



**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
RIDGECREST CITY SUCCESSOR AGENCY,
FINANCING AUTHORITY, AND HOUSING AUTHORITY**

**City Council Chambers
100 West California Avenue
Ridgecrest, California 93555**

**March 14, 2015
10:30 a.m.**

This meeting was recorded and will be on file in the Office of the City Clerk for a certain period of time from date of approval by City Council/Redevelopment Agency. Meetings are recorded solely for the purpose of preparation of minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Council Present: Mayor Peggy Breeden; Mayor Pro Tempore James Sanders; Vice Mayor Lori Acton; Council Member Mike Mower

Council Absent: Council Member Eddie B. Thomas

Staff Present: City Manager Dennis Speer; City Clerk Rachel J. Ford; and other staff

SPECIAL SESSION – 10:36 a.m.

- Pledge Of Allegiance

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None presented

DISCUSSION AND OTHER ACTION ITEMS

1. Discussion Of And Receive Comments On The Indian Wells Valley Land Use Management Plan

Tamara Heiss

- County resident
- Thanked Council for receiving public comment
- Presented property tax bills and noted that all properties owned are within the proposed zone.
- Read a prepared statement.

Tamara Heiss *(continued)*

- Commented on population projections and proposed inability for smaller parcels to conduct business on the property. (i.e. equestrian boarding, bee keeping, etc.)
- Commented on conditional use permit costs and development plan requirements.
- Commented on large agricultural farms and Searles Valley Minerals using larger quantities of groundwater and the inequality of small parcels being penalized because of larger business usage.
- Commented on the EIR speculation of future businesses and residents.
- Stated IWW board of realtors and taxpaying stakeholders reject the plan and are willing to work to develop a more appropriate plan.
- Thanked Council for their time and giving consideration of how this affects small parcel owners.
- Residents are concerned with water use, however it appears to stakeholders that Kern County has thrown a net over the entire valley and is not equal to the small parcel holders.
 - Mike Mower – asked for parcel sizes.
- 2.5 acres developed and connected another 2.5 acre parcel. 4 other parcels ranging from 2.5 acres to 9.6 acres. Not interested in developing a large business that will suck out a lot of water.
- Currently no way to regulate the large scale agriculture business yet penalizing the small parcels.
- Supporter of local 4-H club for youth. Healthy and productive and teaches children that farming is hard work and must be responsible. Teaches children that hard work is worth something.
- Taking away these types of small business hurts not only the property owner but the entire community.
- Already have one equestrian boarding facility closing which has been in operation for decades. This is due to the release of the proposed plan.
 - Peggy Breeden – asked if a request of 20 acres or under stayed the same, would this alleviate some of the concerns.
- That would alleviate almost 100% of the concerns. Understand something needs to give and water is a finite resource, but the burden needs to be shared by all and not placed unfairly or unequally on the small homeowner.

Carol Wilson

- Want to make it clear that speaking on behalf of citizens in the Inyokern area who attended the March 4 meeting.
- Land use management plan and EIR has contradictory statements.
- Massive intrusion on the part of Kern County on the lives of citizens.
- Coalition of residents made observations of the plan.
- All properties zones A or A1 that have development remain the current zone designation.
- All properties zoned A or A1 with no development and less than 20 acres remain the same zone
- All government properties changed to reflect the ownership.

Carol Wilson *(continued)*

- Commented on inflated figures of the EIR. Only one parcel sold last year.
- Questioned how this can be deemed for the public good.
- Will this happen on the west side of the mountains also.
- Commented that with accurate figures, missions could be accomplished and all water savings could be accomplished without significant environmental effects.

Robert Eierman

- Water history, today everyone feels we are in a crisis. No one has quelled these misbeliefs and this action of the County is fostering those beliefs.
- Cannot conserve our way out of this, will have to import water.
- In 1993 discussion of Ridgecrest growing to 100k people. And statements of having plenty of water
- 1988 Dr. Austin study indicated we have 3 aquifers and 2million acre feet of water in the largest basin.
- 2004 navy EIR states no water problem in this valley
- 2005 IVV water district information for BRAC states this valley can easily support 90K people.
- 2012 Navy EIR state enough water under current usage including aggressive agriculture for 60-70 years.
- Navy suddenly saying there is a problem, which I do not believe.
- Were they not telling the truth all those years or are they not telling the truth now.
- In 1985 active agriculture reached its peak without a drop to the water basin.
- Stated projections for this year.
- Current time Agriculture is using 2.5 times the water than Ridgecrest citizens.
- 985 Agriculture was using slightly less than 3 times and now is reduced but we are blaming them for a crisis.
- Do have to do something for the future but this EIR and Land Use Management plan is the wrong action to take.
- Placing the highest burden on small land owners who have already reduced their usage.
- Tell citizens of Ridgecrest to stop using their water. Without water you die. Picking on the wrong segment of society, don't pick on those who grow our food.
- Commented on pistachio production and alfalfa production.
- This EIR and Land Use Management Plan does nothing to stop the current large Agriculture but does affect the small agriculture. Only thing this does is stops future large scale agriculture and hurts the small parcel owners.
- Commented on Ron Porter statements to Lorelei Oviatte referencing the Gentleman Farmer.
- This plan is punitive to many citizens and exempts Ridgecrest citizens.
- NAWA is a 20% user of water in this valley and have their own well.
- Since we have a good number of years of drinkable water, this is premature. Should be leading and not following. Don't punish a part of the citizens.

MINUTES – RIDGECREST CITY COUNCIL/REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY - SPECIAL

March 14, 2015

Page 4 of 10

Robert Eierman *(continued)*

- Commented on constitutional right to the water they are using is agriculture and small farmer.
- Asked to approve something that violates constitutional rights. Council swore an oath to uphold the constitution. When you see government doing something that violates the constitution you have an obligation and responsibility to protect the citizens.
 - Lori Acton
 - agree, that is why we are having this meeting.
 - All wells are drawn from the same aquifer so we will all run out at the same time.
- Many things can be done to protect the drinkable water. Some people now saying there is a crisis are the same people who used to say there isn't a problem.
- This aquifer doesn't seem to charge very well. Will have to import water in the long term. But should not penalize the agriculture.
- This valley has been over drafting since the 1950's, now we are doing less.
- Commented on citizen who had to redo their well. Hit water at 160 feet and set the well at 195 feet. Works for the water district and sounds the well regularly, only 1/10th of a foot reduction in 4 years.
- Commented on base test wells which are not active, sealed and can be tested but if the navy is concerned then where is the information.
- Cannot do this in a panic, need to step back and redo with accurate information.
 - Lori Acton
 - Do agree we need to do something, but this is not the right approach.

Jim Fallgetter

- Thanked Council for having this meeting, being asked to take an active position.
- Resident of Ridgecrest, homeowner, commercial property owner, multi-family property owner, county parcel owner, and represent other families.
- In agreement with the EIR, highly necessary. Stand to lose value but that is how it is.
- Entire country is in a water crisis. Need to take action now or else will have to turn to the government.
- Surprised at the constitutionalist being against this when we will eventually have to turn to the government for relief.
- Every homeowner has property rights.
- In favor of rezoning and in favor of the suggestion of small property owners being given respect.
- Talking only about large agriculture, totally against the large agriculture sucking more than its share of water out of the valley. Our county supervisors are not taking all the steps they should at this point.
- Large scale agriculture gets to keep pumping with no change. Supervisors are kicking it to the next agency who will study for several years.

Jim Fallgetter *(continued)*

- 29k people in the valley, 800 involved in large agriculture. Who are the citizens in the valley
- Is anyone in this room not affected by the navy base?
- Every business in Ridgecrest is here because of the navy base.
- Surprised at the realtors because most of their business is selling homes.
- Future of people raising families in this valley is affected by the base; the base is the largest payroll and employer in this valley.
- Captain of the base is very concerned. To act as though the captain is lying is foolhardy. If he and his staff are concerned then we need to be concerned.
- Base is doing everything they can to save water. IWV water is offering incentives to save water. Do not want to support more water going out, everyone will be asked to save water. IWV water is considering a rate hike to incentivize people to not use as much.
- Commented on the large Agriculture putting in a new well that can pump 4000 gallons per minute out of the aquifer and set 1500 feet down. Located on Inyokern road. Asked if this is true.
 - Citizen - 750 ft. well that pumps 4500 gallons per minute located on brown road.
- Commented about the future of Ridgecrest and asked the Council to be in partnership with the base. National defense is the crop in Indian wells valley.
- Asked Council to be realistic and take a position.

Elaine Meade

- Appreciate the comments
- Asked if Council and staff have read the EIR.
- Commented on meeting earlier at the water district who were taking action to support the EIR.
- When asked if the board if they had read the EIR and none of them had read it, but they agreed to have the manager send a letter of support for the EIR.
- Want to make sure this Council isn't doing the same thing.
- Feel the EIR is premature.
- Proposal for this valley is disastrous.
- Groundwater sustainability act mandates we solve the problem. This needs to happen first and land use comes in after, not before the sustainability plan.
- Will be a major impact to valley including the city.
- Do not see where we have the industrial movement projected in the EIR.
- Commented on costs for bringing industrial into the valley.
- This is not the time to do this plan.

Catherine Brown

- Agree with plan being punitive for small property owner, owns 2.54 acres in Inyokern.
- Personal story presented regarding tax bill. Documents support 2.54 acres owned. Commented on APN number and acreage reduced to 2.16 in the EIR.
- Commented on changes, current property is A1 and county wants to change to estate 1. Told could split the lot. Hundreds of acres on the EIR is misrepresented. Was told it would stay the same. Taken away the owners right to have a horse or goat.
- Land is now devalued. Have the right to request lower property taxes.
- Why pick on the little person and take away their right to have a horse. No guarantees things will be changed. Called them and sent a certified letter to try and ensure the corrections would be made.
- Commented on future projections being higher than reasonable.
- Commented on being shorted by county on allowed water use.
- No guarantee of what the county is going to do.
- If this data is used in the future, will the inaccurate acreage be used? Then people will be fined if they use more than allowed.
- Do not feel is legal to devalue property.
- Large agriculture property isn't devalued. They are doing everything legal but they are sucking all my water out.
- Commented on Volume 3 of EIR, section 4.10.46 land use and planning. California code 65860 reviewed pertaining to the general plan and zoning changes.
- Commented on discussion with Lorelei Oviatte and recommendations that have no guarantee.
- Volume 3 section 4.16-3 reviewed.
- Commented on pistachios as being done legally and being a billion dollar cash crop for Kern County.
- Read a portion of Volume 3 section 4.16-3
- Commented on planting indigenous and xeriscape plants.

Lynn Loscar

- Property owner both in Ridgecrest and in Inyokern.
- Children have learned from having animals on a small farm.
- Commented on the base mission to protect liberty and citizen's liberties currently being taken away.
- EIR is a backdoor measure, not the right way of doing things.
- Purchased the land for agriculture and now being told can use it that way.
- Appalled at the lack of participation of people in Ridgecrest.
- Commented on City not allowing chickens on property or having purple pipe.
- If we lose our water rights then will be controlled by those who have the control of the water.

MINUTES – RIDGECREST CITY COUNCIL/REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY - SPECIAL

March 14, 2015

Page 7 of 10

Lynn Loscar *(continued)*

- Own 5, 2.5 acre parcels.
- Having to ask neighbors for conditional use over something that is already zoned.
- This is communism and ridiculous.

Mrs. Farris

- Thanked Council for hosting this meeting
- See this as one of the worst things to ever affect this valley.
- Commented on TODD report which states we are in critical overdraft which is not a fact.
- Commented on published articles on water. There are more studies that speak to the fact that we are a closed basin.
- Navy's EIR is reputing the fact that we are a closed basin and there is enough water that if properly managed have enough to sustain us for 160 years.
- Offered links to studies for open basins and closed basins.
- Need to stay with the facts.
- First study known is from 1911 and other studies have been done over 50 years.
- Is time we find out the true answer. Need to protect the mission of the base and our agriculture.
- Agriculture land will be the most expensive land anywhere; this is why millionaires are buying as much agriculture land as possible.
- Need to base what we are doing on facts and not assumptions.
- Commented on people not wanting to buy our land once the water is gone.
- Can provide data and stated the TODD report as being flawed.
- COSO is mining millions of gallons of water daily.
- Offered history on a local mine.
- Don't run around deciding we are running out; let's find out for sure how much water we really have.
- Commented on BRAC. Dealing with the future of a treasure valley. Early homesteaders grew agriculture. Early 1940's sustained large alfalfa and dairies. Some of these farms were moved because of the base. They paid the price already; don't need to ask them to continue paying the price.
- Go back to the facts.

Dave Matthews

- Thanked everyone who looked into the details.
- Have conserved everything my whole life.
- Spoke with water board, 100% of nothing is nothing.
- Can conserve but if it keeps going down then will have nothing in the end.
- Need to find ways to get more water into the valley.
- If we are in an overdraft situation, and not sure we are, then urge Council to NOT back this plan and begin writing letters to the County, State, and find ways to get more water.

Dave Matthews *(continued)*

- There are places that have excess water which runs to the ocean and could be re-pumped to reservoirs before getting to the ocean.

Mike Neel

- Draft EIR is overreaching and is oppressive to property rights to neighbors.
- Am conservative on people's rights and their rights are being taken away.
- This won't do anything to conserve the water.
- Large agriculture is not affected because county does not want the litigation.
- Believe this Council should respect right to community and tell county this is wrong.
- This is overreaching and should only change the BLM zoning for open space.
- Over 30,000 acres will be affected by this.

Tamara Heiss

- Thanked Council and implored Council to represent the people of the valley.
- Spoke on personal life before coming to the Indian Wells Valley
- Asked Council to consider the needs of the people who live here now.

Alexander Kobaiskie

- Economist, with emphasis on political economy
- 2000 pages of new regulations.
- Personal issue with water went back to 1915 studies, over 3000 pages of research and then read the TODD report.
- Excluding Dr. Austin is a mockery
- This has nothing to do with water.
- This has a lot to do with grabbing land, controlling food, controlling economy and controlling people.
- If they don't go back to 1915 to study reports on water then they do not need to be in this business.
- Commented on process.
- Loves this community, you have a jewel of town. Don't allow bureaucrats to impose their will on you.
- Read the reports from 1915 and after, there is no shortage of water.
- Shortage of common sense.

Chip Holloway

- In 2004 sat with BRAC commission, Mr. Stoner swore that we had enough water for 90,000 residents. That document exists upstairs. Don't know what changed but that is a fact.
- We don't have the facts and Council is being asked to make a decision with a tremendous set of educated opinions. Numbers lie and liars use numbers.
- Frustrated with the open basin and closed basin theory. If we truly have a closed basin then let's make some money on it.

Chip Holloway *(continued)*

- Proposal of closed basin purchases on Wall Street from our closed basin.
- Presented numbers of investment being about \$20 per month per person.
- Problem is what if this is not a closed basin.
- Easy to put the burden on a small segment of population when you have nothing at risk.
- Option to Council is support, oppose, or no position.
- The only position this Council can take is to oppose and amend. Then you can represent these people.
- Plan must balance constitutional right of property owners.

Mike Mower left the meeting due to prior obligation at 12:30 p.m.

Marilyn Neel

- City resident and will be affected by this plan.
- Mr Fallgetter stated putting property rights aside and Mr. Eierman stated we don't do things this way in America
- Commented on property rights as the foundation of this Nation.
- Encouraged Council to remember that if you deny the foundation of the constitution then it is shaky.
- All want lives built on something solid.
- Commented on statement of 'In God We Trust'
- This is about control and putting trust in the base or the state, this is not the foundation our nation was built on.
- The issue is about the individual and their property rights. Don't care if it is a corporation or a person.

Peggy Breeden

- Would like to write a letter and present to other Council members, legal and public then send to county.
- Commented on need to do something 30 years ago and how government needs to work together.
- Believe we have a responsibility to talk to our government and work together.
- Groundwater management coalition is not perfect but is working together to find solutions.
- Want Council to be part of that group that says we believe in you but we also believe in us.
- This is one of the most important issues we will face in my short term as mayor. We have to take a stand and be honest and true for our people.
- I will write a letter and will bring back to Council for their opinions thru the city manager. Will go from there.

Jim Sanders

- This has been helpful to understand the issues people are facing. Feel the smarter way to go is to oppose unless amended.
- Amendment I support is no zone changes to existing property. Support rezoning undeveloped property.
- Willing to listen to other opinions.

Lori Acton

- One comment not addressed is that 45 days is not enough time to review the document
- Anyone with property use now should be able to continue. Grandfather in what is already there.
- We have opportunity to give a voice to our entire community.
- Oppose and then amend.

Peggy Breeden

- Large map available for viewing at the front of the room.
- Appreciate everyone who came here.

Citizen

- Asked about importing water from Death Valley and grey water study.

Meeting adjourned at 12:47 p.m.



Rachel J. Ford, CMC
City Clerk