



LOS OSOS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

May 27, 2021

Zoom meeting 7pm

MINUTES

The meeting was **Called to Order and Roll Call** was taken. Present were Tim Carstairs Chairperson, Trish Bartel, Jim Stanfill, Lynette Tornatzky, Yael Korin, Larry Bender, Sandra Sarrouf, and Sue Morgenthaler. Jan Harper was excused; Christine Womack was absent.

Chairperson Tim Carstairs outlined the zoom features and meeting protocol.

Our Sheriff's representative C Langston reported there were 69 service calls last month, mostly disturbances but nothing notable.

Kerry Brown was unable to attend, as was **Supervisor Gibson** so **Blake Fixler** updated us on county matters that related to Los Osos.

The damage to the lights at the intersection of Los Osos Valley Road and South Bay Blvd was caused by a traffic accident. Internal parts to the lighting were damaged and repairs will be completed when the ordered parts arrive.

On May 14, the Board of Supervisors agreed to the appointment of a Code Enforcement Hearing Officer. Now code compliance issues will go through this officer and will not be heard by the Supervisors. If a resolution is made and the situation is not rectified, a legal injunction will follow.

Blake suggested if we have a code violation to report we should go through the new channels but always cc him. He will help us to get things resolved whenever help is necessary.

On June 14-16, the Board of Supervisors will be discussing the \$85 Million coming to San Luis Obispo County from the Federal Government as COVID relief. It will be decided at these meetings what, if anything, will get to Los Osos.

A question was asked to be forwarded to the Supervisor regarding the posting for a new Ground Water Agency Director. This manager will be involved with the Los Osos BMC. How will this individual interface with our issues and what are the implications for Los Osos with this position?

The CSD report was given by Chuck Cesena. The CSD is fiscally in good shape.

They will start work on a new bike/pedestrian path to link 8th St and Ferrell, it will go out to bid on June 3rd.

Also on June 3rd, the CSD will start the bid for a new well on 8th St. This will be an upper aquifer well meant to take pressure off of a lower aquifer well. They are waiting for a \$250,000 grant.

Environmental review for a new well in Baywood Heights on CSD property is on its way, they hope to move ahead with this well within a year.

The CSD is working on a letter to the Coastal Commission that addresses ADUs, this will be a joint letter presenting a unified response from the 3 water purveyors in Los Osos. Each group is structured differently, so they are looking for common ground. One company is resident owned, one is for profit, one is non-profit. There has not yet been enough progress made towards the criteria set to say we have a sustainable basin. The CSD also wants to make sure the data to assess Title 19 water retrofits is accurate before they decide on what to say. It is a complicated issue. Presently, they are just not sure if the basin is sustainable.

For the **Chamber of Commerce**, Lynette Tornatzky told us their directory will be out next week, and Linde's map made it in! Jim Stanfill joined her to announce that the Chamber is planning a Festival of Flavor, it will involve a month-long passport to at least a dozen restaurants in July. The Chamber is still planning, details to follow.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Cantwell, candidate for District 4, challenged LOCAC's election process. After an emotional 3 minutes of comment, Mr. Cantwell continued speaking past his warning and was ultimately muted due to inappropriate language. Mr. Cantwell then proceeded to give the finger to all participants on the zoom call and was removed from the meeting. Steve Vinson and Jeff Edwards added comment to this issue.

The next Public Comment speaker, Cecile Surbeck, thanked LOCAC for its support of her neighborhood and community throughout the appeal of the Fairchild Way/Bean Construction Yard as it travelled from the SLO County Planning and Building Department to the Coastal Commission.

MINUTES FROM APRIL 22ND were approved.

There was no **Treasurer's report** as Christine Womack was not present, nor was **Traffic and Circulation** Chair Jan Harper. **Land Use Committee** did not meet this month as there were no projects to discuss, and the **Trees and Landscape Committee** meeting was postponed.

The **Outreach Committee** always welcomes information for the twice monthly newsletter. Yael Korin reported that the **Unhoused Residents Committee** is working hard. They are close to providing trash and shower services to the homeless here in Los Osos and are making progress towards a long-term solution, a transfer from Palisades to a safe place which will also provide mental health assistance and job help.

PRESENTATION OF THE 2020 DRAFT LOS OSOS BASIN MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT, DAN HEIMEL OF THE BASIN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Dan Heimel walked us through a presentation of numbers, metrics, and data found in the Draft 2020 Los Osos Basin Annual Monitoring Report.

The Los Osos Basin Management Committee, which oversees implementation of the Los Osos Basin Plan, consists of representatives from the Los Osos Community Services District, Golden State Water Company, S&T Water Company and the County of San Luis Obispo.

During this presentation we saw a cross section of the basin, numbers in acre feet of production set out by years, types of uses, and purveyors. We saw charts of how the ground water production has shifted year to year and which level of the aquifer it came from. We saw that rainfall has plummeted since 2017, one that has been on the decline since 2005, and we saw metric numbers as they showed the change in water levels, chloride levels and nitrate levels. We saw how the sea water intrusion front has swept west even though there are not enough testing sites to accurately monitor this activity.

We saw a list of infrastructure projects; some completed, some deferred, on hold or not yet initiated.

Dan Heimel listed some of the annual report recommendations, recommendations that are basically projects that analyze data, develop rating curves for data, evaluate, and update sustainable yield estimates. The last 2 dates in the schedule for this report are June 16th, when the BMC committee plans to review and consider for approval the Final 2020 Annual Report, and June 28th when it is submitted to the Court.

There was much discussion to follow, many questions asked. Many questions centered around the accuracy of the data and the accuracy of processing the data to get to statements that say whether or not we are experiencing deteriorating levels of chlorides and nitrates.

Concerning the data, the BMC places more weight on long term trends as opposed to year-to-year numbers. Dan stated chlorides are trending up while the water level metric level is trending the same.

One chart predicted an increase in chloride and then a large decline while it also predicted water would eventually increase. It was questioned as to how these predictions were formulated.

Keith Wimer of the Los Osos Sustainability Group stated that since 2015 when the Basin Management Plan was started, there has not been much improvement, certainly not close to the predictions made for 10 years out.

The concept of increased pressure in the lower aquifer will push back the sea water and the chloride will decrease. The project at the Broderson leach fields was discussed as recycled treated water is sent there.

New LOCAC Council member James Bishop asked about coordinating our efforts with the state. The state is doing aerial geophysical sweeps of San Luis Obispo. Although we are partnering with Cal Poly for land-based geophysics, we are not in line to be swept by the Department of Water Resources when they fly over San Luis Obispo. James Bishop said he would contact the DWR in an attempt to get them to do a fly over for us while they are flying over SLO.

Charlie Cote, Systems Operator at S&T Water Company reported that septic pollution (nitrates) is still being released into the upper aquifers. 3 areas have a severe impact with nitrates on the upper aquifer- Cabrillo Estates, Bayview Heights and Vista del Morro. Nitrate contamination has also been found leaking through the clay layer into the lower aquifers Zones C and D, zones which had up to this point been considered to be pristine areas of fossil water. We have 5 wells which are too polluted to use or that will become unusable within 10-20 years. Charlie predicted that in 10 years we will need a water source we do not have right now.

Dan was asked if he agreed. His answer was that the pollution at these particular wells is well documented. It is definitely a concern that the nitrates are migrating to the lower aquifer. They are hoping to see improvement in the upper aquifer with the treatment facilities, and he acknowledged the importance of keeping track of the contamination.

It appears that while water production has gone up, there are no long-term conservation efforts. Larry Bender remarked he is concerned about the water supply. The BMC talks about moving wells inland. This may get us more useable water, but it still all comes out of the same basin, we are still taking more out than is going back in. Also, the census shows we don't have the 14000 residents we thought we have, we actually have over 16000. Residents are working hard to conserve, but the county is still permitting more water use in Los Osos by approving new home construction.

Dan agreed that a one source water supply is a dangerous place to be in. Although we have a diverse trio of water purveyors, they agree it is a challenging situation when there is only one source of water that is completely reliant on rainfall.

Lisa Denker asked about the methodology of well injections to hold back the salt-water intrusion. We presently put our treated water back in 3 places, one of which is the Broderson mound. It needs to develop pressure and make its way down to be effective in warding off sea water. Injecting our treated water where it is needed is not allowed by the California regulations we must follow. Our treated water is not considered an acceptable source, it would require us to use a reverse osmosis filtering system to be injectable. For that process the waste is brine. How do you get rid of that, where do we truck it?

Cecile Surbeck asked if the BMC's goal of providing a sustainable water supply to our current water users has been accomplished. Dan stated it is the goal to ensure sustainability and they are working towards that. They are testing and monitoring, continuing to look for opportunities to improve monitoring. They are hoping it will improve conditions.

Again, questions were raised as to the accuracy of the basin yield metric numbers and the Title 19 offset numbers were questioned. Since there are no meters on private wells, the ag numbers are potentially inaccurate. The ag numbers are based on an efficiency of 92% when a 50% figure is more realistic. We should not be using best case scenarios; the numbers are skewed and look better than they actually are.

In response Dan mentioned that the BMC will be re-evaluating the basin yield numbers and in June will be responding to the ag numbers.

Deborah Howe asked what the target values for the basin metrics actually mean to the existing community. Dan responded that achieving the values would mean gaining ground on sea water intrusion. Hitting the target values would indicate that the plan established with the Broderson mound is working to push water into the lower aquifer. Target values are indicators.

Linde Owen was concerned that our recycled water was meant to go back into the ground but instead is going into the Broderson mound. She'd like to know how we are offsetting the ag use. We are not offsetting the water we pull out, which was the original plan. We need to have correct data from the unmetered wells, we need a metering program. She also requested that the 'danger to nitrate pollution' areas sign into the sewer district.

Patrick McGibney pointed out that the BMC initially said bold, decisive and immediate actions need to be taken to solve our problems of sea water intrusion and high nitrate contamination. Since it will take time to see if the BMC metrics are working, wouldn't it be prudent not to increase our population and water usage until we know?

And what is our Plan B? Not much has changed as a result of the BMC plan. Outside water sources are not a solution, drought is a future norm, state water is not a solution, desalinization plants are not an option. If we lose it all, what is our Plan B?

Dan's answer...we are a one source supply, that is a problem. Plan B would be to access another supply, a diversity that would allow our basin to rest. State water is the closest. As a community we need to face that rainfall is now more variable- longer dry periods, shorter wet periods. We need to develop strategies, take advantage and capture water when it is available, store it and rely on that storage during the droughts.

SOUTH BAY BLVD BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION, KIDD IMMEL, ENGINEER AND PROJECT MANAGER

SLO County is replacing the South Bay Blvd Bridge. It is being replaced for seismic reasons. When it was built in the 1960s there was no understanding of liquefaction during seismic events, nor was there an understanding of reactive aggregate. It doesn't meet the no collapse criteria of today. An earthquake would have to be major, perhaps a 1 in 20 chance every 50 years, but this bridge is one of our only egresses and is an evacuation for Diablo. It needs to be replaced, not retrofitted.

Construction will start in 3 years, presently they are just working on design details, utilities, and talking environmental issues. This project will be funded by the Federal Highway Administration.

The existing bridge was originally built with space to add another bridge upstream on the land side, so there is a place to build this new bridge. It will take approximately 2 years to build. During the first year, traffic will be rerouted, utilities moved. The second year, the old bridge will be taken out, the soil restored, and the habitat replaced.

The new bridge will be 100' longer and will include two traffic lanes, two 8' shoulders for bicycles, and a 5' sidewalk on the ocean side making it 30% wider than the existing bridge. Railing will be as see through as possible, but because safety railings change from year to year, they don't know what will be useable until it is built.

Closer to when the bridge will be built, the County will reach out to the community to discuss logistics, etc. It is just too early now.

Comments:

- The viability of a proposed staging area at Santa Ysabel was challenged, Kidd Immel didn't know why they are considering that street, but they may be confined as they work with public right of ways. It has not yet been set as to what areas they will use for staging.

- The end of Santa Ysabel is not good condition and would be completely torn up by construction equipment.
- Perhaps consider Turri Lane? Kidd Immel suggested the possibility of an archeological site or endangered species when considering Turri Rd.
- What about keeping the old bridge as a bike lane?
- Because it is such a long project, it was asked that there please be no staging areas in town.
- Speaking for the Elfin Forest, there is an animal corridor that goes under the bridge keeping the Elfin Forest from being an isolated island. Elfin Forest animals will be impacted unless there is a corridor for them during construction. Kidd responded there will be temporary impacts. Details haven't yet been worked out, but they will be proposing mitigations. They have many organizations and concerns to please; the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, a Fishery Service, National Fish and Wildlife Service, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Coast Guard, Army Corps of Engineers...etc.
- Will there be a consideration for wildlife crossing the road? Answer: A retaining wall on the ocean side should reduce the amount of roadkill as access will be deterred from the West.
- What might happen to our roads and our homes if there is liquification. The answer was that the bridge is on piles so standard wood framed structures like homes would not be affected.

CONFIRMATION OF NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The elected LOCAC council members being confirmed are Yael Korin from District 1, James Bishop from District 2, Larry Bender from District 3, and Deborah Howe from District 4.

To put us on a path where the terms of elected council members and Supervisor appointees are on the same schedule, Supervisor Gibson reappointed Jim Stanfill, Trish Bartel, and Sue Morgenthaler to start their present terms tonight along with the elected council members.

Officer elections followed as Trish Bartel was nominated and elected as Chairperson, Sandra Sarrouf was nominated and elected as Vice Chairperson, Sue Morgenthaler was nominated and elected as Secretary, and Lynette Tornatzky was nominated and elected as Communications Officer. The position of Treasurer has yet to be filled, we will do so at the June meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:07pm.

