



SANTA CRUZ MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER AGENCY

Thursday, September 20, 2018 - 7:00 p.m.

Simpkins Family Swim Center

979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz, California

MINUTES

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Vice Chair Matthews.

2. Roll Call

Board members present: Mr. Abramson, Mr. Baskin, Dr. Daniels, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Kerr, Chair LaHue (arrived late), Ms. Matthews, Mr. Romanini (Alternate for Mr. Marani).

Board members absent: Mr. Benich, Mr. Friend, Mr. Leopold, Mr. Marani.

Staff present: Mr. Bracamonte, Mr. Carson, Mr. Duncan, Ms. Luckenbach, Ms. Partch, Ms. Pruitt, Mr. Ricker, and Ms. Strohm.

Others present: Two members of the public.

3. Oral Communications: None.

4. Consent Agenda

4.1 Approve Minutes from July 19, 2018 Joint Meeting of the Board and the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Advisory Committee

4.2 Accept Treasurer's Report

4.3 Acknowledge Biennial Review of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) Conflict of Interest Code

4.4 Accept Semi-Annual Groundwater Monitoring Report for the Santa Cruz Mid-County Basin

MOTION: Mr. Baskin; Second: Mr. Kennedy. To approve the consent agenda with minor typos to be corrected. Motion passed unanimously with one abstention (Mr. Romanini).

Chair LaHue arrived and began chairing the meeting.

5. General Business

5.1 Approve Amendment to Contract 2017-02 with Montgomery & Associates to Update the Groundwater Model

Staff reported this amendment includes changes to the schedule, scope and budget of the contract. The amendment extends the contract schedule from July 31, 2018, to June 30, 2019, but includes no proposed change to the total contract amount. The proposal adds two additional tasks, totaling \$70,000, and removes a task that is being funded under the County's Stressed-Basin Grant with the Department of Water Resources (DWR) that was estimated at \$70,000.

The additional tasks, as laid out in a supporting letter from Montgomery & Associates, involve additional work on climate change scenarios. Task 5.1.1c considers new information related to the City of Santa Cruz's climate change modeling and incorporates more recent information from DWR. Task 5.6 involves additional modeling tied to the development of the GSP.

The precise scope of these two tasks is yet to be determined. Both relate to project management actions and require input from both the GSP advisory committee and executive staff. When the original contract was proposed, Hydrometrics laid out the modeling tasks anticipated for the 2018 - 2019 fiscal year, but did not assign budget numbers because they thought it was too speculative. Although the tasks are still not fully defined, Montgomery & Associates now has a better understanding of the range of these tasks. With the task for evaluation of the inland pumpers being funded under the County grant, this offset results in no change to the overall contract budget.

Board Comments, Questions, and Staff Responses:

What does the task to evaluate the effect of inland pumpers involve?

- Primarily, in the modeling, turning off all the inland pumping and comparing that to the baseline in terms of the effects on coastal groundwater levels and groundwater levels along the streams.

Is this for the municipal production wells?

- No, the inland pumpers are essentially inland, up in the hills. They are still trying to figure out where to draw that line, whether that is a

land-surface elevation, the distance inland, or groundwater elevation. That has not yet been determined. If it a land-surface issue, they are not sure what exactly that would be.

Public comment:

Becky Steinbruner requested that the model include the effects of turning off the Soquel Creek Water District pumping.

MOTION: Ms. Mathews; Second: Dr. Daniels. To approve Amendment 2 to Contract No. 2017 – 02. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Mathews; Second: Dr. Daniels. To authorize the General Manager of the Soquel Creek Water District to sign Amendment 2 to Contract No. 2017 – 2 and the purchase order. Motion passed unanimously.

**5.2 Endorse the Water Supply and Water Quality Act of 2018
(Proposition 3) on the November 2018 Ballot**

Staff reported that Proposition 3 is a statewide voter initiative on the November 2018 ballot that would authorize \$8.9 billion in state bonds for a variety of water infrastructure projects. The initiative sets aside \$640 million to support the implementation of groundwater sustainability plans. These funds would be made available through competitive grants and could be a potential funding source for the MGA. The City of Santa Cruz has identified \$3 billion in potential grant funds for water projects, and the Santa Cruz City Council has endorsed the measure.

Based upon the funding potential, there is support among the executive team for MGA Board to endorse Proposition 3.

Board Comments, Questions, and Staff Responses:

Is the board endorsing only part of the measure?

- The proposal is for the board to endorse the entire Proposition 3.

Have all the MGA member agencies endorsed the measure?

- The County and City of Santa Cruz have endorsed the measure. Soquel Creek Water District has not, as it needs to pick and choose among requests for endorsements, and Central Water has not.

MOTION: Ms. Mathews; Second: Mr. Baskin. To endorse Proposition 3, to state how Proposition 3 might benefit the work of the MGA, and to publicize MGA support. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Informational Updates

6.1 Groundwater Sustainability Plan Advisory Committee (Oral)

Staff invited input from board members and executive team and who also serve on the GSP Advisory Committee to speak to the process so far.

It was reported that over the past six months the GSP Advisory Committee has been working with the seven sustainability indicators and has moved through the minimum thresholds for each of those except for storage. They are still working with issues related to surface water. For groundwater, seawater intrusion indicators are driving the other issues, so the committee is focused on those. Storage issues still need to be evaluated. The committee is preparing to look into sustainability strategies informed by the results of the groundwater modeling scenarios in the coming months.

Public Comment:

Becky Steinbruner requested presentations by Dr. Andy Fisher (UCSC) to both the board and the advisory committee, and for both entities to communicate with Dr. Helen Dahlke (UC Davis).

6.2 Groundwater Sustainability Advisory Committee Meeting Summaries from April, May, June, July 2018

No comments.

6.3 Outreach Reports (Oral)

Staff reported the MGA sends out a monthly electronic newsletter to about 650 subscribers, and recently updated the GSP advisory committee sections of the MGA website. Staff recently purchased outreach materials, and will have a table at the Water Harvest Festival on October 20th, in Soquel.

The GSP Advisory Committee will also have a half-day hour field trip on October 23rd. Field trip participants will visit monitoring wells at the coast, where Soquel Creek Water District (SqCWD) staff will demonstrate sampling as part of water level and water quality monitoring. The field trip will visit a few production wells and the Heart of Soquel Park, a multi-benefit project at a public plaza that includes a low-impact development, stormwater management, and habitat enhancement features. This will be an opportunity for participants to meet individuals from local agencies working to protect groundwater and enhance local habitats. The public is invited to attend.

6.4 Board Member Reports (Oral)

No reports.

6.5 Staff Reports (Oral)

An update was provided on the progress of the grant the County received from the DWR for counties with stressed water basins. This project has been going on for about two years, and is due to wrap up in December, but staff will be requesting an extension for three to six months. The County been making good progress, and has completed work with the Resource Conservation District by responding to requests from private well owners for evaluations of water conservation and irrigation practices. Visits were made to over 20 properties, including a few small agricultural operations. Assessments were completed for both indoor and outdoor water use, and potential steps were identified to increase efficiency or reduce water use. Staff did not see a lot of low hanging fruit, as many in rural areas have already reduced outdoor irrigation, and staff did not see any big turf areas in the areas visited. But there is some potential there.

Montgomery & Associates continues with groundwater modeling to look at the impact of inland pumping and refine the model to better understand the groundwater/ streamflow interactions, particularly looking at the alluvial areas. They are focusing on the way the model treats the alluvium and the interaction between deeper groundwater, the alluvium, and the stream flow to try to make that work better. They will also model turning off some of the SqCWD wells, the Main Street well, to see if that results in any significant changes in groundwater levels or stream flows in Soquel Creek. This should be done by the end of the year, including the assessment of the effects of inland pumping.

Staff is working with the consulting firm Raftelis to look at various fee mechanisms that might be used in the future and how they might be used

based on different allocations of cost and benefit. After the November board meeting, staff will be sending a questionnaire to board members regarding board objectives and what the board would like to accomplish with fees. Staff will then come back to the board in January or March with a presentation of the results and possible options to consider moving forward.

There are funds available for designs for potential groundwater recharge projects. Staff is looking particularly at the 38th Avenue detention basin as a potential project. A grant was received from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) for subsurface investigations, borings, and percolation testing at a number of areas to better assess recharge suitability. The work Dr. Andy Fisher did with the Resource Conservation District (RCD) maps suitable locations based upon geology and soil. Using the DualEM electromagnetic geophysical instruments, accompanied by representatives from Denmark, staff measured the permeability at depth. Next steps will be to drill in some of the places looked at before, to see how well the DualEM and Dr. Fisher's mapping work characterizes the subsurface conditions. The SWRCB is interested in this work, and may potentially use the DualEM technology in other places if there is a good correlation between its findings and what is actually found by boring into the ground. This will be happening in the next six months.

Board Comments, Questions and Staff Responses:

Will the results be presented to the board?

- Yes.
- The SWRCB grant is probably good for a year and a half. The County is trying to coordinate with SqCWD for some of the managed recharge projects. Funding will be used for investigations. The big issue now is the potential sale of the golf course property, which looked good for recharge, but we need a willing partner and that is up in the air right now.

Regarding a questionnaire to the board regarding fees, a request for the questionnaire to include the board's statutory authority and information on what other groundwater agencies are doing, to provide context.

- An existing draft document does provide context, and statutory authority will be included. This is something that other water agencies have done, so some board members may already be familiar with the procedure of going out to the elected bodies.

The City has worked with Raftelis, and you get what you ask for.

- They seem to be fairly responsive, so I will ask about that.

Board member Dr. Bruce Daniels described a study about 16 years ago on the impact when the Main Street well was turned off for maintenance for several months. It was observed stream flows increased about 10 days after the well was shut off. Since then, similar observations have been made when the well was shut off. Dr. Daniels offered to provide that data to use to assist with calibrating the model.

- That would be interesting and helpful data to see.

With regard to potential rates and charges, and tying that to impact on the basin, where do you recommend that the discussion of defining “impact on the basin” take place, at the advisory committee or the board?

- Probably both. Some of it is a technical work, and so would probably start with the advisory committee, but it would then need to come to the board for discussion. That is what is being done with the model, looking at the impacts of pumping in different areas, return flows and similar issues. There are no real numbers yet to share, but there may be by the end of next months.

When do you think the advisory committee should start considering that concept in some defining detail, next spring, or before that?

- Probably before. This work should be done by the end of this year, so I would say that by the end of this year or early next year we should be able to start working on this issue.

Staff provided an update on the GSP planning grant award from DWR. After several rounds of back and forth to get the scope of work and budget finalized, this agreement is in final review at DWR. Hopefully, by the next board meeting the agreement will be executed.

Staff reported that the SqCWD gave a presentation to about 60 students in an environmental studies class at Cabrillo College that included the MGA’s helicopter-based data collection and mapping of seawater intrusion in the groundwater aquifers offshore done with SkyTEM and Ramboll. The students were really impressed. One student commented on how great it was to see a government agency doing this kind of thing and pushing innovation. Passing along the kudos to the board and staff.

7. Future Agenda Items

Requests from the Board:

Future collaboration with other groundwater sustainability agencies, perhaps inviting San Margarita and Pajaro Valley Water Agencies for a dialogue. The executive team will schedule this and get it on a future agenda.

It was noted that several requests that are carried forward in the prior minutes that have not yet been addressed.

Continued updates on community outreach. (This was addressed in the oral reports.)

Requests and Questions from the Public:

Becky Steinbruner requested that the board and advisory committee work with Dr. Fisher and Dr. Dahlke.

What is the turnout for the MGA's monthly informational drop-in sessions?

- Staff reported that there are typically two to three people per meeting, sometimes as many as seven to eight people.

It was requested that the size of the signs for the meetings be increased.

8. Written Communications and Submitted Materials

None.

9. Adjournment

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Regional Water Management Foundation

Secretary
Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency