

MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE WORK SESSIONS OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BISBEE, COUNTY OF COCHISE, STATE OF ARIZONA, HELD ON TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2017, AT 5:30PM IN THE BISBEE MUNICIPAL BUILDING, 118 ARIZONA STREET, BISBEE, ARIZONA.

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER BY MAYOR SMITH AT 5:30PM.

ROLL CALL

COUNCIL

Councilmember Anna Cline, Ward III

Councilmember Joan Hansen, Ward II

Councilmember Frank Davis, Ward I

Mayor David M. Smith

Councilmember Bill Higgins, Ward I

Councilmember Douglas Dunn, Ward II , Mayor Pro Tempore

Councilmember Gabe Lindstrom, Ward III Excused

STAFF

Richard J. Marsh Jr., City Manager

Nina Williams, Deputy City Clerk

CITY ATTORNEY

Britt Hanson

THE FOLLOWING ITEM WAS DISCUSSED AND/OR CONSIDERED AT THESE MEETINGS:

1. Presentation by Holly Richter of the Nature Conservancy regarding Acquiring Bisbee Wastewater Affluent to Recharge the San Pedro River.
David M. Smith, Mayor

Mayor Smith said this was a work session which means that Council will not be voting on any matters. This was being presented to the Council for educational purposes as well as to the audience both live and on television. There was only one (1) item to be looked at tonight and he wanted to indicate that there was some misinformation present that deals have been struck as to how much money would be paid, how much water was going to be used and all of these kinds of things. This meeting was for the purpose of the Council to understand the concept that was being looked at. If the Council decided that they wanted to enter into negotiations regarding this concept that was when we will start talking about how much affluent, how much that's going to cost meaning how much will the City charge for that. We were talking about the concept. We are here to learn about this and the concept of this . He also said that the presentation would be given by Ms. Holly Richter of the Nature Conservancy regarding acquiring Bisbee Wastewater Affluent to recharge the San Pedro River. He introduced Ms. Holly Richter and thanked her.

- Sharon Rock, Bisbee resident spoke in opposition to the possible sale of the Bisbee affluent water.

Ms. Richter gave a detailed presentation regarding acquiring Bisbee Wastewater Affluent to Recharge the San Pedro River that included;

- Groundwater Sustainability
- The Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network

- The CCRN Members
- Aquifer Recharge to Sustain a flowing River
- Benefit of the Recharge Network
- Simulated Change in Base flow from 2003 (Without Proposed Recharge Projects / With Proposed Recharge Projects)
- Groundwater Recharge – Sheet Flow
- Groundwater Recharge – Treated Effluent
- Benefits of Simulated Recharge of San Jose Wastewater Treatment Facility Effluent Near the San Pedro River
- Annual Effluent Production, FMI USE, and Discharge from San Jose WWTP
- How is recharging effluent in Greenbrush Draw currently affecting the local System
- What impact would moving treated effluent recharge out of Greenbrush Draw have on drinking water wells
- How will recharging treated effluent at Horseshoe Draw effect riparian conditions and base flow in the San Pedro River
- Where does the river need the help the most
- How much was enough to help the river
- 2050 Simulated Increase in Groundwater level
- 2050 Simulated Response to HD Recharge

Mayor Smith asked that there had been certain discussions with the fact that this proposition was actually nothing more than attempting to put water into the river to benefit a future housing development outside of Benson can you Ms. Richter address that. It was on the slideshow exactly where the benefits were from this project that's the only location where we can really determine the direct benefits to anything. She said that the builders were many miles downstream and that at some point groundwater travels down and at some point in the very distant future maybe there might be some really remote benefit. Where the river needs help was exactly what this project was designed to do.

Councilmember Hansen said that one of the things people asked about was the cost of the pipeline itself. Ms. Richter said that all of the work done by the CCRN, the projects that they have implemented to date have been really unique and frankly exciting in that they have been public / private partnerships. They have been the recipients of some foundations that very much support river conservation that have made some major investments in these projects. She couldn't speculate to where the money would be coming from, but with creative partnerships, private donors, private foundations as well as collaboration participation with public partners. No one entity will cover the cost of these but together there can be creative ways to make them happen.

Mayor Smith said that was why they were approaching us with the first step whether we would be willing or not in order to go the next step to find out exactly how much that pipeline cost.

Councilmember Cline said that this was an interesting presentation.

Councilmember Davis asked what Sierra Vista's part would be in this, as far as their Wastewater. Ms. Richter said that they entered into an agreement back in 2002 and that facility was funded again with multiple sources obviously part of the expense was borne by the city itself. This project was very well monitored which helped them to understand how something like this could work.

Councilmember Higgins said he saw where the City of Sierra Vista recharges approximately 2700 acre feet a year and what were expected of Bisbee were approximately 400 acre feet. He asked if part of the land on Ladd ranch itself. Ms. Richter said “Yes” some of the benefits of the recharge part of the ground water would benefit on the Ladd ranch, but it would spill out onto other lands as well as federal land.

- Brad Edwards, Bisbee resident was curious as far as the amount of information that was given so much of it was dependent upon off the shelf computer modeling software that you get one size fits all. He felt that this was too complex for off the shelf modeling. He would like the City of Bisbee to look a lot more carefully before they commit themselves.

Mayor Smith asked if Ms. Richter did the modeling was it an FDS model or a linear model. Ms. Richter said that it was a 3-dimensional mod, flow model that was created by the USGS. In 1998 the Upper San Pedro partnership was formed to build a groundwater model that 21 agencies could agree upon and it took them 8 years to do it. This model is custom built which encompasses the Sierra Vista sub watershed US and also encompasses the Mexico sub basin.

- Brad Edwards, Bisbee resident asked how much the model had been tested.

Ms. Richter said that it was called model calibration it refines its accuracy over time and that this was an important cycle.

- A Citizen asked what would the impact on wildlife would be.

Mayor Smith said that would be something the Council would discuss and that it would depend on where the water went.

- A Citizen said that obviously there wasn't enough water how do you balance that and what would we lose by doing this.

Mayor Smith said that he could assure her that some of these questions had been thought of, have been asked and prior to the Council making some type of decision he would request input from others who might have some of that information.

- Patricia Worth, Bisbee resident asked two questions: who draws off the San Pedro at the moment and who in the future maybe drawing from the San Pedro.

Ms. Richter said the way groundwater works was that all groundwater moves towards the river underground and sometimes it can take a year to get there, a day to get there or 500 years to get there, but every gallon that they pump (any of us in this basin) we are pumping water that over some period of time would have moved towards the river, so who uses the San Pedro river all of us.

Ms. Hanson, City Attorney said that if we do this or not we are all trying to keep the river alive all around us rivers are drying up. We are lucky we have one that hasn't dried up and we are trying to keep it alive it takes extraordinary measures like this to do that.

- Martin Gregory spoke regarding the reason why the San Pedro campaign was started and asked what the CCRN was doing to stop development.

Ms. Richter said what she would tell him was that the several thousands of acres that are these recharge projects every one of them has a conservation easement on it that precludes future development and felt that precluding pumping as important as putting water back into the ground.

- Sharon Rock, Bisbee resident she thought Ms. Richter had said that there was a declining trend in groundwater in the river area from the models 2012-2050 if the recharge doesn't take place. She asked if Ms. Richter could explain why there would be that decline in the groundwater if there isn't a recharge.

Ms. Richter said that she has been talking about the fiscal reality of what water was really out there and how we could get more water to be in the right places at the right time. To answer your question of why the river wouldn't do well without the recharge, right now there was a cone of depression regional in extent in the San Pedro River valley and that cone of depression started back in the 1940's. Groundwater sinks when we pump it faster than it was replaced. What this recharge will do was stop that cone of depression which was basically the groundwater that has been drawn down from pumping from reaching the river. If it reaches the river the river will go dry we have seen this throughout the desert southwest that was why flowing rivers are so rare, because in most places that cone of depression with that pumping has already reached those rivers it has not reached the San Pedro yet.

Mayor Smith thanked Ms. Richter for her expertise, for her time and we certainly will be meeting on this subject down the road. He thanked all who attended and asked questions.

MOTION: Councilmember Higgins moved to adjourn the meeting.

SECOND: Councilmember Davis

MOTION PASSED: UNANIMOUSLY

ADJOURNMENT: 6:52pm

David M. Smith, Mayor