

NOTE FROM OCSD COMMUNITY MEETING, OCTOBER 24, 2013

Location: Union Hotel

Attendees: About 45 people attended, including Sonoma County Water Agency staff (Cordel Stillman, Mike Thompson, Pam Jeane & Ann DuBay – Brian Michelsen attended as a resident of Occidental). Mona Daugherty and Cathy Goodwin attended from Regional Board. Susan Upchurch attended on behalf of Director Efren Carrillo.

Steve MacNeal, Occidental Working Group, welcomed people, and gave Supervisor Carrillo's regrets. Noted that the Supervisor was at a candlelight vigil for the young man who was killed. Noted that the Water Agency dropped the Loades plan and that the purpose of tonight's meeting is a fresh start.

Jeff Tweddale, Occidental Working Group, MC'ed the meeting. He noted that himself, Steve, Margaret Gerner, Al Negri and Ray Lunardi have been on the waste water committee for several years. The focus has been on getting out of cease-and-desist order position. A few years ago, it looked like the zero discharge solution was the best option and the district went forward with that plan. The community didn't like the proposal, and we are now trying harness that energy and move toward a project. Jeff noted that the Water Agency has professionals who can help the community explore options.

Comment: It's been 15 years since we've been working on this!

Mike Thompson, Assistant General Manager, Business Operation, Sonoma County Water Agency, pointed out that Occidental is second least expensive publicly operated plant to operate in Sonoma County. (Geyserville is least expensive plant in Sonoma County to operate.) Super simple technology but it costs an additional \$100,000 per year in Occidental to comply with discharge requirement, in addition to O&M. New testing will likely cost an additional \$50,000 per year. A key goal is not to discharge into Graham's Pond or Dutch Bill Creek (both waters of the state) in order to reduce operational costs.

Ann Maurice pointed out that Ferndale costs are significantly lower than in Sonoma County. Need to keep everything on table. Mike agreed. **Al Woicicki** noted that Ferndale folks loves the plant. Looks at cost; \$613,000 versus \$300,000 in Ferndale. Doesn't make sense. Stakeholder, not a ratepayer. **Mike Thompson** replied that the O&M budget in Ferndale is \$600,000, not \$300,000, but we are happy to look at anything.

Steve MacNeal asked people to use him as a conduit for information and communication with the Water Agency, if needed. He also noted that the Working Group is willing to look at anything.

Cordel Stillman, Deputy Chief Engineer, Sonoma County Water Agency, discussed the problems with the current system. He noted that the Regional Board has been fair, but that Occidental needs to meet requirements. (See handout.) Occidental has compliance deadlines, including a 60% engineering design by December 2013; need to work with the community to develop options. One part of the immediate solution is to reduce peak demands. Releases go from 20,000 in summer to 180,000 gallons per day during winter storms. A lot of rainwater is getting into system. Discussed lateral replacement program.

Ann Maurice asked if Water Agency would consider lining laterals versus replacing. **Cordel** said that the current program is a free replacement program but the Water Agency is open to lining versus

replacement, depending on the conditions of the lateral. This would be a conversation with each property owner.

Cordel discussed other options, including:

- Zero discharge, which has benefit of keeping the water in watershed. Need storage and irrigation.
- Tertiary treatment (with either zero discharge or discharge). Noted that can't discharge year round. Can only discharge from October 1 through May 14.
- Regional solution, with pipeline. **Question:** Would pipeline it lower rates? **Cordel:** Not sure.
- Subsurface disposal requires deep enough soil and right kind of soil, with willing property owner. **Comment:** The hillside right outside town where construction is happening has deep earth.
- Trucking waste water. Consider if we need to do something between now and 2018. **Susan Upchurch:** If we dropped load significantly in wintertime, would trucking be a viable solution? **Cordel:** Yes. 4 trucks a day in summer; 7-10 trucks a day in winter.

Al W: What about a gray water program in Occidental? Could we inspire people to do this? **Cordel:** Yes, we could help do this. **Jeff T:** Composting toilet program is available. Water Agency looking for pilot sites.

Bill Wadsworth: From a climate change perspective, trucking doesn't seem very green. **Jeff T:** We should be embarrassed if we get this solution.

Ann M: What about direct installation toilets; rebates for washing machines? Ann said that Water Agency told her that people in Occidental don't seemed interested in conservation. **Jeff T:** There has been a lot of information about rebates, conservation and other programs. Ann doesn't receive since she doesn't live in district.

Question: Does rainwater go into treatment plant? **Response:** No, it – hopefully – goes in stormwater system.

Lloyd Cuccione: Made a statement regarding (1) Costs for pursuing reservoir project; (2) O&M? Would like to see O&M budget for Occidental for 10 years; (3) Guerneville doesn't have a local board or working group. Outreach has been criticized, no or few minutes, no meetings posted. Guerneville doesn't have disposal capacity.

Cordel: Responded to Lloyd's first question, noting that the Water Agency received a \$240,000 EPA grant to pay for design costs.

There was a request that Water Agency send a copy of the 10 year budget to the Occidental Library.

Pam Jeane noted that all the annual budgets are sent to the local libraries. The Water Agency will check on this.

Someone suggested that the Community Center be a test site for a composting toilet. **Cordel** said the Water Agency will follow up.

Ann Maurice: Asked a question about the 2012-13 budget, which was \$1.3 million versus \$600,000. Why this amount? Also noted that actual operating expenses for 2012-13 are too general to understand.

Mike Thompson said he would talk to Ann after meeting.

Cordel reminded the community that we are going to look at all options. **Comment:** It has taken so long to do it so far... **Cordel:** Will come back in six months with a report. We would like it to be sooner, but don't want to promise anything. Regardless of the solution, we need to go through environmental process, which takes time.

Bill Wadsworth requested to see budget statements to understand why our budget says \$1.3 million versus \$700,000.

Ann Maurice noted that she has requested information from Ann DuBay regarding flow, organic solids, etc. This information needs to go to Aeromod and others so they can provide cost estimates.

Cordel said that he planned to select several package plant manufacturers who could possibly meet the needs and provide them the necessary information and have them submit estimates.

Question: Could Mike Gossman do a budget presentation to Occidental? **Cordel:** Yes. We will have Mike Gossman come and do a budget presentation.

Question: Will rates go up once we build new system and stop subsidizing? **Mike T:** Not sure. We need to balance the rates and other factors. **Jeff T:** The simpler we make the system, the better it is for community.

Question: Is recycled water we put in creek any different than water from roads and other polluted sources? **Mike T:** Doesn't really matter. Recycled water is regulated at federal level and the Regional Board sets out requirements ensuring we comply.

Question: Will operating costs be less with no discharge? **Response:** We think so. Mike Thompson promised to send Ann Maurice the Ferndale budget.

Jeff T: Closed meeting by noting that the Water Agency will study the following: Tertiary treatment plant at lift station, plant on top, irrigators at top or bottom, releases into Dutch Bill Creek. Secondary treatment, with water going to irrigators. Jeff asked for the community's help in identifying potential sites for summer irrigation.

Ann M: Have been doing this for years! Result was Loades. **Mike T** noted that the last effort really focused on nearby properties, so they didn't look too far.

Question: What can tertiary water be used for? **Answer:** With the exception of drinking, tertiary treated water can be used for almost everything. Spray irrigation on vegetables, etc.

Jeff T: Have heard criticism about working group. We need to harness interest. Not sure how we merge the energy from the different groups. **Steve M:** Suggested people go through Occidental Community Services District, use the meeting as a forum. 3rd Tuesday every month, 7:00. **AI W:** Need to take minutes. Need to share information.

Jeff thanked everyone for attending, and thanked the Regional Board, the Union Hotel and the Water Agency. Mike thanked the Working Group.