

**ST. GEORGE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
WORK MEETING
SEPTEMBER 2, 2021 4:00 P.M.
ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE ROOM**

PRESENT:

**Mayor Michele Randall – via Zoom
Councilmember Jimmie Hughes
Councilmember Bryan Smethurst
Councilmember Gregg McArthur
Councilmember Dannielle Larkin
Councilmember Vardell Curtis
City Manager Adam Lenhard
Deputy City Attorney Paula Houston
City Recorder Christina Fernandez**

OPENING:

Mayor Randall called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance. The invocation was offered by Reverend Alex Wilkie and The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Councilmember McArthur.

**DISCUSSION WITH THE WASHINGTON COUNTY WATER CONSERVANCY DISTRICT
REGARDING WATER CONSERVATION AND NEW DEVELOPMENT:**

Zach Renstrom and Karry Rathje with the Washington County Water Conservancy District provided a PowerPoint presentation covering the following topics: Water supply; Population growth; Water Conservation; District recommendations; Water efficiency standards; Residential standards; Residential standards: traditional; Residential standards: traditional cost; Residential standards: traditional concept; Examples; Large lot examples; Residential standards: certified; Residential standards: certified concept; Examples requiring certification; and Commercial, institutional, and industrial standards.

During the presentation, the Council also discussed that City code does not require front landscaping to be complete prior to Certificate of Occupancy (CO); state law dictates when a CO can be held up.

Councilmember Larkin noted that in a meeting she attended yesterday it was said that an accessory dwelling could be metered separately. She asked staff if that was correct. Staff indicated they would have to look into that.

After being asked by Councilmember Hughes, Mr. Renstrom noted the alternative to what is being proposed is to limit building as there is only so much water.

Councilmember Larkin commented there could be a big economic hit if building stops.

Councilmember Hughes commented this proposal is going to change the ability to choose landscaping so the County can grow more. He believes using water is not necessarily wasting water. Although he wants to be careful in taking away people's ability to have the yard they want, he understands there is only so much water.

Councilmember Larkin noted that long term, having a large lawn can shut down the City 30 years from now.

Mr. Renstrom likes the proposal since this will not take away water from people as they are not using water now as this is for new development. When purchasing a large lot, people need to look at other amenities instead of grass. After being asked by Water Services Director Scott Taylor, Mr. Renstrom explained that someone cannot pay two impact fees if they buy a big lot and install grass.

Councilmember McArthur asked if that could that be an option. Possibly base impact fees on each $\frac{1}{4}$ acre or $\frac{1}{2}$ acre.

Mr. Renstrom explained a 5,000 sq. ft. lot uses less water than a 10,000 sq. ft. lot; it is not double. If a homeowner wanted to have grass on their entire yard, impact fees can be very expensive and then there is still the concern with high water use.

Energy and Water Conservation Specialist Rene Fleming asked what happens if she sells her home that has desert landscaping and the new buyer rips it all out and puts in all grass. She asked if there was a mechanism in place to catch that.

Mr. Renstrom explained the ordinance would only affect homes built after a specific date; therefore, they would be in violation of the ordinance.

Councilmember Hughes noted he believes some people will be okay with the proposal as most people can see the value of water.

Mr. Renstrom shared Santa Clara's concerns with the fill in lots they have in parts of their city.

Mayor Randall commented that the County will need to go with these restrictions or builders won't be able to build like they are.

Mr. Renstrom explained water is secured for 50 years with the Lake Powell Pipeline; however, using water wisely is always better. The state of Utah is implementing a turf buyback program; he believes there is a high probability there will be legislation this year. After the District finishes meeting with cities, they will present a proposed ordinance the cities can consider adopting. The biggest question being what happens if only half of the cities adopt the ordinance – at this point he does not have an answer.

Mayor Randall commented all cities need to be on the same page.

Water Services Director Scott Taylor commented at some point Mr. Renstrom will provide a number of units that can be built before there is no more water based upon source size standard. Right now, that standard is .89-acre feet per household, per ERU. When Mr. Renstrom comes back with a number, it will be based on a standard the City is not at. He would like to see two numbers – how much water can be used if water is being used as it is now, based on the current standard as well as

a number if the standard were to change to .56-acre feet per household per ERU. He noted that he is concerned with basing future planning the City is not at and may not be able to get to.

Mr. Renstrom commented that half of the population is there with new construction.

Councilmember Hughes pointed out there is probably a large portion that the cities could reach consensus on. For the items that cities cannot reach a consensus on, each city could still incorporate some of the suggestions and it still might be very impactful.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:50 p.m.

Christina Fernandez, City Recorder