

**Citizens Advisory Panel  
March 14, 2006  
Meeting Summary**

**Attendance:**

Howard Peak	Dr. Ed Roy
Dave Barton	Steven Schauer
Orlando Cisneros	Dr. Weldon Hammond
Gerald Mullin	Luci Cockrell
Jerry Green	Susan Wright
Marianne Kestenbaum	Eiginio Rodriguez
Tony Navarrete	Ben Youngblood
Nettie Hinton	

**Excused:**

Richard Araujo	Gene Dawson Jr.
Evelyn Bonavita	Andy Johnston

**Absent:**

Rene Cortez	Jack C. Jordan
Eddie Gonzalez	Joe Fulton

**SAWS Staff:**

Calvin Finch	Kevin Morrison
Rene Gonzalez	Thomas Smith
Michelle Eisenhauer	Janelle Okorie
Jeff Haby	David Chardavoyne
Charles Ahrens	Eddie Wilcut

**Board Member:**

Roberto Anguiano
Michael Lackey

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Howard Peak at 6:08 p.m.

**Introductions**

Mr. Peak welcomed all of the members and asked them to introduce themselves.

**Discussion / Suggested Schedule and Agenda Items (Calvin Finch)**

Mr. Finch discussed the suggestions from the committee that were given to staff, which were the posting of the meetings, the summarization of the meeting minutes, and providing orientation for the new and existing members. He asked Rene' Gonzalez. to talk about the options for the orientation. Mr. Gonzalez offered the committee the options of meeting on March the 22<sup>nd</sup> or the 29<sup>th</sup> for a luncheon and presentation on the status of all of the projects. Mr. Finch then asked Mr. Peak if he had any other recommendations. Mr. Peak asked the committee if they felt the orientation might be useful to the whole group. Mr. Youngblood stated that the topic might fit in well with the drought management plan that would be offered at the April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mr. Peak asked the committee if they had any objections with having the orientation on April 11<sup>th</sup>. With no objections, Mr. Peak asked staff to provide the orientation to the whole committee at the next meeting. Mr. Finch continued the discussion with the proposed agenda items for the rest of the calendar year, and the possibility of changing the existing meeting schedule. There was no action taken on the meeting schedule.

**Amendment of Provisions of the City of San Antonio Ordinance relating to a Critical Period Surcharge (Calvin Finch)**

Mr. Finch provided a presentation that gave an overview of the Critical Period Surcharge history and analysis. He then discussed the regulations of the ordinance, and the history of when it was created and implemented. He asked the committee for recommendations on how staff should

approach the possibility of utilizing the ordinance in the future to protect the systems current resources.

### **Committee Comments**

Mr. Youngblood commented that it was a misconception that you were a water waster if you made it into the fourth tier. He explained that individuals with large families and individuals with large tracts of land also fall into the trap of the rate structure, but he felt that it should remain as a tool that SAWS can utilize. Mr. Finch mentioned the waiver process that SAWS had implemented to take care of those situations. Ms. Hinton commented on the inequality of the ordinance between residential and commercial regulations, and that the inequalities needed to be corrected before the surcharge is implemented. Mr. Finch stated the rates were generous for commercial at that time. Ms. Hinton stated that there lied the problem. Mr. Finch stated that there could be a parallel effort to incorporate the commercial customers into the rate structures. Ms. Okorie stated the Community Conservation Committee would look at creating a structure to look at that issue. Dr. Hammond asked what was the inflexibility of price vs. demand in other parts of the county. Mr. Finch stated the normal was a 20% reduction in demand by raising the average bill one dollar. Mr. Cisneros stated that the system needs the flexibility of both plans, but that the public needs to be notified in advance that the rate is going to be implemented so the customers aren't surprised by the increase in their bill. Mr. Green made the comment that it should be kept in the tool box as long as customers that will be affected are notified before SAWS implements the rate. Mr. Peak stated SAWS needs to be careful and make sure that the cuts are focused on discretionary water. Ms. Kestenbaum also commented on the disparity between residential and commercial especially when it pertained to golf courses. Mr. Rodriguez asked the if SAWS took into consideration the size of families in the households. Mr. Finch stated that a waiver process was incorporated into the ordinance. He also commented on the wording of surcharge vs. penalty, stating that customers might not understand if they see the term penalty. Mr. Finch stated that SAWS would not even consider penalizing large groups of people. Mr. Navarrete made the comment everyone should have to contribute if the rate is implemented, and also that the system should educate the public to try to curtail water use. Ms. Okorie gave the example of revenue acquired from contractors for non compliance going to educate students on the importance of our water quality. Mr. Navarrete also stated that he wanted to know where the additional revenue goes, and how long would the surcharge be implemented. Mr. Finch stated the ordinance is unclear to when it should end, and this issue needed to be looked at before it gets re-enacted. Dr. Roy commented this is the time to inform the public if SAWS plans to implement this surcharge this summer. He also stated he preferred the term surcharge over penalty because penalty implies non compliance, and surcharge implies over usage and the customers that want to use the resource can pay more for the resource. Mr. Youngblood stated if SAWS wanted to find a way to implement the surcharge to all of its customers that adding a drought surcharge to the water supply fee would have broad based application. Mr. Hammond stated SAWS use to publish the top water users and that the unwanted public scrutiny was a good deterrent. Mr. Peak ended the discussion by reviewing the comments provided by the committee and felt that the committee wanted to allow staff to utilize the ordinance to protect our resource if the ordinance could be modified to include similar restrictions for both commercial and residential customers, communication to the public, and education. Mr. Green moved to recommend to the board of trustees to retain the tool. Mr. Hammond seconds the motion. Mr. Peak asked all in favor say I. All the members said I, and there was no opposition.

### **Brackish Groundwater Desalination General Overview (Thomas Smith)**

Mr. Smith provided a presentation that explained the Desalination process. He also provided definitions for brackish & saline water and brine & concentrate, along with the history and an explanation on the different types of processes needed for different types of supply, (ocean vs. brackish groundwater). Mr. Smith talked about the membranes used and the different methods of treatment and their efficiencies. He also provided the pros and cons associated with each supply. Mr. Youngblood asked what psi is needed to push the water thru the membranes. Mr. Smith answered the higher the salinity the higher the pressure. Dr. Roy wanted to know what the composition of the membranes were. Mr. Smith said responded the newer membranes are polymer based and the older ones were acetates. He continued the presentation by illustrating the different methods used currently in the industry. Mr. Peak had a question about the continued treatment of the concentrate to further reduce the waste stream. Mr. Smith stated in some cases it is possible to drive up the efficiency up to 90 – 95% but it becomes more costly the higher the efficiency. He then stated the new polymer based membranes are sensitive to chlorine and that if the source water is treated with chlorine at the source then run thru the R.O. system that the water needed to be de-chlorinating before introducing into the system. Mr. Smith talked about the operating pressures needed for brackish sources which would be 150 to 300 psi and ocean sources 700 to 1000 psi. He then discussed the decreases in cost of the membranes over the past decade and how treatment facilities have changed out their membranes prior to the end of their life expectancy to reduce their operating costs. Mr. Smith discussed the disadvantages of R.O. systems which are related to the smaller systems and their energy costs. He then went over the presentation by discussing the pros and cons of both brackish and ocean.

### **Committee Comments**

Mr. Rodriguez asked about the concentrate and the different ways of disposal. Mr. Smith provided an explanation of the process.

### **Treatment & Distribution Presentation (Jeff Haby)**

Mr. Haby began the presentation by explaining the services that SAWS provides to its customers. The services include water, wastewater, recycle water and heating and cooling. He continued by going over the history of where SAWS gets their water. He also stated the largest service that SAWS provides is fire flow. He explained how SAWS oversizes its infrastructure by design to maintain an adequate level of fire flow for each type of service. The presentation then went into the explanation of how the service levels work and how SAWS delivers water to its customers from one pressure zone to another pressure zone. Mr. Haby also discussed the complexities of the distribution system which included wells, pumps and storage facilities. He stressed that the system was originally designed to supply water from the productive zone of the Edwards. He concluded by discussing the issues that SAWS faces with the integration of other supplies from other areas of the region into the system.

### **Committee Comments**

Mr. Schauer asked what was the typical lifespan and the replacement schedule of our distribution system. Mr. Haby said SAWS has a whole presentation on that topic. He said that SAWS tries to replace two percent each year. Mr. Rodriguez asked about the diameter of the mains and the rules of TCEQ. Mr. Haby stated SAWS has master planning our system since 1954. Ms. Cockrell asked about the range of pressure in the system. Mr. Haby stated that a residential

service may fluctuate between 5 and 10 psi thru out the day. He then discussed the issues of the COSA's Uniformed Plumbing Code which requires that a pressure reducing valve be put on the customer side of the meter. This requirement was not instituted until the late 70's when the psi requirement changed from 100 to 80. Since 1975 SAWS has required a pressure reducing valve when the pressure exceeds 100 psi. With no further questions Mr. Peak asked that the meeting move to the citizens to be heard.

**Citizens to be Heard**

Mr. Jack M. Finger discussed drought restrictions.

**Schedule Next Meeting:** April 11, 2006.

**Adjournment:** With no further business to discuss, the Citizens Advisory Panel Meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m., by Mr. Howard Peak.