

Utility Advisory Committee

Meeting Highlights -- Wednesday, November 5, 2008

Committee members present: Sharon Schilling, Chair, Arthur Reker, Sarah Velasquez

Committee members absent: John McCubbin, Allan Schroeder, Deena Monteiro

Welcome

Sharon Schilling, UAC Chair, opened the meeting and introduced Robert Andersen, who will be the City Liaison during this UAC session.

Sarah Rubin, the Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) facilitator asked everyone to introduce him or herself.

- ❖ Sarah Velasquez introduced herself, and explained her role at Fresno City College.
- ❖ Art Reker introduced himself, and explained his role as the head of a local advertising agency. Mr. Reker is a long-term member of the Fresno Advertising Federation. For the past 2-3 years he has been the chair of the Fresno Advertising Foundation.
- ❖ Robert Andersen introduced himself, and explained that he will be taking over for Lon Martin. Mr. Andersen has been with the city for 25 years, most of that time with the Department of Public Works doing design & consulting services.
- ❖ Ann Kloose introduced herself and explained that she is the chief of staff for Councilmember Calhoun. [/Government/CityCouncil/District2/](#)
- ❖ Sharon Schilling, UAC chair, introduced herself and summarized the current status of the committee appointments. She explained which council members still needed to nominate someone.
 - Jerry Duncan's Office: Ms. Schilling spoke with Ginger. They will be waiting for Lee Brant to appoint in January.
 - Mayor's Office: They will be waiting until the new mayor takes office. Two more members from the mayor's office are needed.
 - Mr. Borgurges is coming in for Mr. Calhoun. Mr. Borqurqes has asked Calhoun to check with his appointment whether or not there is an interest in returning.

The group agreed to try to get three more UAC representatives by the next meeting in December. Ann Kloose stated that she will see what she can do as far as getting more appointments. The group agreed that the new members could start before January (in a limited capacity) so they could get up to speed.

Ms. Rubin then reviewed the agenda.

1. UAC Charter Renewal

Ms. Rubin presented two versions of the UAC charter: a track changes version showing all of the edits made to the previous years' charter and the clean version with all of the changes incorporated. She asked the group to consider adopting the charter during the meeting.

As the group began by reviewing the list of tasks for the 08/09 session it was clarified that the transition to a special district is uncertain. The UAC will look toward making a recommendation to the City on this issue in the spring Report.

The group was queried as to whether the monthly group meetings could be held the second Tuesday of each month. The group agreed. Ms. Rubin said that starting the meeting earlier than 6:00 p.m. was brought up, however at the time Committee members (change to last names), Alan and John were not in the room and a decision to change the time of the meeting could not be made. The decision will have to wait until after everyone can be consulted.

Next the group reviewed the new decision-making language in the charter. Participants reviewed a graphic entitled "gradients of agreement" table to the group, and explained that the overall idea of the gradients of agreement was that you can be between numbers 1-4 (from high agreement to neutrality) and still be a part of the agreement. Only a five, which means you can not live with the proposal, would signify dissent. There was consensus among those present to use the gradients of agreement in the future.

New charter text change was proposed for the decision making section:

Decisions made by the UAC will be re-considered only if all Committee members wish to do so. Members are encouraged to attend all meetings, or to propose an alternate meeting date for taking a particular action to ensure their ability to participate in the decision.

Ms. Rubin explained that the appointment process language was made consistent.

In this session, CCP is doing the administrative point of contract, and will add that notation to the charter. The group agreed that the UAC will annually appoint a chair from their membership and will leave out the annual change proposed.

Sharon Schilling clarified for the group that Ms. Rubin will get homework out to the participants at least one week before each meeting.

Jackie Grazier, Jeffrey Scott Advertising (JSA), suggested the idea of making a press release to advertise the activities of the UAC and possibly recruit needed members. She agreed to run it by the group before being released. The idea was brought up that Ms. Schilling could do a 10 second public service announcement. Another idea was to put a public outreach posting on mindhub.org, a local repository of community related information. Ms. Schilling explained that during the first year of the UAC there was a

high level of public involvement. She said that putting an announcement out may get the two new at large members, or alternates. Robert stated that interested individuals would still have to fill out an application with the city clerks office. CCP agreed to check to see if the application is online. Ms. Grazier agreed to work on the public service announcement task.

Action Request Report

CCP captured the action requests during the meeting and confirmed that they would coordinate with Robert Andersen to respond to each request. CCP agreed to always release action request reports and read-ahead materials to the entire group at least one week ahead of each meeting.

Break

The group decided not to take a break and continued working.

Meeting Calendar/Work Plan

Robert Andersen explained that group members should feel free to bring up discussion topics additional to those on the agenda.

The group agreed that the UAC meetings will be on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, if additional meetings are needed they will be added on the 4th Tuesday of the month.

Ms. Grazier will be involved with the public outreach effort in December.

Ms. Rubin reviewed the calendar agenda items with the group. During the first year of the UAC, the committee went to the city council meeting in person to present their report. The group agreed to present the report in person again this year. The group felt that the current UAC calendar was aggressive. Mr. Andersen asked that the meeting 5 and 6 agenda items should be reversed. The group discussed possible additional meetings in Feb/March/April and agreed to add two additional meetings: April 28 and May 19. The purpose of the May 19th meeting will be to allow more time to work on the final report.

2. Overview of 08/09 Issues

➔ Reserve Policy – Work on Council Adoption

Robert Andersen explained that last year's UAC touched on the reserve policy issue but didn't reach agreement. He would like this year's UAC to work towards some agreement. Various consultants will come to the UAC meetings and provide education for the group.

Having a reserve policy will cover debt, and help the utility continue to operate during bad economic times. The agency would like to become self sufficient and not have to rely on the general fund. The utility took out a bond a few years ago in order to go to a

three cart system. The bond has been paid off. Any new routes and carts have come from the reserve policy rather than from impact fees. However, the utility is running out of reserve policy in solid waste.

Another reason for a reserve policy is that the utility will be two months behind when they go to metered rates. There is not an impact fee for solid waste. Ann Kloose suggested that if the UAC wanted to, they could ask the city council to consider impact fees for things like solid waste.

An example of an impact fee was given as clarification. A street impact fee is used to widen streets in new subdivisions.

➔ *Municipal Water District Options*

Mr. Andersen announced that he has been meeting with a lot of people to discuss municipal water district options. Additional options include having small incremental increases rather than large increases and not waiting until the bond rating is lost.

Mr. Andersen brought up the City of Long Beach Utility Council as an example of a sub council to handle only public utilities. He explained that a separate utilities commission could help the City focus on utility issues. The council would have full authority and recommendation powers. Ms. Schilling asked Mr. Andersen to bring more information regarding the City of Long Beach Utility Council to the next meeting.

➔ *Public Outreach / PIO / Water Meter Project*

Mr. Andersen explained that the City of Fresno has until 2013 to get all of the water meters installed. He is currently meeting with construction management firms to gather design specifications and bids to install water meter boxes. The installation of the boxes will be the most expensive part of the water meter process. The City of Fresno is looking to put in 2100 new boxes.

In addition to the water meter boxes, the City is doing the following:

Demonstration project

The City is considering both mobile and fixed technology. Mobile technology would involve driving by the water meter with a collector device to read the meter. Fixed technology would automatically read the water meters and transmit the information to a central location. A benefit of the fixed technology would be that at any given moment the City would know right away if there was something wrong with the water usage (i.e. a broken pipe). The City is asking venders to install 10 mobile and 10 fixed boxes in strategic locations throughout the city. The City will then short list 3-5 meter venders and ask them to build their boxes. This will be a design-build project that will include warranty and maintenance. The City will do a cost/benefit ratio over a 20 year period to assess the cost of a meter life cycle. Mr. Andersen concluded by saying that the environmental impact report for this project has already been done.

Ms. Schilling asked Mr. Andersen why the process is so far behind the original time line.

Mr. Andersen replied that too much time was spent on the environmental review process. He explained that putting in the boxes is the hardest part of the process. He clarified that the demonstration project houses will not be chosen as volunteers, but rather their proximity to the utility right of way.

Volunteer Water Meter Program

Ms. Grazier described a new volunteer water meter program to the group. It is a highly anticipated community project. She said that the process to find the right vender and the right meter has taken longer than expected. During the same time period of the volunteer program a demonstration project will also be conducted. Ms. Grazier shared a draft drawing of the project mascot, "Wally the Water Meter".

The volunteer water meter project has multiple communication goals:

- o Be completely transparent with the community.
- o Looking to get volunteers from council districts (10 in total).
- o Looking to get representatives from each demographic (kind of house, etc). They are going to get these different types of households through press releases and public service announcements, etc.
- o Will work with the media to develop stories of the families for a 12 month cycle.
- o Will work with print outreach and television to capture how the water meters will impact their daily lives.
- o Analyze the cost differences of each different demographic. Present the data in a way people can relate to. There is no cost to participate in the program.

The application to participate is on the fresnowater.org website. Click on water meter.

➔ Consumer / Utility Price Index / Next Proposition 218 Metered Rates

New meters will begin to go into place over the next four years. The City would like to tie the 218 process to a CPI/UPI process. The consumer price index (CPI) takes into account everything across the board while the utility price index (UPI) focuses only on utilities (i.e. the cost of treating a gallon of water). The City is asking the UAC to look at both the UPI and CPI rate increases. Ann Kloose brought up a recent article she has read that made the case for UPI rather than CPI. Sharon Schilling asked Ms. Kloose to bring the article to the next UAC meeting.

Mr. Andersen described a study included in the Metropolitan Water Plan / Urban Water Management Plan that explained the 4 stages of drought. The City of Fresno is currently in stage 1; when they get into stage 3 & 4 they will begin to lose money due to decreased flow. Ms. Schilling asked Mr. Andersen to get the 4 stages of drought information to the UAC. Mr. Andersen said he would.

3. Unfinished and New Business

None

4. Public Comments

None

Additional Attendees:

Robert Andersen, City of Fresno

Ann Kloose, Councilmember Calhoun's office

Jackie Grazier, Jeffrey Scott Advertising

Sarah Rubin, CSUS, Center for Collaborative Policy

Christal Love, CSUS, Center for Collaborative Policy