



Meeting Minutes

Utility Advisory Committee

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Contact: Andy Haub
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Thursday, March 3, 2016

5:40 PM

City Hall, Room 207

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Curtz called the meeting to order at 5:41 p.m.

1.A ROLL CALL

Present: 6 - Chair Thad Curtz, Vice Chair Margaret Drennan, Committee member Michelle Barnett, Committee member Steve Fossum, Committee member Dever Kuni and Committee member Roger Wilson

Absent: 2 - Committee member David Dunn and Committee member Chris Ward

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[16-0263](#) Approval of February 4, 2016 UAC Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Water Resources Director Andy Haub announced the low impact development (LID) item is moving forward in the process. Staff briefed the Planning Commission during several meetings and held a public hearing. Staff will brief Council's Land Use and Environment Committee (LUEC) on April 21 and will present LID recommendations to the City Council in May or June.

City staff is involved in discussions with the State regarding Capitol Lake.

The City completed an assessment of habitat and water quality improvements regarding Olympia's West Bay shoreline. Staff will brief Council on March 22 to share findings, recommendations and cost estimates. The assessment is a collaborative effort between the City, Port of Olympia and Squaxin Tribe. Council will also hold a study session to discuss the assessment in depth.

Mr. Haub encouraged visiting the City's website to read the February 9 Council study session presentation on sea level rise by Eric Christensen. Staff will send the UAC a link to the webpage and will brief the Committee on sea level rise during several upcoming UAC meetings in 2016. UAC and staff will discuss and make a recommendation on a sea level rise response plan for Olympia's downtown.

Chair Curtz presented Vice Chair Drennan with a certificate in recognition of her service to the UAC for the past six years. Vice Chair Drennan's term expires at the end of March 2016.

The UAC discussed officer elections for Chair and Vice Chair for the upcoming year. **A motion was made to re-elect Chair Curtz as Chair of the UAC. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.** The UAC decided to wait to elect a Vice Chair until after new members are appointed this spring.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

[16-0269](#) NPDES Annual Report

Storm and Surface Water Associate Planner Jeremy Graham provided an introduction to the federal Clean Water Act's National Pollution Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The Department of Ecology (DOE) is the state agency that oversees compliance with the permit. The annual reporting for the permit incorporates and documents the City's work to show compliance with the permit. The UAC reviews the permit report prior to submittal to DOE. The UAC also reviewed the City's Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) which is required by the permit.

The information was provided. The UAC approved the NPDES Annual report for submittal to DOE.

[16-0270](#) Smart Meter Customer Feedback

Utility Billing Supervisor Bill Sampson and Drinking Water Quality Program & Planning Supervisor Meliss Maxfield provided information on the City's water meters and billing system.

The City converted to Itron automated water meters (AMR) in 2012. The AMRs provide electronic reporting of water use to utility billing staff. In addition to providing the meter reads to generate water bills, the technology allows staff to monitor customer water consumption on a daily or hourly basis. This is helpful to find water leaks and inform the customer so the leak can be repaired.

In 2016, the utility plans to purchase the analytics software for the utility billing system that will allow customers to monitor their water use online. The software costs \$70,000 initially and then \$24,700 annually. Additional analytical tools will allow staff to view consumption trends by customer class, geographic area and other reports.

The UAC had the following questions:

- Is there data from the vendor showing water consumption decreased for other cities after the analytics tool was implemented?
- Has staff analyzed the numbers if the money for the analytic tool was instead applied towards water conservation fixtures/rebates for customers?

Staff will research the questions and will follow up with the Committee.

The UAC and staff also discussed the current City system that sends utility bills every other month (bi-monthly). The City is considering a change to monthly utility bills. A switch to monthly billing is supported by City staff and customers and would cost the City \$300,000 to implement and ongoing costs of staff time.

The benefits to change to monthly billing are:

- Customers will be able pay their utility bills on time.
- Less water shut offs, which mean less staff time in the field.
- The City can offer a budget plan that will smooth out utility costs over a year.

The UAC had the following question:

Does the City have comparative data on how other City's bill their customers (bi-monthly vs. monthly)?

It was noted that Tumwater has monthly billing. Staff said they would research this question and report back to the UAC.

Mr. Haub said this item, regarding converting to monthly billing, will come back to the UAC in the near future for a recommendation.

The information was provided.

[16-0271](#) Storm and Surface Water Plan

Water Resources Senior Planner Laura Keehan presented information on the process of updating the City's Storm and Surface Water Utility Master Plan. The Utility is currently guided by the 2003 Storm and Surface Water Plan. A new Plan is needed to guide the Utility over the next ten years. There is no regulatory requirement to have a Storm and Surface Water Plan. The Plan update is guided by the stormwater-related goals and policies in Olympia's Comprehensive Plan.

The UAC engaged in discussions with staff regarding the draft goals, objectives and strategies of the plan. Ms. Keehan will send the UAC members an email with the draft goals of the plan and asked them to email her any feedback.

Staff will return to the UAC in May to discuss draft community survey questions. Then, staff will return to the UAC to brief them in June and November. Staff will ask the UAC for a recommendation to City Council on the draft Storm and Surface Water Plan in March 2017.

The information was provided.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Curtz adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.