

CITY OF MOAB
WATER CONSERVATION AND DROUGHT MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
March 11, 2020

The Water Conservation and Drought Management Advisory Board held its regular meeting on the above date in the Council Chambers at the Moab City Center, located at 217 East Center Street. An audio recording of the meeting is archived at <http://www.utah.gov/pmn/index.html>. A video recording is archived at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8TZIts3avY&t=24s>.

Regular Meeting—Call to Order and Attendance:

Water Board Chair Kara Dohrenwend called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm. In attendance were Water Board Members Mike Duncan, Jeremy Lynch, Denver Perkins, and John Gould. Water Board Members Arne Hultquist and Kyle Bailey were absent. City staff in attendance were Assistant City Manager Carly Castle, Assistant Planner Corey Shurtleff, City Engineer Chuck Williams, Assistant Engineer Johanson, Water Superintendent Levi Jones, and Deputy Recorder Joey Allred.

Citizens to be Heard:

There were no Citizens to be Heard.

Board and Staff Reports:

City Engineer Williams confirmed that Board Chair Dohrenwend wanted to discuss the peer review of Ken Kolm's work. He stated he participated in a group conference call with the Utah Geological Survey (UGS) and their staff did not want to review a consultant's work. He said the review would have cost about \$8,000 if UGS had been willing to do it. He said that, given both points, the Engineering department did not pursue that course of action. He said hopefully within a month the Phase IV report of the Pack Creek aquifer will be completed. He said Phase III is the spring and well protection data. Board Chair Dohrenwend inquired if a peer review will still take place. City Engineer Williams said that is the plan, but it will need to be done by someone other than UGS. Assistant Engineer Johanson said that Kolm suggested taking the more scientific parts of his report and publishing them in a journal. City Engineer Williams said that would probably increase the price of Kolm's contract.

Board Member Perkins said the USGS report states that the water in the Glen Canyon aquifer is more than 60 years old. He said that Kolm does not agree with that information. He asked how the Board could reconcile the two reports.

Board Chair Dohrenwend shared Board Member Hultquist's report, since he could not be present at the meeting. She said he wanted to verify that everyone knew about the change from the oil and gas lease proposal. She reports that he said the proposals for the 2020 Utah Department of Water Quality NPS (non-point source grant funding) are due March 18. She said he reports the projects are in the Castle, Mill, and Pack Creek watersheds. She said he reports that Mark Stilson of DWR will present the third part regarding groundwater on March 18.

Assistant City Manager Castle reported that Brad Lancaster will present on March 25 at 6 PM in the Moab Council Chambers. She said he is an expert on infrastructure and rainwater harvesting. She said Finance Director Stenta had an emergency, so her agenda item will be presented by City Engineer Williams instead.

Assistant Engineer Johanson reported the Engineering department met with Ken Kolm today to

discuss creating a plan to monitor the Mill Creek Glen Canyon aquifer area to verify the numbers in Kolm's report. He said the Engineering department will discuss with DWR Regional Engineer Mark Stilson next week regarding monitoring the streams and rainfall. Board Chair Dohrenwend asked if wells and springs will be included in that discussion. City Engineer Williams said that Phase III of Kolm's report will cover everything that is included in the water balance budget that is not already covered. Assistant City Manager Castle proposed providing updates regarding the monitoring throughout the year.

Board Chair Dohrenwend asked Assistant Planner Shurtleff to introduce himself to the Board. Assistant Planner Shurtleff introduced himself and said that he has been in this position for about six months and prior to that he was on the Planning Commission.

Nomination and Selection of Board Vice-Chair—Approved

Motion: Board Member Duncan nominated Board Vice Chair Jeremy Lynch to remain Vice Chair. Board Member Gould seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion passed 5-0 with Water Board Members Dohrenwend, Duncan, Lynch, Perkins, and Gould voting aye.

Overnight Accommodations

Discussion: Assistant Planner Shurtleff provided a brief presentation regarding overnight accommodations development standards. He also provided background on the ordinances from 2019 that placed a moratorium on new overnight accommodations. He said proposed Ordinance 2019-30 will amend City Code to allow new hotels and motels subject to revised development standards, and it was presented to City Council on January 8, 2020. He said City Council has directed the Planning Commission and City staff to further develop these standards. He said the draft ordinance contains section "B. Water" which addresses water conservation requirements. Board Chair Dohrenwend inquired about the feasible rainwater catchment system in the draft ordinance, and if it meant putting the water in tanks or having it soaked into the ground. Assistant Planner Shurtleff said both because there is an overlap as far as channeling and catching the water and where it goes.

Assistant Planner Shurtleff said the draft ordinance includes a provision as part of the energy section that states overnight accommodations development standards may meet the energy requirements by submitting a certification through the Green Building Challenge, Living Building Challenge, Net Zero Building Certification or other established industry standards. He said that provision could potentially affect the increased water conservation development.

Assistant Planner Shurtleff said there is a provision within the site configuration section of the draft ordinance that requires protection of major existing trees and vegetation wherever possible. He said this will preserve natural landscape and will affect the water conservation efforts of the development.

Assistant Engineer Johanson asked if oversized gutters have been considered as part of the rainwater catchment. Assistant Planner Shurtleff said it could be added as a provision to the draft ordinance. Board Member Gould inquired about the process for disagreements concerning what is feasible. Assistant Planner Shurtleff said the standards need to be clear and concise in the Code. Board Chair Dohrenwend said there needs to be enough detail that developers can understand how to meet the Code requirements.

Board Chair Dohrenwend asked if xeriscape is defined as requiring gravel in the draft ordinance. Assistant Planner Shurtleff said it will not require gravel as a component. Board Chair

Dohrenwend clarified that xeriscape in the draft ordinance refers to zoned landscaping and grouping plants with similar water needs together. Assistant Planner Shurtleff added that the provision says no more than 10% of landscaped area can consist of turf.

Board Member Perkins inquired about adding language for rain catchment systems for storms. Board Vice Chair Lynch said the systems should be designed for the largest anticipated rain event of the year. Board Chair Dohrenwend said the landscape requirements will differ by zone. She added that the Water Board would like to be part of discussions for each zone at the start of the discussions rather than the end. She said it is important to look at the character of the land in each zone and what can be developed.

Board Chair Dohrenwend asked if there would be a suggested plant list. She then asked if there would be irrigation standards regarding a preference between drip irrigation and overhead spray. Finally, she asked if organic mulches would be part of the ordinance. Assistant Planner Shurtleff said those suggestions have been considered before, and some of them are already included in other parts of the City Code. Board Chair Dohrenwend expressed concern about developers having to review many different sections of code to find answers. Assistant Planner Shurtleff said he will assist developers to answer any questions.

Board Chair Dohrenwend inquired when the draft ordinance will be reviewed again by the Planning Commission and City Council. Assistant City Manager Castle said the budget is the top priority for Council agendas right now, so the draft ordinance may not be presented for a while. Board Chair Dohrenwend wanted to confirm the draft ordinance is proposing adding standards to require a catchment system, restrict certain types of plant materials, require drought-tolerant standards, and require a xeriscape landscape. Assistant Planner Shurtleff asked the Board if they could provide a list of specific native plants or plants that could help with bioretention and infiltration. Board Chair Dohrenwend suggested that Board Members look at the North corridor and consider the size of the lots, the size of proposed developments, and bring a list of positive and negative aspects regarding the developments to the next meeting. She also suggested bringing visuals that relate to the zone, so the topic is less abstract. Board Vice Chair Lynch agreed. Board Member Perkins suggested adding aerial photographs to the presentation. Board Chair Dohrenwend asked for a presentation that explains the other applicable sections of Code pertaining to water.

Water Rates

Discussion: Assistant Manager Castle said City Engineer Williams is going to provide an update on the rates that were received this morning. She said Zions Public Finance will present to City Council potentially between March 24 and April 14, and she would like to make it a joint meeting so the Water Board can be included. Board Chair Dohrenwend suggested adding this topic to the April 8 Water Board meeting so it can be revisited.

City Engineer Williams said he discussed with Finance Director Stenta when the water rates were last adjusted. He said in 2018 some categories were changed, but the last true adjustment happened in 2008. He proceeded to review the current water rate structure. He said that Finance Director Stenta wanted to relay the message that the current rates will result in a \$98,000 deficit towards operating expenses next fiscal year. Board Member Duncan inquired how the water department avoided losing money the last ten years. City Engineer Williams said maintenance and capital projects have not been done. Water Superintendent Jones said the water and sewer departments used to be combined, and the sewer rates were sustaining the water department.

City Engineer Williams displayed the water distribution system for Moab. He said there are four springs and three wells that are used, as well as three storage tanks. He said there are 52 miles of pipe that the City maintains. He said a consultant came up with a list improvement projects by evaluating the history of the system and having discussions with City staff. He displayed the project list and briefly reviewed the items. He said Assistant Engineer Johanson and Water Superintendent Jones discovered that 60% of the water pipes are 60 years or older. He said the lifespan for water pipes is 40-50 years before they need replaced. He said the grand total for the improvements list is \$16,119,000. He said two of the tasks are in the design phase currently, and then the City will work towards funding from the state.

City Engineer Williams said the base rate for water service should cover half of the operation and maintenance costs. He said the recommendation to Council will be to increase the base rates, add more tiers, and raise the rates on the tiers. Board Member Duncan inquired about basing the tiers on the number of guests in the hotels instead of on water volume. City Engineer Williams said the state has approved models for water rates and it is based on volume.

City Engineer Williams showed the current water rates for GWSSA (Grand Water and Sewer Service Agency) and their base rates are higher than the City's and they have more tiers. Board Member Duncan said the Council will want to know specific reasons why the pipes need replaced. City Engineer Williams said this presentation was a brief overview, but there is detailed documentation supporting each improvement project on the list.

Board Member Perkins asked how explosive this issue is. Assistant City Manager Castle said the increase in water rates will receive a lot of push back. Board Member Perkins asked if the current water rate is cheap compared to other cities. City Engineer Williams said he moved from Tucson and his old water bill was higher. He said he lives in the county and GWSSA's water bill is higher too.

Board Chair Dohrenwend asked the Board if anyone felt that the water rates should be lowered; no one agreed with that statement. She then asked the Board if the current proposed increase appears outrageous to anyone. Board Vice Chair Lynch said the proposed increase seems reasonable. Board Member Perkins said the rates were not increased in the past, so they will need to increase now. Board Chair Dohrenwend said the next Board meeting should include ideas for outreach and education of the public regarding water rates.

Water Conservation Plan Update

Agenda item was tabled until the next Water Board meeting.

Future Agenda Items:

Board Chair Dohrenwend said the water rate will be on the agenda for the next Water Board meeting. She asked if most of the next meeting could center around the water conservation plan update. Board Member Lynch suggested having the water conservation plan update as the first item on the next agenda. Board Chair Dohrenwend said she wants to have overnight accommodations on the agenda again, too.

Adjournment: Board Member Duncan moved to adjourn the meeting. Board Vice Chair Lynch seconded the motion. Board Chair Dohrenwend adjourned the meeting at 4:04 PM.