

WATER COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 13, 2008
MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pete Frisina, Chairman
Chris Clark, Vice Chairman
Tony Parrott
Jack Krakeel
James K “Chip” Conner

NON-VOTING MEMBERS:

David Jaeger

STAFF PRESENT:

Russell Ray

GUESTS:

Jack Smith, Board of Commissioners
Rick Eastin, City of Fayetteville
John Munford, Fayette Citizen

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pete Frisina at 8:00 A.M.

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING ON JANUARY 9, 2008.

Tony Parrott made the motion and Chip Conner seconded, to approve the minutes from the meeting on January 9, 2008. There was no opposition.

II. LAKE MCINTOSH UPDATE.

David Jaeger updated the committee on several items. Release of the credits from the mitigation bank will allow the start of the timbering operation. The Corp visited the site last Tuesday. The word he got through Tommy Craig’s office from the mitigation bank is that the visit went well, and the mitigation bank is optimistic that they may release credits as soon as this week. That information is coming from the mitigation bank, not from the Corp. This is optimistic information. As soon as we get that, we will issue the notice of award, and get the contracts executed for the timbering operation. The 120 day period expired as far as how long the contractor was required to hold his bid price on the timbering. However, he was willing to extend his price indefinitely, and we have that in writing. Until he issues a written statement to say otherwise, his price is good in the future. He is willing to help us out and be patient in getting these credits released. He is anxious to get working. With any luck, we will get the credits released quickly and we will have him on the ground timbering the merchantable timber out there.

Since we have had this delay in getting him started, we have elected to get the geotechnical guys back on site with the direction that they should provide their own clearing operation in order to extend their borings into the areas where they look for borrow materials. They were originally planning to follow the timbering contractor to allow him to do some of this clearing for them, but in an effort to keep

us on track and get these guys the information they need, we have issued them a directive to start work again. They were on site Monday of this week looking for borrow materials.

Mr. Jaeger went on to say that the archaeology recovery plan has been approved by the Corp and is still in the hands of the State Historic Preservation Office. His understanding is that they have a 30 day period to review this and they are close to the end of that period. That is another one that we are optimistic that we will get approval of in the next few days, a week or so. Then the archaeology people will be out at that one recovery site.

He stated that he and Mr. Parrott have met a couple of times with USGS who are going to be providing the stream monitoring stations that are required by the permit. One of those stations is in place already, at the bridge on Shoal Creek, upstream of the reservoir. The second upstream site is on Line Creek and they have met with the USGS representative, they have been out in the field, and have had survey crews out there as well. They have established the area where easements are required and they are in the process now of getting the easement plats prepared for that. They feel like they are making good progress on that station as well. There are three required, two upstream and one downstream. The third one remains for us to establish the exact location, but we will be working with the same people at USGS. They have discussed it with them on a preliminary basis.

Mr. Parrott commented that the site is located downstream of the dam. We are working with it so we can put it in and not have to do any adjustments.

Mr. Jaeger went on to discuss the stream buffer variance. January 3, 2008 a public advisory was advertised in the paper describing the project and the fact that it requires a stream buffer variance. There is a 30 day period from that advertisement that comments were accepted by the State. He talked yesterday with a representative from the State and there were no comments. She has drafted an approval letter for the stream buffer variance and forwarded it. She said it has to go through a few steps, but she is anticipating that we will get approval on that by the end of the month.

Mr. Jaeger stated that we are anticipating setting up a design status meeting with Safe Dams upon completion of the borrow material study; to give them an update on the design, sort of a strategy on the design going forward and a general update. He anticipates that meeting will take place in March.

Mr. Parrott referenced a letter from the Wildlife Resource Division, they are interested in the county providing fishing opportunities with the lake. This includes boat ramps, parking spaces and rest rooms. It is a recommendation on what they would like. We have plans to have some limited public access, but when you start talking about that many parking spaces and such we don't know yet from the way the piece of property lays. We can discuss it later on, once we get the dam layout

and they see way the property lays with the pump station. Property was not purchased specifically for a park, but we are working the park in with some of the property at the dam and what was the spillway.

Mr. Clark commented that money is available to do some of these types of projects through the Go Fish program. A bill that just passed the Senate calls for new reservoirs, if money is available; provide money to new reservoirs to build parks and other passive recreational spaces around them. When we get to that point, we should see if we can get any of that money.

Mr. Parrott commented that at Lake Horton we charge a fee for out of county and the fee generates more than we would have gotten. If we take DNR's money, then we have to open it up state wide. We also have to look and see if the money we would generate would offset that. Lake Kedron has federal money in it and we cannot close it off.

Mr. Clark clarified the water produced in Lake McIntosh would be for Fayette County. There is no inter-connection with Coweta County. Mr. Parrott stated that the permit for withdrawal issued for Lake McIntosh is 10.4 MGD, and it is issued to Fayette County. That is the total amount of water available from the lake.

III. UPDATE ON DROUGHT SITUATION.

A. RESTRICTIONS.

Mr. Parrott referenced a press release from February 12 from the Department of Natural Resources that talks about the water usage exemptions that must be approved by the local water providers.

Mr. Clark gave the committee some background as to where they are at the State level. We do have a lot of full pools now; we do have rivers back up. Allatoona and Lanier are still down, but we do have more water in the system and the legislators introduced several bills that would have lifted those restrictions almost entirely. It would have taken the control away from local governments. That is part of the reason they did what they did, at the end of the day, through the governor's authority, put some of the authority back in the counties before it was taken away by the legislators. There has been a lot of lobbying by the urban agriculture group. They said they have laid off over 35,000 folks and lost 4 billion dollars in revenues, since the impact. That really got legislators attention. That is why they did the allowance at night with very strict restrictions. There are at least two counties, that have already contacted them saying they are not going to ease their restrictions. The swimming pools are the same thing; Mrs. Couch did the random numbers and showed the impact to be minimal, at best. There was another bill about swimming pools going through the legislature.

He went on to say that the climatologist has informed them that we are not seeing an end to it. We even have a group that is looking at downstream. The Flint River

Drought Act, that we had a few years ago, farmers that irrigated along the Flint in South Georgia had a lottery, an auction of irrigation credits. It looks like the drought is going to be significant enough, come April, that we will have to do that again. That is a 30 million dollar hit, minimum, to the State. The governor said in the press conference the other day that any moment, we can change these back again, but at least we have the authority to do that, whereas, if we had passed legislation, we wouldn't have that ability. Several bills have been introduced. One that is in the Senate would require quicker turn around on the wetland buffer deals and stream line the reservoir process. Hopefully, 40 million dollars will be available for water system and reservoir grants.

Mr. Parrott stated that swimming pools are not much of an issue. The county has been issuing swimming pool building permits and people have continued to build swimming pools because we have continued to issue permits to build them. Mr. Frisina commented that not all of them are filling them with County water, anyway. Mr. Parrott stated that we charge a little bit more for the water for pool filling.

Mr. Krakeel expressed concern about the hand watering issue. Sprinklers are a violation. Enforcement will be tough. The committee discussed the outdoor use registration for newly installed landscape. Turf is considered new landscape.

Mr. Parrott estimated April through September usage figures. Our six month baseline average usage is 12.26 MGD, and then 10% off of that leaves us with 11.03 MGD. Currently we are at 6.4 MGD, which means 3.5 MGD is available for outside watering. It depends on how much is used for swimming pools. These figures include what is sold to City of Fayetteville. We have water available, the hand watering existing landscape with a hose and swimming pools should not be a problem. What comes into play is how many people are going to register, because that opens up room that we have no way of judging who is going to do that.

The committee discussed at length the process for newly installed landscape, the registration process, when the process begins, enforcement issues, pool filling and hand watering, and the water supply available.

Russell Ray reported that Lake Kedron is 78% full and is coming along well. Lake Horton is 7.5 feet down, which is 50% full. Historical numbers for last year at this time, we were down 3.25 feet at Lake Horton, 3 feet in 2006 and .5 in 2005. Mr. Parrott stated that the hand watering with a hose midnight to 10:00 a.m. and the swimming pools, he does not see a problem making it fit with the amount of water we will have available, according to the States' formula on April 1. The other is so wide open; he does not know the answer to it.

Further discussion pertained to waiting until April to allow hand watering and pool filling. April is when the new baseline would begin. Mr. Parrot stated that we are 6.37 MGD under the current restrictions. January we were 6.24 MGD. That is only 130,000 gallon buffer, which is not enough. There are no changes that can be made

to our restrictions until April 1, when the new allocation comes in; otherwise we would be out of compliance with our permit. Between now and then, the details will be refined by the State.

Rick Eastin stated that he is here on behalf of the City of Fayetteville, and what they want to accomplish is working to make sure that we have a consistent policy county wide. They want to cooperate in whatever policies come up with as far as the restrictions or the types of restrictions that we implement, that they are implemented on a county wide basis to keep down confusion and one group doing it separate. He stated that he tends to agree with Mr. Parrott, as close as we are on our goals right now, they met goal also, but as close as we are on our goals, if we were to go with a complete release, irrigation systems can kill you. They want to participate to make sure we are all on the same page. That is the purpose of him being here.

Mr. Clark asked what he thinks of the idea of postponing at least until April 1. This would give us another month to look at everything. Mr. Eastin commented that he thinks this is just like the 10% reduction when it happened back in October. It is an evolving process, and over the next two weeks, he thinks we are going to have more information, but he still thinks it was premature for the jump out. He appreciates that the baseline was moved forward to reflect the summer usage versus the winter usage, because had it been maintained at the winter usage, we would not have had the chance at all. That is moving in a positive direction, but he thinks we all need to keep it in the back of our mind that if we release these things, there is nothing in the current regulations that says we can't unrelease them and go backwards. If we see that we are having trouble meeting the goal, either in the City or the County, we can sit back down and say we have a problem, and we need to stop this. That would be a cooperative effort with the newspapers and the media to get the word out.

Mr. Clark questioned if, come April, we decided that we did want to allow some hand watering, would it be too much of an administrative nightmare to have people call in like they do for fire permits. Mr. Krakeel responded that he does not know what it really accomplishes. The main reason it is done with burn permits, is to make people aware of the burning conditions, so that they are not burning when we shouldn't be burning. Obviously, if there is a ban in effect, that is reflected in the message, but if we have windy conditions, we try to advise people this is not a good day to burn. You need to wait until weather conditions improve.

Mr. Krakeel went on to say that we should wait until April 1st, at a minimum, before we make any recommendation on whether to ease the restrictions consistent with the governor's position on the issue. Until we get to April 1st and we can see where we are with respect to our baseline. He commented that there is a secondary issue here. Yesterday, he had a conversation with Allen McCullough and Pete Nelms dealing with our Drought Advisory Committee. A meeting is set up for February 19. That committee has met two or three times now, and has been somewhat of an informal process. He has requested that they make this a more formalized process,

maybe establish some subcommittees, and start looking at some long term solutions that we can intentionally implement here in Fayette County. Maybe, look at some other communities across the country that have taken some very proactive conservation programs and see what we can do in terms of some long term strategies to get us to have a program in place. Gray water usage is an issue in California that basically saved the state of California during their droughts. He thinks those are the types of initiatives we should be looking at long term. Hopefully this is a short cyclical event for us, a one or two year event, but there is nothing to say that it won't reoccur in the future. Just from the perspective of conservation of our natural resources, it makes good sense for us to involve some long term strategies. That is the charge he wants to give to the Drought Advisory Committee, to really begin, formally developing, researching and analyzing some long term solutions that this community can look at.

Mr. Clark commented that we will see a major effort from them, probably starting in April on helping communities do that. He thinks this is good idea.

Mr. Eastin commented that he thinks it is important, even today, if we are going to put out the message today that we haven't released those restrictions and make that clear. As a group we are looking at this and a recommendation will come back. As soon as the governor had the news conference, calls were coming in that afternoon. He went on to say that he thinks we need to be consistent and say we are looking at this thing, but until April 1st, it is still the same status quo right now; because we are still operating under the winter baseline.

Mr. Conner commented that, too, the reservoirs are at the level that they are, and are at the lowest they have ever been at this point in time. Mr. Krakeel said all that could fundamentally change in the next month and a half, if we get some good rains, then that could get us back into a situation where we are back at normal pool levels, or close to normal pool levels. It is a relative number, he thinks you have to recognize that a 50% pool level sounds drastic, but he thinks, just from a supply perspective, it gives us a significant supply. But, at the same time, you want to be where you are normally this time of the year.

Mr. Ray stated with Lake Horton, using 6.5MGD, we have over 250 days of supply. 6.5 MGD is what we normally pull from this reservoir, and then we use other sources.

The committee agreed that we will continue with the current restrictions as they are.

B. TOILET REBATE.

Mr. Parrott explained that the Water Committee recommended and the Board approved doing the toilet rebate program. In between, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District made some changes to the program. Some of which took care of concerns some of the commissioners had. To do the program through the District, it will only cost \$10.00 per toilet, and they were looking \$30.00

through a private entity, and they have worked that out. They have looked at doing both the 1.6 toilets and the 1.28 toilets. The 1.6 toilets will get you a \$50.00 rebate, and 1.28 will get you a \$100.00 rebate. We do not put any money up front into the District. We pay per rebate issued through the program, so we are not sending them the money, and they are holding the money. This was another concern the Board had. Those changes were made, and he put a request on the agenda for the Board to review those changes and give approval for those changes. From the Water System's standpoint, in dealing with it, he thinks administratively, it is going to be fairly smooth.

Mr. Krakeel asked what the cost to us is, outside the rebate. Mr. Parrott replied that it is \$10.00 per toilet; this is the administrative fee that we have to send to the District. Mr. Krakeel asked how the process will work. Mr. Parrott explained they will do a form for the District, it will be approved, they will notify us who is approved and we will credit the customers account. Mr. Krakeel asked how the District will verify this person is an eligible property owner, because, number one, it will have to be a Water System customer. Mrs. Quick commented that they will send us confirmation and we will respond back to them that they qualify. Mr. Krakeel said, secondly, it is based on the property itself being a certain age, built prior to a certain year. Mr. Parrott stated they will have to provide documentation to the District, and they will verify it.

Mr. Krakeel clarified that this is limited to Water System customers. This is not something that is available to someone that is on a well, for instance. Mr. Parrott stated we will get a list and we will verify that they are a current customer. We believe that it will work fairly smooth. There should not be any problems.

C. WATER SAVER KITS.

Mrs. Quick reported that we have 500 water saver kits. They will go to people who are Water System customers, and their house was built prior to 1993. Peachtree City will give some out at the City Hall. They will bring in their water bill and a photo ID to show that they are the people paying the bill. We will look them up and verify that their home was built prior to 1993. We have a form for them to fill out and we will check with Peachtree City to be sure people are not getting more than one. A press release has been prepared and is in the Water Committee package for review. It will be placed on the County web site after the Water Committee review. The form requires their account number, name, location of the house and a contact phone number. We have limited quantities, and it is only available for residential single family homes. The form will be placed on the web site and they can print out the form, fill it out and bring it with them.

Mr. Eastin stated they started about a month and a half ago. The demand has not been what he would have expected. There was an initial, small burst. They publicized it, and they have it on the web site. Now, it has trailed off. He thinks we will see the same thing with the toilet rebate program. There will be an initial spurt and then kind of just level off to a reasonable level.

Mr. Parrott said that we have guessed at, there were about 13,000 customers in 1993. There should be enough interest to take care of what we are providing.

NEWSPAPER FREE SPEECH ARTICLE

Mr. Parrott mentioned that today's paper had a free speech article that talked about well water use and the fact that the Water System has no rules and regulations concerning private wells. Private wells are the property owners water source on his property, the State does not regulate a private well unless it is over 100,000 gallons. The Department of Health does check putting in a well to make sure you don't put it too close to a septic tank. Other than that, there is no other permitting. It has to do with property rights. The gentleman in question was going to fill up the lake at his subdivision, and being part of the homeowners association, was going to have to participate financially and that appeared to be his biggest gripe with what was happening. We have some other people who have put wells in on their property just to irrigate with recently. Again, if you own acreage and you want to water, it is one of the rights that you have as the owner of the property.

Mr. Clark commented that there are a lot of counties they have talked to in the south, particularly Southeast Georgia, where we have a lot of salt water intrusion issues. The Coastal region is talking about requiring registration and permitting of personal wells. This is something that the water plan is suppose to evaluate as well.

WATER TANK SITE

Mr. Jaeger reported that they have been out to do preliminary reconnaissance and are attempting to schedule drillings for next week.

There being no further business, Chairman Pete Frisina adjourned the meeting at 9:00 A.M.

Peter A. Frisina

The foregoing minutes were approved at the regular Water Committee meeting on the 27th day of February, 2008.

Lisa Quick