

CITIZENS' WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CWAC) MINUTES

June 8, 2021, 6:00 p.m.

Water-wise Garden, AMC 15151 E Alameda Pkwy

In the event of inclement weather:

Webex

Public Participation through call in number (listen only)

1-720-650-7664

Access code: 187 416-6886

Members Present: Janet Marlow (Chair), Angie Binder (Vice-Chair), Richard Eason, William Gondrez, Mike Spatter

Absent: Jay Campbell, Tom Coker, David Patterson, Brandy DeLange

Staff Present: Marshall Brown, Rory Franklin, Tim York, Adam Waters, Sarah Young, Kelly Bish, Carol Zsako, Jessica Roode

Visitors Present: None

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

1. Tour – Water-wise Garden

A. Waters provided a walking tour of the Aurora Water-wise Garden which is located on the northwest corner of E. Alameda Parkway and S. Chambers Road. Begun in 2002, the garden covers six acres of land and serves as an example of low-water landscaping, plants, and techniques for the public. From the use of reclaimed water for irrigation and clearly labeled signage discussing the seven principles of water-wise landscaping and the plants utilized in the garden, audiences are afforded the opportunity to actively participate and learn about xeriscaping. In addition, the Aurora Water-wise garden is also host to free water-wise classes which are held annually by Water Conservation staff.

2. Approval of Minutes – May 11, 2021

The May 11, 2021 minutes were approved.

3. Introductions/Public Invited to be Heard

There were no members of the public present for the meeting.

4. New/Old Business

There was none.

5. Communications Update

R. Franklin advised that the federally mandated water quality report from mid-May has been posted. The report provides important information about water quality, as well as outlining the sources of Aurora's water supply. The report details any chemicals, minerals and other byproducts that may be found in the City's water resources.

6. Proposed Aurora Water Course

Per R. Franklin, in 2015 the State of Colorado launched the Colorado Water plan as a framework for solutions for the state's water challenges. The plan was then adopted by the Colorado Water Conservation Board. One of the main components of this plan is the State Water Education and Action Plan (SWEAP), which aims to achieve a sustainable water future by engaging and promoting well-informed community discussions about water solutions. To this end a new Aurora Water Course, conducted by Water Resources and Public Affairs staff members, has been proposed to introduce Aurora residents to the city's water system and key concepts about water conservation.

The prospective class would take place on a single evening during a currently unspecified date in July and would assist in encouraging participants' abilities to engage in well informed and water literate discourse. Prior to participating in the evening, attendees would be asked to watch the Virtual Water Tour and complete a quiz with a passing grade of 80%. Those who complete the course and achieve the passing grade, will have their names added to the top of the list for participating in the annual two-day water tour which is held by Aurora Water staff. Participants in this tour include, the Mayor, City Council and management, legislators and staff, important Aurora Water stakeholders and residents of the city of Aurora.

A. Binder asked, Is the course just one night?

R. Franklin a responded, Yes. It will be just one night, but we are still deciding when that will be, sometime in July. And probably just from 6-8 p.m. Depending upon how it goes, they will see about offering it later.

7. Future Conservation Efforts Discussion

M. Brown provided an overview of Aurora Water's continuing efforts to establish and maintain the city's water supply, noting that water is going to continue to become increasingly more precious, expensive, and challenging for communities in the West. He advised that initially, the cost of building and maintaining the various pumps, reservoirs, and systems were offset by income sources such as tap fees that were based upon the size of the meter that was purchased by the customer. Since that time and with continued efforts to increase water conservation, steps have been taken to minimize the impact of the city's use of its water supply.

For example, tap fees were replaced with a volumetrically based tier system which minimizes the costs for small water users and increases as a customer's volumetric rate grows. K. Bish advised,

that new construction builder restrictions have been put into place that restrict the use of sod by requiring at least 400 contiguous square feet be laid for a developer to receive permission to use the turf. If the size falls below that requirement, sod is not allowed and builders can apply for rebate for the xeriscape that is installed in place of sod. Per M. Brown, Aurora Water is also working, in cooperation with Aurora Water Planning, and Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS), to implement zoning code changes for the city which restrict turf such as Kentucky bluegrass from being planted in areas such as medians. Per T. York, current projects that are in the works include a survey and analysis by PROS of areas of aesthetic turf in public spaces that may be replaced with water efficient plants and landscaping. From those projects, a five to ten-year development and implementation plan is being created. A. Waters advised that, so far, two locations that have been identified which include a site Airport Rd and I-70 and one at I-225 and Alameda Ave that are five to six acres a piece.

With these examples in mind, M. Brown requested the committee's assistance with generating additional methods to approaching water conservation for the City.

R. Eason asked, Are you looking to expand the reach of the reclaimed water system at all?

M. Brown responded, Good question, we are looking at a few options there. When we created the reclaimed system at Sand Creek, we did not have a Prairie Waters system, so we had no ability to use that water anywhere. With Sand Creek, we have two choices: we can expand it for irrigation or that same water supply could go to the Binney plant and we can turn it into a potable supply. However, if the Sand Creek facility is tied into the potable system, then that water would not be available for irrigation.

W. Gondrez asked, Two questions, why does the City allow businesses to sell Kentucky sod? If we allow customers to purchase the sod from retailers and it is on one the primary consumers of our water, it defeats the purpose of water conservation. And where does the idea of pumping in water from areas such as the Great Lakes, the Mississippi and Columbia rivers sit as a possible water solution?

M. Brown responded, The concept of moving water from the East to the West has been in circulation for about thirty years or more. A few attempts have been made over the years, but legal impediments, private sector lobbying and a withdrawal of federal funding and support has derailed the efforts. Then the other question, we probably would not have to prohibit its sale if we prohibit its installation. More realistically, we are approaching the issue incrementally by not allowing the sod to be installed it in medians, most tree lawn applications, and then identifying situations where the sod makes the least sense and restricting it use in those instances.

R. Eason asked, The City of Aurora already requires a permit for installation, correct?

M. Brown advised, Yes.

W. Gondrez commented, That does not necessarily mean they obtain a permit before installing the sod because its available at retailers. If our municipality moved on the issue, other surrounding municipalities would follow suit.

J. Marlow stated, We would have to get a consensus, we would have to get them all to agree.

8. Review Follow-Up Questions Generated at this Meeting

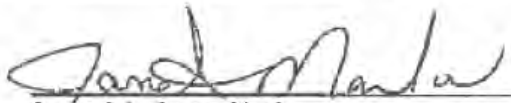
There were none.

9. Confirm Next Meeting – Tuesday, July 13, 2021

J. Marlow confirmed the next committee meeting date with the CWAC members.

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.



Janet Marlow, Chair
Citizens' Water Advisory Committee

Submitted by Jessica Roode
Administrative Specialist, Aurora Water

Adopted: _____