



# WASHOE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION Meeting Minutes

## Planning Commission Members

Sarah Chvilicek, Chair  
Larry Chesney, Vice Chair  
James Barnes  
Thomas B. Bruce  
Francine Donshick  
Philip Horan  
Michael W. Lawson  
Trevor Lloyd, Secretary

Tuesday, April 2, 2019  
6:30 p.m.

Washoe County Commission Chambers  
1001 East Ninth Street  
Reno, NV

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The Washoe County Planning Commission met in a scheduled session on **Tuesday, April 2, 2019**, in the Washoe County Commission Chambers, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

## 1. \*Determination of Quorum

Chair Chvilicek called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The following Commissioners and staff were present:

Commissioners present: Sarah Chvilicek, Chair  
Larry Chesney, Vice Chair  
James Barnes  
Thomas B. Bruce  
Francine Donshick  
Philip Horan

Commissioners absent: Michael W. Lawson

Staff present: Trevor Lloyd, Secretary, Planning and Building  
Michael Large, Deputy District Attorney, District Attorney's Office  
Dwayne Smith, Director of Engineering and Capital Projects  
Sophia Kirschenman, Park Planner, Planning and Building  
Katy Stark, Recording Secretary, Planning and Building

## 2. \*Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Donshick led the pledge to the flag.

## 3. \*Ethics Law Announcement

Michael Large, Deputy District Attorney, provided the ethics procedure for disclosures.

## 4. \*Appeal Procedure

Secretary Trevor Lloyd recited the appeal procedure for items heard before the Planning Commission.

## 5. \*General Public Comment and Discussion Thereof

Tammy Holt-Still, Lemmon Valley Swan Lake Recovery Committee, said the water is still there. She said development got us into this position and asked how development is going to get us out. A City Council member stated at a Prado Ranch meeting that we have to have Prado Ranch so they can get things straightened out in regards to flooding. She said we have seen what development has done. The water has to become tertiary water and must leave the valley. It comes from Silver Lake and TMWA who is recharging aquifers. They are putting in 7,800 acre feet of water in the lake each year. It keeps coming in and not going out.

## 6. Approval of Agenda

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, Vice Chair Chesney moved to approve the agenda for the April 2, 2019, meeting as written. Commissioner Donshick seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of six for, none against.

## 7. Possible Action to Approve February 5, 2019 Draft Minutes

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, Commissioner Donshick moved to approve the **February 5, 2019 Draft Minutes** as written. Vice Chair Chesney seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with a vote of six for, none against.

## 8. Planning Items

- \*A. Presentation by Dwayne Smith, Director of Engineering and Capital Projects regarding existing sewer capacities and planned improvements to existing facilities. Discussion will include but not be limited to collector systems, treatment facilities, planned expansions to existing facilities, as well as other changes identified in the county's capital improvements plan. **\*\*\*THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY.\*\*\***

Dwayne Smith, Director of Engineering and Capital Projects, provided a presentation.

Commissioner Horan asked why we wouldn't discharge to the playa more than twice a year. Mr. Smith said we discharge twice a year under permit through NDEP. There is treated water from Reno that also gets discharged into the playa. We are required to discharge a certain amount of water in order to maintain the bird habitat. Commissioner Horan asked if we could discharge more to the playa. Mr. Smith said there are scenarios and what happens to Swan Lake, it could be considered in the future to have that conversation.

Chair Chvilicek requested clarification that when Mr. Smith said approximate number of residential connections, he was only talking about Washoe County facilities. Mr. Smith said those don't recognize a boundary. They are looking at the existing treatment capacity within the facility, and the number is conservative. Chair Chvilicek said it is a conservative but alarming number, given the number of approved but not yet built developments. She said the capacity is exceeded. Mr. Smith used Cold Springs as an example. He referenced the StoneGate development in the City of Reno with approximately 5,000 homes. 1,945 residential connections are available. He said Lifestyle Homes continues to build, and they are utilizing some of that capacity. Even if StoneGate turned dirt tomorrow, understand that our facility work is completed for Cold Springs. We will be moving based on schedules of growth and need; we will move to an expansion phase of the Cold Springs facility in approximately three years. We don't want to build until it's necessary. When you build things, it costs money to build, maintain, operate, and repair. Those 5,000 homes are 10 to 12 years out. We are being a responsible utility operator by making decisions when decisions need to be made.

Vice Chair Chesney asked about North Spanish Springs' capacity for 500 additional hook-ups; he asked if those homes that are planned to be built have been taken into consideration. Mr. Smith said the bottom is not based on treatment capacity in the TMWRF facility. He put an asterisk in the presentation: it's the 2005 agreement. He said 500 is approximately the number of available connections by agreement with 0.78 mgd permitted capacity in terms of what we have connected and what we have final mapped. As we add more final maps to the list, that number comes down incrementally. We are keeping a very close eye and working with our partners collaboratively. The City of Sparks specifically has a responsibility to operate and maintain and meet the permit requirements of the TMWRF. We owe it to them to keep them up-to-date with information. Commercial development goes directly to Sparks. Washoe County is looking at the residential component, and we provide a 'will serve' letter that goes to the State and City of Sparks. We keep them fully informed as we see development come into the area.

Commissioner Horan asked if permitted capacity was because of the rate of the machinery. Mr. Smith said it was the hydraulic and the loading treatment capacities of those facilities. They go through modeling efforts to understand what the plant can do. Commissioner Horan asked for confirmation that the current flow is based on what is going through it, and the difference is what the excess is right now. They are Washoe County operated. The City of Sparks and the City of Reno own, and the City of Sparks manages, the TMWRF facility, which is our largest regional facility. The City of Reno also owns the Stead Treatment Facility in Lemmon Valley. Commissioner Horan asked if they all take flow from Reno homes. Mr. Smith said TMWRF and Lemmon Valley do, and the Cold Springs facility doesn't, but will with StoneGate development.

Commissioner Horan asked about Effluent and Reclaimed water terms. Mr. Smith said there are a lot of terms. A reclaimed water facility is using effluent water as a resource or benefit for a variety of things based on the class of the water. Class of water is based on what it could be used for and how it can be come into contact with. For instance, in South Meadows, we use a Class A effluent. That can be used on golf courses, schools, parks, ballfields, or as construction water. For the I-580 bridge over Galena Creek, concrete was batched with reclaimed water. Class A is full contact which means you post signs, but it's safe to come into contact with. It's recommended to wash your hands if you come into contact. Class A is the highest level. Other classes are Class B and C which are lower quality but can be used for irrigation. He said we treat to Class A standards and put into reclaim system which is stored in Huffaker system. There is 2,400 to 2,600 acre feet produced for Class A. All water in STMWRF is Class A standards. Other treatment plants produce treated effluent of Class B or C, and it's distributed to the playa or Lemmon Valley. Commissioner Horan said he hears about the County pumping into Lemmon Valley. He asked why we don't we pump it up to the playa. Mr. Smith said the Swan Lake Playa is where we are permitted to discharge our treated effluent. Right now the playa has water. Commissioner Horan apologized and said he thought it was the Black Rock Playa.

Commissioner Donshick spoke about 2016-2017 updates. Mr. Smith said it's based on rate of flows, which triggers the expansions. He said it's a guideline plan for what we do and when we do it as part of our responsibility to rate payers. This helps guide processes to assure the rate payers we are doing the best we can.

Vice Chair Chesney asked about what triggers the expansion plans. Mr. Smith said there are different things that trigger expansion that might not just be the flows. We work with NDEP and when we hit 85% of capacity, it is a general rule to express to the NDEP what we need to do to expand and the approaches. Vice Chair Chesney spoke about Swan Lake and Lemmon Valley. He said the water in Swan Lake was precipitated by the 2017 winter which was hard to forecast. He asked, considering the conditions we have, if there is any way to direct the effluent from Reno and Washoe County plants to somewhere else. The playa doesn't absorb the water and the water has to evaporate. He asked if there is a contingency plan. Mr. Smith said those are

the same questions we are working through. Historically, we haven't seen these water levels. The clay layer under the playa doesn't allow for infiltration so the primary way the water leaves a closed basin is evaporation. We have to deal with the closed basin. We have a certain amount of water to discharge in order to maintain bird habitat. We normally cannot keep water in the playa. Starting in 2017, we have had a different situation. We would love a different situation. The volumes of water discharged are de minimis; the total volume discharged on the lake would raise the lake half an inch. It's a big lake. Even though the discharge is de minimis, we would like another option. We are looking at a Class A+ concept – looking for approvals for regulation. The desire is to take the Class A+ to drinking water standards, inject it into the ground, and recharge for future uses and needs. As we move forward, we look hard at these options and change the strategy. He spoke about the Water Innovation Institute's focus on moving the Class A+ program forward with all agencies as partners to manage effluent for our residents.

Commissioner Donshick asked how much more it takes to get to a Class A+. Mr. Smith said with Cold Spring Rapid Infiltration Basins, Class B gets put into infiltration basins; it passes through the soil with biological processes to return the water to standard. With Class A+, we are attempting to short circuit that process in the plant, which means we control and inject directly into the aquifer. It's expensive. We don't know how it will be implemented. We are doing testing programs at our facilities in the region. Part of effluent master planning work is finding best use. We believe Class A+ is one of those strategies in our tool box to allow us to continue to move forward to provide alternatives.

Vice Chair Chesney said effluent is not to be confused with storm water/runoff. Those are two separate plans. Mr. Smith said we don't have combined sewer and storm water; they are segregated. We do not treat storm water. Those systems are conveyance systems.

Vice Chair Chesney asked about regionalization of waste water treatment. Mr. Smith said that as responsible utilities, Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County are looking at best approach. We don't know the best approach for the future, but we are looking at what is best for the rate payer.

Commissioner Horan asked if there are other areas experiencing issues similar to Lemmon Valley. Mr. Smith said STMWRF said there is desire to use reclaimed water. Sparks facility uses the treated effluent. Developers use treated effluent. He said we had algae. There have been challenges with that.

Mr. Smith said the Huffaker storage pond has storage of 4,000 acre feet when it's fully lined. Mr. Smith said we have initiated the last stage of lining. He spoke about their effluent management plan to identify the use of effluent, manage the volume, quality, and use it as a greater resource for opportunities in South Truckee Meadows. Commissioner Horan said we have a water problem in Lemmon Valley and people are being impacted. Mr. Smith said we have been directed by Board of County Commissioners (BCC) to create a barrier system to maintain the lake within the lake, and keep the lake out of residential area. He said he appreciates the resiliency of the residents out there. He said none of us like it. He doesn't have an answer. Mr. Smith said they provided a presentation to the Board with options to address the issues with volumes of water in Swan Lake.

Commissioner Horan asked about SRF preferential rates for state loans. Mr. Smith said he can get that information for him.

Chair Chvilicek said this was an extremely helpful presentation. She said we are dealing with the Regional Plan update. It will help with capacity and run-off questions. She said it's comforting to know you are working collaboratively with all the agencies. Vice Chair Chesney said this has been an ongoing issue. He said this presentation brought questions to light. He

thanked Mr. Smith for the presentation. Mr. Smith invited anyone to call him. Mr. Smith said running utilities is expensive and complicated with moving parts, working with partners, and we do our best for the region. Commissioner Donshick requested a copy of the presentation.

## **9. Chair and Commission Items**

**\*A.** Future agenda items – None.

**\*B.** Requests for information from staff – Vice Chair Chesney asked when the storage containers topic will come back before the Planning Commission (PC). Trevor Lloyd said he isn't sure just yet but it should be coming to the PC soon unless further direction is needed from the BCC. However, it will come to this board before going to the BCC.

## **10. Director's and Legal Counsel's Items**

**\*A.** Report on previous Planning Commission items – The BCC approved the South Valleys 2.5 acre parcel regulatory and master plan amendments, and they approved the regulatory zone amendment for the Club at Arrowcreek. The development code amendment for lot coverage was heard and approved. The BCC directed staff to begin the process for a code amendment for short term rentals.

**\*B.** Legal information and updates – There were no updates.

Commissioner Donshick asked about legislative bill AB70 that can impact Open Meeting Law (OML) and minutes. DDA Large said those bills are being tracked by staff. He said we have had some proposed amendments. He isn't sure if they will be accepted or rejected at this point.

## **11. \*General Public Comment and Discussion Thereof**

Danny Cleous spoke about the Lemmon Valley sewer plant. It's supposed to have nine ponds; it has two. He said they just got done doing work on sledge pond; that's why there has been talk about the sewer plant. There are seven ponds under water. Before they do work on raising berms, there are rental pumps there. The first pond with a ramp had a lot of water. It disappeared. He asked where it went. We didn't see a tanker truck. He said we are concerned. It's not lined. The effluent is mixing together between ponds. He showed pictures of a truck delivering road base. We have a lot of concerns. We don't get answers for them.

Denise Ross spoke about the local elementary school. Effluent water is in the field, playground, and park. Effluent water is acceptable to irrigate the grass, but not acceptable for kids to play with on the playground. We are very concerned and frightened. She said they have been told the County did a test. She said if it's regular lake water, she would like to see them play in it with their kids. They won't do it. Adam Searcy said he would allow his kids to play in it. We wouldn't want that. She said Dwayne Smith speaks about shaving program to shave \$.5 million gallons of effluent/sewage to the City of Reno. It's expensive for us to pay. They have over developed.

## **12. Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Misty Moga, Independent Contractor.

Approved by Commission in session on May 7, 2019.

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Trevor Lloyd, Secretary to the Planning Commission