



CITIZENS' WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
(CWAC) Conservation & Education Subcommittee

Monday, September 13, 2022, 2:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams

Legal Action Report and Meeting Minutes

1) **Call to Order / Opening Statement:**

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m.

2) **Roll Call:**

Those present and absent were:

**Present:**

Lisa Shipek (Chair)	Representative, Ward 3
Ed Hendel	Representative, Mayor
Raul Ramirez	Representative, Ward 1
Raye Winch	Representative, City Manager

**Absent:**

Roxanna Valenzuela	Representative, Ward 2
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3) **Announcements** – None

4) **Review and approval of August 8, 2022, Legal Action Report and Meeting Minutes** - Member Ramirez moved to approve the Legal Action Report & Minutes. Member Hendel duly seconded the motion. The motion passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0.

5) **Call to the audience** – No audience comment.

6) **Tier 2 Drought Response Plan** – Tucson Water Conservation Program Manager Candice Rupprecht led a review and discussion of the City of Tucson's Drought Response Plan, which the subcommittee previously discussed in May 2022. The drought plan was updated and adopted by Mayor and Council in Fall 2020. The City has been in Tier 1 drought in 2021 and is working to provide targeted information to customers who exceed water use guidelines. Guidelines have been developed for single-family and multi-family residential customers;



staff is developing a water budget app for landscape guidelines. Water use guidelines representing the monthly average for the residential customer class appear on customers' monthly utility bill. This is the primary tool being used to communicate with residential customers in Tier 1. The utility is currently focused on identifying customers who are exceeding water use guidelines, and next year will roll out tools for working with those customers. Free audits for residential and commercial customers will be provided through the Zanjeros program. Conservation staff are working on additional tools for customers which will include a smart home water guide and a home waterworks calculator.

Discussion ensued between members and staff. No action was taken on this item.

- 7) **Community Garden Rate** – Ms. Rupprecht led the review and discussion of this item. In 2018, the City launched a pilot program to subsidize water rates for Community Gardens. Tucson Water began reviewing data in late 2021. There are currently 14 gardens on the CG rate. Most had a dedicated meter prior to joining the program and two were on payment plans after installing a discounted meter through the program. Sites used about 27 AF total in 2021. Since 2017, collective water use has increased 154%, some of which is due to expansion and increased services due to reduced water rate. CG sites saved over \$13,000 in 2021, with cumulative savings of almost \$34,000. Benefits to customers included the ability to provide additional financial assistance for members, purchase water saving devices, expand farm plots, and the ability to stay open during the pandemic. Challenges remain, including fiscal stability, leak detection, ability to provide free/reduced plots, and paying for water despite subsidies. General observations included: meter installation and fees are still cost-prohibitive; the CG rate helps to stabilize water bills; CGs allow neighbors and communities to share knowledge and garden produce.

The CG rate is now being considered as part of Tucson Water's formal rate-setting process.

Discussion ensued, including a conversation about users of reclaimed, the commercial rate, community garden rate, and cost equity vs. use and type of water. Chair Shipek requested that staff provide a breakdown of reclaimed customer types for future C&E review (i.e., schools, parks, HOAs, golf courses, etc.).

No action was taken on this item.

- 8) **Conservation Technical Memorandum** – Ms. Rupprecht led a review of a draft Conservation Technical Memo, which is part of Tucson Water's One Water 2100 master-planning process

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that focuses on the utility's conservation efforts over the next decade. The memo examines demand trends as a whole and for each customer sector, and projects water savings likely to be achieved over the next decade to inform the strategic planning process.

The memo makes six recommendations:

- Adjust rebate levels and increase efficiency of fixtures and appliances for which rebates are offered to increase cost-effectiveness
- Increase savings opportunities for commercial customers
- Expand focus on outdoor water use, with emphasis on resilient, desert-adapted landscapes
- Improve Tucson Water's ability to understand customer water use and ability to target conservation programs with customer-specific water budgets
- Increase customer-side leak detection to reduce water waste and loss
- Support efforts to improve fixture efficiency in plumbing and building codes and consider additional policies to ensure community water savings

The memo provides analysis and savings estimates for conservation program participation over the next decade, with a mid-level projection of 11,600 acre-feet savings. Ms. Rupprecht provided additional depth and detail about the recommendations and fielded questions from subcommittee members.

No action was taken on this item.

- 9) **Conservation discussion follow-up** – Chair Shipek led a review and discussion of topics that were raised during the August CWAC meeting, in particular proposals to implement an ornamental turf ban and to expand the toilet rebate program. Members and staff explored ideas for expanding conservation program scope and funding, with ideas including the utilization of funds from differential rate revenues and proceeds from CAP water left in Lake Mead for 2022.

Chair Shipek suggested collaboration between the subcommittee and staff to develop conservation program ideas for proposal to the full CWAC.

No action was taken.

- 10) **Future Meetings / Agenda Items** – Chair Shipek reviewed items proposed for the October subcommittee agenda

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- Differential rates discussion, and use of fees collected for conservation initiatives
- Followup on water policy items directed by Mayor and Council
- Review and give feedback on conservation program budget.

11) **Call to Audience** – Mead Mier, Pima Association of Governments, presented questions for the subcommittee. She indicated that she would seek responses from staff outside of the meeting.

12) **Adjournment** – Meeting ended at 3:57 p.m.