

Winchester/Homeland Municipal Advisory Council

MEETING MINUTES

Date: August 9, 2018

Place: Winchester Community Center, 32655 Haddock Street, Winchester

Attendees:

Winchester MAC:

Andy Domenigoni, Chairman; Dirk Meredith Vice-Chairman; James Horecka, Secretary; Jeff Logan; Jimmy Sheldrake

Ex Officio:

Opal Hellweg, Legislative Assistant for Third District Supervisor
Members of the Public

Call to Order: Call to Order by Andy Domenigoni at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve agenda: Motion by Horecka; second by Sheldrake. Approved unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve May meeting minutes: Motion by Logan; second by Sheldrake. Approved unan.

Guest Speaker: Ruben Arroyo, Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner.

Mr. Arroyo gave a brief bio. He noted the Agricultural Commission has a new website. Advised us of various figures: ~1.3 billion agricultural industry; down ~57M. We export 20 different commodities to 50 countries. We produce the most dates in the nation, and the most bell peppers(!). Avg figures; all fluctuates. They are mandated by the State to report. Economic output: ~3.61B. Riverside was one of the first counties to get a jump on citrus long ago. The AgCom also deals with pesticides, weights and measures (scales, gas pumps, even truck scales & jewelry scales). They assure equity in the marketplace. Now getting into cannabis. Arroyo has a 4-yr degree in agriculture. He has been in public service since 1989. He manages a staff of 52. The AgCom issues permits for export, to 50 countries. RivCoAWM.org. Arroyo then fielded questions:

- Q: Does AgCom regulate livestock? A: No; some feeds, though.
- Q: Are the new tariffs having an effect? A: Some; almonds, e.g. Not much in Riverside County.
- Q (A.D.): Is the AgCom involved in reclaimed water? A: Depends on where it's at. Some environmental groups take exception to its use.
- Q (A.D.): Central Valley; no water? Better? A: It's been a progression, and he doesn't see it getting any better. The issues have to do with non-native fish. More of a man-made drought. Mostly political. Kevin Pearson of EMWD chimed in: See the California Water Fix. This would divert water from farther north, which would avoid the matter of fish caught in the pumps. California did not have any groundwater laws until 2014. The water districts are seeking more sustainable paths. Agriculture in California is a multi-trillion dollar industry. The new Twin Tunnel project is under consideration. If approved, there will be lawsuits. Proposed are 30 miles of tunnels, up to 200 feet below grade. Perhaps by 2022, plus 8-10 years of constructions. MWD will fun \$11B of the \$17B project.
- Q: What is done if a person gets sick on lettuce? A: Call Health Dept.; they respond & investigate.
- Q: Does the AgCom certify Organic Farms? A: Yes. State permit, under a Federal program.
- Q: What to do about ground squirrels? A: See link on AgCom website: How to manage pests.
- Q: Who inspects food coming into USA? A: Customs and border inspection, including certain percentages of certain crops. They do find a lot of issues, like illegal products, pesticides, vermin, residues, disease, etc.

- Q: Farmers Markets? A: His office regulates Certified Farmers Markets. The concept is to allow smaller growers to be under less regulation. Site inspections. The intent is to keep the market whole of people who are small, growing & selling.
 - Q: How close does the AgCom work with Immigration? A: Not very. Cooperates w/ them & OSHA.
- All thanked Mr. Arroyo, and enjoyed the breadth & depth of knowledge of agriculture in our County.

Old Business:

A. General County update; Opal Hellweg, 3rd District Legislative Assistant:

- Opal not present. Sarah Rodriguez, Board Assistant was present, with news: The next Board of Supervisor's meeting will be August 28th. Noted that the Holy Fire is raging, 5% contained, many evacuations. Asked if anyone has used the new Mobile App for reporting illegal dumping & graffiti: Yes, three, who enjoyed successful outcomes. All applauded the new App.

B. Sheriff Department update. No report.

C. EMWD Updates; Kevin Pearson:

- Discussed the proposed water tax that the current State administration is pushing: The Tax proposal was pulled from the State budget. It now has resurfaced. The proposed law may end up wrapped up in another proposal, or other mechanism. Only a simple majority, not a super-majority, is required to pass. He suggested that citizens contact their State representatives with their personal opinion on the matter.
- EMWD is fighting SB-623, the Water Tax, which would charge \$1/month per household; more for commercial. The money would go to a dedicated fund, to be allocated to the failing districts.
- Water Bottle Fill Stations: EMWD has now provided and installed 90 water bottle fill stations. People use their own water bottles, rather than single-use plastic water bottles. These units have saved over one million water bottles already.
- Q (M.P.): Desalination plants? A: Yes, EMWD runs many. Ocean desalination is VERY expensive. 3X the cost. Also incredibly energy-intensive. In San Diego, desalinated water runs \$2500 per acre foot, compared to \$1200 for our water.
- Q: How much is the Water Tax expected to collect? A: About \$140 million.
- C (C.D.): We're already paying so many fees! Stand-by fees, back-up chares, etc.!
- Q: Who supports the Water Tax? A: The biggest supporter is agriculture, primarily dairy farmers. There is language in the law that amounts to a sweet deal for dairy farmers.
- Q: How are new tracts in town being fed water & sewer? A: Kevin will bring maps in future.
- Q: Will there be a sewer line down Winchester Rd? A: Depends on demand. Olive has 10-12".
- Q: Is there a line under Domenigoni Parkway? A: See the EMWD website.
- Phil Paule announced this year's Water Leaders' Academy, gave Andy Domenigoni a brochure, & invited one of us Board Members to attend. Jimmy Sheldrake attended last year, and was impressed with the engineers & leaders he met, as well at the facilities, technology, programs.

D. Code Enforcement: Marr Christian reported.

- Regarding illegal dispensaries: Permanent injunction against "Homeland's Choice." The head shop near the Mexican restaurant appears to be just that. One at Simpson: A report is being written. The one at Patton is now with County Counsel. Marr described the process, in general, of enforcing current laws in unincorporated Riverside County.
- Storage yard on Patterson Avenue: There has been one meeting with the Planning Commission. They are striving to get some sort of compliance on that site. Q: Is what they are doing on that site legal? A: No, none of what they are doing on that site is legal.
- Marr reminded us to use the new Mobile App to report illegal dumping and graffiti.
- The motor homes behind the mushroom house off SH 74 have been cleared out, finally.
- Issues with a homeless fellow, who refuses services; vanishes. If seen, call Marr, to assist.
- Q: What about the huge bust recently? A: That was in the City of Perris, not our area. Marr noted that our local production of cannabis is going out of the area, to LA and out-of-state.

- E. Assemblywoman Melissa Melendez' Office Field Representative: Not present; no report.
- F. Senator Stone District Director, Glenn Miller: Not present; no report.
- G. Highway 79: No news.
- H. Land Use update; Cindy Domenigoni:
 - The WTA LUC (Land Use Committee) had a meeting with the County on July 19th, regarding the topic of transportation. Included was RCTC, Flood, Metrolink, etc. The biggest issue is money to fund the creation of necessary transportation infrastructure.
 - On July 31, the LUC met at the County with Flood Control. Discussing areas where we need to be asking for funding of important flood control infrastructure.
 - On August 7th, the LUC met with the County regarding Parks & Recreation and Trails.
 - August 21, upcoming meeting with LUC & County, covering infrastructure for water & sewer.
 - There are three LUC meetings being planned locally: Aug. 30, Sep. 4, Sep. 11, all regarding upcoming projects.
 - The LUC & County is preparing to put on our next Community Workshop, to be in Sept. or Oct. This would be the final meeting before the County goes out for the EIR.
 - C: Gregg noted that whether we ever get a train will depend on demographics.
 - They viewed a large-scale map of the realignment of Hwy 79, with high levels of detail.
 - Flood Control indicated that there are two specific lines that would be very helpful right now.
 - Parks & Rec: One group at the table was MWD. Regarding recreation development at Diamond Valley Lake, they stated that they "cannot find anyone interested." Also stated, per Gregg, "We are water purveyors, not developers." Greg suggested a theme park on west end.
 - Gregg noted that the Garbani Homestead, on the National Registry, is decaying. The Rock House Post Office is also suffering.
 - The intersection of Newport Road & Hwy 79 has been redesigned, different from before.
 - Q: How is the ridership on the S. Perris Line of Metrolink? A: Very low.
- I. City of Hemet update; Jeff Logan: City Council. A citizen has gathered enough signatures to push forward a vote on marijuana.
- J. City of Menifee update: Andy Domenigoni & Jeff Logan: Andy had a conversation with the City Managers, who welcomes a visit. The new mayor had his first official meeting last week. The City of Menifee will be celebrating its tenth anniversary on October 1, 2018.
- K. Other Old Business: None.

Open Forum:

- Many thanks to the Winchester Town Association for printing & mailing the mailers.
- Thanks to Jeff Logan for maintaining our website.
- See Greg Cowdery to support military care packages.

Next WMAC Meeting:

- No meeting in July.
- The Next WHMAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Sept 13, 2018, 6:30 PM, at the Community Center.

Adjournment: The WHMAC adjourned at 7:52 PM.