025 then the community would support them on that. He said that his question is what the best way is to work out all of the details.

Mr. Holmes said that when the GUAC safe yield report came out those were the best ideas at that time, and just a few months since it was finalized new ideas have come out. He said that would lead him into a suggestion for next month's meeting agenda.

ITEM NO. 6 Next Meeting Time / Location / Agenda Items

[Committee]

(The next regularly scheduled meeting date is September 26, 2007)

Mr. Holmes said that Mr. Dan Campbell of the Nature Conservancy would like to give a presentation regarding three significant ideas he has; (1) purchase of development rights, primarily in the Big Chino; (2) details regarding conservation easements; and (3) watershed protection.

It was noted that Mr. McGavock's presentation may be on the September agenda as well.

Chairman Fann also noted that Member Springer would like the issue of safe yield being added to the mission statement would be on the next agenda.

The meeting of the Upper Verde River Watershed Protection Coalition held on August 22, 2007 adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

KAREN FANN, Chairman

ATTEST:

ELIZABETH A. BURKE, Clerk