

**Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency
Advisory Committee Meeting
MEETING SUMMARY**

Meeting date/time: December 4th, 2017 | 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Location: City of Santa Rosa’s Utility Field Office (UFO)
35 Stony Circle Drive, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

Contact: Brittany Jensen, Interim Administrator, Santa Rosa Plain GSA

Email: Brittany@goldridgercd.org | Phone: 707.823-5244

Sonoma County Groundwater Website: <http://sonomacountygroundwater.org>

MEETING RECAP

- Tania Carlone, Center for Collaborative Policy, opened the meeting with an overview of the meeting’s agenda. The general public was afforded an opportunity to make comments to the Advisory Committee shortly after the opening of the meeting.
- Brittany Jensen, Interim Administrator for the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) provided an overview of the Board meeting in November.
- Advisory Committee Members received an overview of the fee/rate study process and consultant role and schedule from Raftelis by Sally Van Etten, Raftelis Financial Consultants, Inc. and Bob Reed, of The Reed Group.
- Ann DuBay of the Water Agency, discussed a draft Outreach and Communication Plan and opened the floor for questions and/or comments.
- Tania Carlone led group discussion of the latest draft Advisory Committee Charter. The charter provides a governance structure for how the group collaborates in its consensus-seeking efforts to provide advice and recommendations to the GSA Board of Directors on GSP development and implementation, and on GSA policies. Committee Members offered a range of comments, questions and input on key sections of the draft charter. The group agreed the charter should be placed early in the next meeting agenda to afford the opportunity to discuss outstanding issues, work towards consensus, and then adopt the document as a governance structure for the committee.

Summary of Action Items

<i>Action Item</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Send comments on the draft charter to Rich Wilson (r.wilson@ccp.csus.edu) and Brittany Jensen.	Advisory Committee Members	December 18, 2017
Send comments on the draft Outreach and	Advisory Committee Members	December 18, 2017

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Communication Plan V3.0 on groups or organizations that may have in interest in the GSA to Ann DuBay (Ann.DuBay@scwa.ca.gov)		
Send Brittany any edits to the bios.	Advisory Committee Members	December 8, 2017

Next Meeting: January 8th, 3:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m., City of Santa Rosa’s Utility Field Office (UFO), 35 Stony Circle Drive

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Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

Tania Carlone, Center for Collaborative Policy, opened the meeting with an overview of the meeting’s agenda and provided a summary of the last meeting. She then opened the floor for public comment. There was no public comment.

Administrator Updates

Brittany Jensen, Interim Administrator for the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), provided an overview of the November Board meeting: approval for shifting funds in budget to fund CCP; Marcus Trotta gave an overview of basin conditions; the December 14 Board meeting was cancelled – the next Board meeting will be February 8. Brittany reminded the Advisory Committee members to complete their Ethics training.

Fee/Rate Study and Potential SGA Financing Mechanisms

Sally Van Etten of Raftelis and Bob Reed of The Reed Group presented the Fee/Rate Study.

- Question – has your team worked on groundwater fee before?
 - Answer – We have, in San Diego County, pricing groundwater. Not related to SGMA. We are currently in contract with Borrego Valley for similar work to this. We are at the very beginning, this is brand new, we are excited to be here and doing this pioneering work. Our past work is somewhat similar but not very applicable to CA codes. Since this is a new law there is very few who will have had experience under SGMA.
- Question – Do you plan to be working elsewhere in the state in this work?
 - Answer – We are interested in this area. We will go after similar work in Northern California.
- Question – Is there a requirement for nexus of use or benefits or impacts?
 - Answer – Regulatory fees can be apportioned out to a wider base of programs. That addresses use more than benefits. It is not spelled out what needs to be addressed in terms of impacts, but it would not be unreasonable for us to do that type of nexus

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assessment. I want to hear from you all about what you are looking for in the analysis from us.

- Question – Ag users may use a lot of water but, they also may do a lot of recharge. So, use algebra to determine what kind of rate they should be set at and modified. I want a holistic approach.
 - Answer – Right. So, you’re interested in adjustments that take all parts into consideration.
- Question – Consider that some “uses” have “benefits” embedded or associated with them. This can be messy in the equations of formulas for rate fees.
 - Answer – We are under a tight timeline to get a draft done. But, this does not mean we cannot include some benefits in the initial research. You can help us to be more creative. Two fee frameworks; the regulatory fee is limited.
- Question – Regulatory fees vs property fees. It sounds like regulatory fees are the start-up costs for the GSA. Do you see a two-stage fee where eventually the fees will result once the GSA is set up and we get to just operational costs to be paid?
 - Answer - They could be separate, together, or one before the adoption of the GSP and one instituted after. It all has to do with our strategy. We may not need to go to a second type of funding if the basin is stable. Fees depend on the needs of your basin. Right now, we are pre-plan stage and we just won’t know until we have more data.
- Question- How do we get our feedback incorporated into your initial research plans so that our social values are represented?
 - Answer – We will be present, engaged and making you aware of what we are doing. You all should raise the issues, so we know them. As for the future, if we make a financial plan budget and begin estimating the next 2-5 years, we will do that if we have some confidence. If there is not enough certainty going so far forward in time, we won’t try to estimate budgets.
- Question – What information do you have about our basin? What level of info do you get?
 - Answer – In Petaluma GSA, we heard that the basin could be very stable, and our role could be focused on simply sustaining that instead of actively managing it. In Sonoma Valley GSA, there appeared to be a history of active management, though I don’t know the condition it is in. The basins are all different. One size does not fit all for these basins.
- Question – Sally can you describe your data needs?
 - Answer – Our data needs have grown as we get to know each basin more. We have put our requests to the county. Hopefully that will not be too held up. Number, size, zoning, number of wells, depth of wells, crop coverage, and general history and conditions on the groundwater basin. The water systems are another source of data and field of data. Marcus will provide a lot of that data to them soon.
- Question – Will the USGS study be a part of the basin study that’s going out?
 - Answer from Marcus – Yes.

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- Question – Our independent water system has 22 years of data if you’d like it. We have a tiered structure for charging on water, and all the information about what we’ve charged each parcel.
 - Answer – Yes, we want it. Please copy Brittany when you send me things.
- Question – It would be good to keep apprised of what funding mechanisms the state is using to charge basins that did not create local GSAs. It could be a bench mark to us, just good information.
 - Answer – No comment yet.
- Question – Who do we see as being charged?
 - Answer- Agencies can be subject to the fees, certainly. Well owners, too. But potentially it could be all parcels within the basin.
- Question from Sally – Does anyone want to share observations about pros and cons?
 - Answer – An idea is to define de-minimus users with an intention to be ethical approach. Sally – We ask this internally, too, and we will ask the attorneys when they get here. We don’t have a set idea about how it must be done. But attorneys may.
- Comment – This will be unpopular. Look closely at the cost of the GSP.
- Comment – no matter the fee structure, it will be unpopular. Educate as much as possible so people can at least understand and feel it is worthwhile.
- Comment – This basin has been active a long time, and it has already been active in outreach. There has yet to be a meeting in which most of the people come in and say they didn’t know about this. We need to do better in outreach. We need to allay their fears that some awful thing is happening that isn’t necessary. We need to say “we are preventing the sky from falling. There will be costs associated.” We can explain this better if we bring nexus into the conversation. People will in general be more aware of groundwater as a result – a big win for us – and a win for the groundwater.
- Question – We’ve heard from well owners in Town of Windsor. The fee is a concern. Can they buy down their fees if they do responsible practices to conserve water? That would be great.
- Comment – Fees must be online, so go ahead and look to see the rates for the question that was asked of me earlier.

Community Outreach and Communication

Ann Dubay, Community and Government Affairs manager at the Sonoma County Water Agency, introduced and discussed the draft Outreach and Communication Plan then opened the session up for a group discussion.

- Question – Is Hispanic outreach included?
 - Answer – it’s not articulated but can be.
- Comment – You need specific targeted goals to outreach to disadvantaged communities. You are required by law to do so. If you are not out, sitting in someone’s living room, you will not get the engagement you are looking for. Especially after the fire, this is going to be a hard conversation. We need language that shows we are going to be targeting these communities.

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- Comment – You need to communicate what the public is going to get out of this. What are the benefits?
- Comment – You need to reach out to the ag community. I need to run a business with water. We will need to start pulling water from the ground if recycled water is not continually available.
 - Answer – Good points. The Advisory Committee is charged with advising staff and Board on outreach. We will go more deeply into those kinds of roles. But if you see more roles that the Advisory Committee should take on, please let me know.
- Comment – I’m pleased you use survey monkey. Should we keep it as a tool in our tool box? It works great.
 - Answer – Yes, we will explicitly list it. Then, public workshops are a less formal way to engage. We have a plan to do our first public workshop in the spring to discuss what rate and fee will look like. We will need to work with Raftelis to design that. And we’d like your comments on that.
- Comment Ann – A SGMA requirements is to reach out to environmental users of groundwater (fish, plants, etc.). So, we need to look to the organizations that speak for those organisms. Also, disadvantaged communities are listed (it is just a start). Please send suggestions for other organizations that will get the word out. Appendix B is a list of organization’s that have a lot of influence and groundwater interest. Please send me additional names and organizations, and the contact people if you have them, due to me by Monday Dec. 18 by 5pm. Attachment A is an example of activities with a timeline.

Advisory Committee Charter Discussion and Potential Adoption

Facilitator Tania Carlone mentioned that Brittany had incorporated changes the Advisory Committee already provided. Special attention was drawn to the decision-making section “Options for how to determine a quorum”. It was left up to the group to determine what kind of quorum they would like to have – simple majority or super majority.

- Question – Quorum is only of members and members that are present at that meeting?
 - Answer – It is ALL members, present and absent. Not including public or other attendees at the meeting.
- Question – So, what about proxy people? And, there may be times when a simple majority is just fine, but other issues, like funding, may need a super majority to show a solidarity to the commitment to the decision we are making. This could add some extra weight to our recommendation when we make it to the Board.
 - Comment Tania – Difference between decision making and a quorum: Decisions must have $\frac{3}{4}$ present. But this is not decision making. This is about quorum. Quorum shows the full range of opinions.
 - Comment – The Advisory Committee needs to be perceived as a serious committee. We should not settle with a simple majority vote. Also, if we decide that proxy people count, then it would set the bar even higher. On decision-making, our value is showing minority opinions to decision makers. We don’t need to limit ourselves by saying the vote is this or that, if all opinions are heard. We should quantify the votes, such as 14:4.

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- Comment/Question Tania – so I hear you saying that we should keep it simple at 10 and report out all opinions. We don't want it to be about the quorum. Is that right?
 - Answer – More or less. I predict we will probably not have such great attendance to these meetings in the future. Alternates, how do we track that? What if we don't have 14 members present at a future meeting?
- Comment – Clarification, this is irrespective of the issue of having alternates included?
- Question Tania – Do we need Board approval to use alternates?
 - Answer Brittany – My understanding is that the Board has the option to approve alternates for the Advisory Committee. You all could give me something to bring to the board next meeting if you'd like.
- Comment – I'd also like to bring proxies to that discussion. Proxies are votes that are given to another member for a member who can't make it to the meeting themselves. Used for absent members.
- Comment Tania – Proxies would only be used for formal recommendation of decisions not for quorum.
- Question – Should we be breaking these up into two different groups? If we do, we could be left without a quorum easily. I prefer not segregating. But have enough rep that we have a good majority. I'm willing to do 2/3 or supermajority – which would be 14 – to represent those interests. This is a fourth option.
 - Answer – We could have a provision in the Charter that makes a bar: Just to do business (hold the meeting) we need so many people present. To give formal recommendation, we need supermajority numbers present. It could be like that.
- Comment/Question Tania – Ok great, that's decided. Now, do you think the other part -- Is a simple majority enough to take a suggestion to the Board—needs to be revisited?
 - Answer— Yes.
- Tania – Ok, we have something then. Here are our options:
 - ❖ Simple Majority,
 - ❖ Majority respective seats/interest groups (concern about separation)
 - ❖ Option 2 plus 1 in each group
 - ❖ Super Majority
- Question – Can we get the charter done at the beginning of the next meeting?
 - Answer All – Yes.
- Comment Tania – Ok, homework: please take a fine-toothed comb to the charter and bring your comments to the next meeting. Next meeting is Jan 8, same place, same time. Rich will facilitate.

The meeting was closed at 5:40 pm.

Meeting Attendees¹

¹ In addition to Advisory Committee Members and staff, members of the public attended the meeting.

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Advisory Committee Members

Agriculture, David Long
Agriculture, Bob Anderson
Business, Joe Gaffney
Environmental, Rue Furch
Environmental, Sebastian Bertsch
Rural Residential, Doug Beretta
City of Cotati, Craig Scott
City of Rohnert Park, Mary Grace Pawson
City of Santa Rosa, Jennifer Burke
City of Sebastopol, Henry Mikus
County of Sonoma, Mark Grismer
Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Maureen Geary
Gold Ridge RCD, Matt O'Connor
Independent Water Systems, Chris Bates
Sonoma County Water Agency, Carolyn Dixon
Sonoma RCD, Wayne Haydon
Town of Windsor, Toni Bertolero

Staff

Brittany Jensen, Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District
Adriana Stagnaro, Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District
Marcus Trotta, Sonoma County Water Agency
Ann Dubay, Sonoma County Water Agency
Tania Carlone, Center for Collaborative Policy (facilitator)