



COUNTY OF COLUSA

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT,
WATER RESOURCES DIVISION
100 Sunrise Boulevard Suite A, Colusa, CA 95932
530-458-0719

COLUSA COUNTY GROUNDWATER COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING

Darrin Williams, Dist. 1 | Deke Dormer, Dist. 2 | Matt LaGrande, Dist. 3 | Tom Charter, Dist. 4 | Jeff Moresco, Dist. 5

Meeting Minutes

Location: Colusa Industrial Properties Conference Room
100 Sunrise Blvd., Colusa, CA 95932 and via conference call

Date: June 29, 2020

Time: 1:00-3:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Williams opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance, a Roll Call of Officers and introductions of others in attendance.

Introductions

Staff and public in attendance:

Mary Fahey, Colusa County Water Resources	Tom Charter, Jr. T&P Farms
Greg Plucker, Director of Community Development	Ben King, landowner
Denise Carter, Supervisor, District V	Stephen Marsh, Myers March Mutual W.C.
Emily James, SMWC	Mary Randall, DWR
John Brennan, SMWC	Brandon Davison, DWR
Dan Griffith, SMWC	Shelly Murphy, Colusa County Water District
Darren Cordova, MBK Engineers	Jeff Sutton, TCCA
Patrick Neu, MBK Engineers	Matt Jones, T&P Farms

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Dormer, Moresco, LaGrande, Williams and Charter

Approval of Minutes from the June 3, 2020 Meeting

Motion: Commissioner LaGrande moved to approve the June 3, 2020 meeting minutes with one correction to the spelling of the name of a member of the public that was in attendance. Commissioner Moresco seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Period of Public Comment

Ben King commented regarding meeting procedures and timing of noticing for this meeting.



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DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

Request for Permit for Groundwater Transfer

Consider the adoption of a resolution taking formal action to deny the out-of-county Groundwater Substitution Water Transfer Permit and Agreement from the Sycamore Mutual Water Company. Alternatively, consider the approval of resolution approving the out-of-county Groundwater Substitution Water Transfer Permit and Agreement from the Sycamore Mutual Water Company based on the addition of specific mitigation measures and a reduced project alternative.

Mary Fahey provided some background information on this item. At the June 3, 2020 Groundwater Commission meeting, the Commission voted down a motion to approve Sycamore Mutual Water Company's (Sycamore) transfer proposal, but did not take a formal action to deny the permit. The purpose of today's meeting is to allow the Commission to either formally deny the permit request, or to approve an updated "Plan B" proposal from Sycamore that includes updated mitigation measures that were discussed at the June 3 meeting.

Mr. Plucker clarified Mr. King's procedural questions that were voiced during public comment. He said that at the June 3rd Commission meeting there was no action taken and as a result, Sycamore or any other interested party could not initiate an appeal process because there was no formal denial or a Resolution denying the proposal. At today's meeting, the Commission is presented with two alternative resolutions: one denying the application and one approving the application subject to the reduced "Plan B" project alternative developed since the June 3 meeting.

Commission Chair Darrin Williams invited representatives from Sycamore to address the Commission and discuss their revised "Plan B" proposal. John Brennan described the proposed transfer, including the updated mitigation and monitoring measures and cooperation with and from neighboring landowners. The Commissioners expressed concern about the neighbors at the June 3 meeting. Sycamore has since contacted all of the surrounding neighbors, which Mr. Brennan identified on a map. Sycamore will comply with the mitigation plan and shut off pumping if needed. Sycamore will willingly share all of the data from the updated monitoring plan and the neighbors are also interested in seeing the results. Mr. Brennan said that if approved, the sale will start on Monday.

Discussion was held regarding groundwater conditions, the merits of the updated proposal from Sycamore, and other related issues.

Commissioner Williams stated that the water situation is a moving target. He learned today that there are some recent problems with domestic wells in the Arbuckle area, two specifically that he has heard about. He is also seeing groundwater levels decrease to levels that are close to where they were during the last drought. He stated that the sustainable yield of the basin will most likely be exceeded in 2020 and that is one of the seven findings from County Code that he is most concerned about. Even though Sycamore has provided a much improved proposal, he doesn't feel



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that the data exists to make the necessary findings to approve the permit, especially the third finding that; *“The proposed extraction will not cause the groundwater basins underlying the county to exceed their sustainable yield and will not otherwise injure or unreasonably impact other beneficial uses of the groundwater within the county.”*

Commissioner LaGrande stated that he has been watching groundwater levels closely this year and they are lower than last year. He has concerns of moving water out of the basin.

Mr. Brennan said that any data gathered this year would help inform potential projects next year. He also described the small percentage of groundwater pumping (1%) from this project related to total groundwater pumped in the County.

Further discussion was held about dry conditions, early pumping and lack of data to make the necessary findings to approve the permit.

Commissioner Dormer said that it is very important to utilize available surface water to maintain the long-term storage of the groundwater basin.

Mr. Brennan described the groundwater recharge efforts that Sycamore has put into place including rice decomposition and participation in The Nature Conservancy’s multi-benefit groundwater recharge and shorebird habitat program.

Mr. Moresco asked why it is required that Sycamore has to pump groundwater as part of the transfer. Mr. Brennan explained that in order to make the water available they either have to fallow or pump groundwater. Crop idling did not work this year for the buyers because it is more expensive.

Mr. Williams opened the floor to public comments.

Jeff Sutton, General Manager of Tehama Colusa Canal Authority said that he has worked successfully with Sycamore Mutual Water Company on transfers and they have always been responsible and good to work with. Data is important and Sycamore has been very responsible in their proposal. The best protection of the overall water resource is protection of surface water and this project plays a role in that.

Mr. King talked about concerns he has regarding groundwater quality, specifically salt water and arsenic. Darren Cordova, MBK Engineers described the water quality monitoring protocols that are required by DWR during these transfers.

Mr. Brennan said that the updated “Plan B” proposal was crafted to resemble a pilot project. It is on a smaller scale than the original proposal and there is more robust monitoring. The data gathered through this program can help with future decisions regarding transfers.

Regarding pending litigation against the long-term Transfer EIS/EIR, Commissioner Williams asked



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Mr. Plucker if the County has concerns. Mr. Plucker explained that, should the Commission approve the transfer, there is a requirement for an indemnification Agreement between the County and Sycamore to protect the County's interest and without the Agreement, the transfer cannot take place.

Motion: Commissioner Williams made a motion to adopt Resolution 2020-02 Denying the out-of-county groundwater substitution water transfer Permit and Agreement from Sycamore Mutual Water Company. Mr. Dormer seconded. The motion passed on the following vote:

Yes: Williams, Dormer, LaGrande, Moresco

No: None

Abstain: Charter

Updates and Reminders

There were no updates from the Commissioners.

Items for Next Agenda

None discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

Next Regular meeting date: August 5, 2020 at 10:00 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted;

Mary Fahey

Secretary