

JOSHUA BASIN WATER DISTRICT
Minutes of the
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
September 23, 2009

1. CALL TO ORDER 7:02 PM

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM: By roll-call:
Gary Given Present
Bill Long Present
Mickey Luckman Present
Mike Reynolds Present
Gary Wilson Present

STAFF PRESENT: Joe Guzzetta, General Manager
Keith Faul, GIS Coordinator
Marie Salsberry, Executive Secretary

GUESTS: 5

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MSC Luckman/Reynolds 5/0 to approve the agenda for the September 23, 2009 Special Meeting of the Board of Directors.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

6. CERTIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR GROUNDWATER RECHARGE PROJECT

General Manager Guzzetta introduced Tom Barnes of ESA Associates; Mr. Barnes presented information on the Recharge Basin and Pipeline Project Environmental Impact Report, including discussion of the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) process, project description, and key issues. Some Board discussion followed, with President Given requesting that the term "public hearing" used on page 9.2 should be changed to "public meeting". It was also suggested that the availability of water from Mojave Water Agency following year 2022 should be clarified in the report.

President Given asked for public comment. Al Marquez of Joshua Tree asked what was meant by "overriding considerations" in the document; he spoke in opposition of the project as he believes there will be no grant funding and he objected to the cost of the project at this time. He stated that overdraft is offset by recharge from septic systems so that there is only 400 acre/foot of overdraft per year. Steven Whitman of Joshua Tree commented that the current board has made significant advances, most notably with the recharge project and with emergency preparedness. Jean McLaughlin of Joshua Tree commented

in opposition to the project and all three sites. Specifically, she was concerned about the Joshua Creek wash and Quail Wash that she stated have been studied as a possible wildlife corridor and loss of local plant and animal life; vector control; water loss through evaporation; a nearby fault, and that importing water will facilitate growth. She also stated that the project is not consistent with the Joshua Tree Community Plan. Margo Sturgess of Yucca Valley asked what might happen to the washes if a 20-year or 100-year flood were to occur.

Tom Barnes responded to the comments. He explained the term "overriding considerations" which refers to the fact that the benefits of the project to the community outweigh the impacts, and he noted that United States Geological Services' (USGS) recent studies indicate that there is little recharge from septic systems. He explained that the objective of the project is to replenish the groundwater regardless of the growth rate, and that mitigation measures are in place that provide for awareness of and monitoring, if needed, of the project area for sensitive species such as tortoise, burrowing owl, and others. He noted that the wash area is the southeast corner of the property and in order to allow floodwaters to continue to flow when needed, the area either will not be used, or will be engineered to allow for flood waterflow. Regarding the fault, he reported that the site is not on the fault, but is near it; however earthquake is not seen as a threat to the project. The evaporation rate is low, especially when compared to the percolation rate. Regarding vector control, he noted that the water will be in ponds for only short periods of time, and that the District will be responsible for vector control should a problem occur. Mr. Barnes stated that the project is consistent with the Joshua Tree Community Plan in that it is needed for the community in order to stabilize the water supply.

President Given asked for questions and comments from the Board. Director Wilson asked, if a tortoise survey couldn't be done until April, wouldn't that mean that the project could not begin before a survey is completed? Mr. Barnes replied that rather than wait for a survey to be completed, the District could move forward with the project by assuming the presence of tortoise, and monitoring accordingly. Director Long stated he has had questions about whether the recharge could have an effect on the nearby Pinto Mountain fault; Mr. Barnes responded that to his knowledge, adding groundwater would not affect activity in the fault zone. GM Guzzetta pointed out that USGS is aware of the proposed recharge site and of the Pinto Mountain fault and they are not concerned. Director Wilson commented that he has always been against ponds and he believes there are better ways to recharge an aquifer; he also believes that this project is related to developers and a wish for growth in the area. Director Reynolds commented that if no growth were to occur in the District, recharge would still be needed as overdraft is occurring now. GM Guzzetta pointed out that the need for recharge is not a crisis situation, but planning now will avoid a crisis at a later time. Director Luckman asked to clarify the projected population of 98,000 people is based on ultimate build-out of all available land in Joshua Tree. Vice President Long commented that many small communities put off large projects such as this; it is better to be proactive now so that a serious situation will not occur in the future due a failure to plan. He stated that this is about planning for the community's current and future needs, whether or not any growth occurs. Director Wilson reiterated that he is not against recharge, but is opposed to ponds; he discussed the possibility of an underground leach field. President Given stated that the District has been in favor of importing water since the very early years. He explained that it is difficult to find potential project sites as the recharge must be over the aquifer and within a certain area; he feels the three sites considered are all good.

GM Guzzetta reported that the District had a much more rigorous environmental study prepared than what was required; the District wanted an in-depth study to ensure that all impacts

would be identified and addressed. Director Reynolds stated (Regarding Director Wilson's suggestion of a leach-field recharge option) that he enjoys considering other ways of recharging and that the District can keep it in mind for the future.

MSC Long/Luckman 4/1 to approve staff recommendation to adopt Resolution 09-852 certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Recharge Basin and Pipeline Project, making written findings, adopting a Mitigation Reporting and Monitoring Program, issuing its statement of overriding considerations, approving Alternative Three (the site generally east of Sunburst Avenue and north of Highway 62) as the preferred site for the recharge basin and approving the proposed project.

Given	Aye
Long	Aye
Luckman	Aye
Reynolds	Aye
Wilson	No

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Al Marquez of Joshua Tree commented that he has been unable to obtain information on water quality of Morongo Basin Pipeline water as it arrives at Hi-Desert Water District; he has requested this information from HDWD. He commented that grant funds should cover 90% of the cost of the Recharge project.

8. GENERAL MANAGER REPORT

GM Guzzetta had nothing further to report.

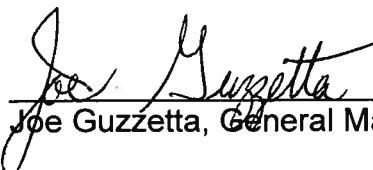
9. DIRECTOR COMMENTS/REPORTS

Director Reynolds reported on attending Mojave Water Agency's "ABCs of Water"; he recommends that anyone interested in water attend these informative events. He also commented on attending a meeting where Senator Dutton's staff reported on news from the state government.

10. ADJOURNMENT 8:52 PM

MSC Long/Luckman 5/0 to adjourn the September 23, 2009 Special Meeting of the Joshua Basin Water District Board of Directors.

Respectfully submitted;



Joe Guzzetta, General Manager

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for October 7, 2009.