

**CITY OF BUCKEYE
COUNCIL WORKSHOP
MARCH 18, 2014
MINUTES**

**City Council Chambers
530 E. Monroe Ave.
Buckeye, AZ 85326
4:40 p.m.**

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Members Present: Councilmember Garza, Councilmember Strauss, Councilmember Hess (arrived at 4:44 p.m.), Councilmember McAchrans, Councilmember Heustis, Vice Mayor Orsborn and Mayor Meck.

Members Absent: None.

Departments Present: City Manager Stephen Cleveland, City Attorney Scott Ruby, City Clerk Lucinda Aja, Deputy City Clerk Deborah Harrell, Assistant to Council Carol Conley, Public Works Director Scott Lowe, Community Services Director Cheryl Sedig, and Finance Director Larry Price.

**2. Presentation and Discussion on the Buckeye Wildlife Corridor Implementation Study
Staff Liaison: Robert Wisener, Community Services
Ed Boik, Development Services**

District No. All

Mr. Wisener presented Council an overview of the Wildlife Corridor background and studies. If nothing is done to preserve this area, eventually the White Tank Mountains will become surrounded by development similar to what you see in the Phoenix Mountain Preserve where there are no wildlife corridors to connect wildlife populations to outside habitat blocks. The Wildlife areas were shown on a map and one main goal is to connect the many wildlife blocks that are within and surrounding Buckeye. Tracking information on mule deer and mountain lion movement was presented; there are 11 species selected and representative of the travel needs. Mr. Boik presented the scope of work which includes review of Buckeye's CMP and adopted plans and studies for trails, transportation and materials produced by the Arizona Game and Fish. Outreach will be focused on balancing development needs with wildlife needs. Corridors can be collocated with washes, native open spaces and with trails and other passive recreation corridors. Implementation will include determining the best method to secure corridors. Councilmember Garza confirmed language in the contract would reflect the City's protection for future owners. Vice Mayor Orsborn confirmed that Game and Fish has done studies on the statewide corridors and the wildlife corridors and work with municipalities. Mr. Wisener indicated there is \$100,000.00 in the budget for the Wildlife Corridor Study; final costs will not be available until a vendor is selected. Councilmember Hess confirmed the study could take one year or longer depending on the implementation tasks. Councilmember McAchrans confirmed that adoption of codes and regulations that will help staff implement the study. Councilmember Heustis confirmed staff is working with various land owners including the Bureau of Land Management and the current migratory patterns will not have much impact on Skyline Park. Mayor Meck requested staff look at the recently completed Sonoran Study pertaining to Interstate 11 which may have some impact. Mayor Meck confirmed there will be no negative impact to the wildlife in the White Tanks for the proposed Skyline Park.

3. Presentation and Discussion on Landscape Irrigation Rates and Flood Irrigation
Staff Liaison: Dave Nigh, Water Resources
District No. All

Mr. Nigh presented Council an overview of the landscape rates including the previous, current and proposed rate design. Landscape customers have the highest use and therefore, the highest costs. A rate study would be performed at the end of this year and annually thereafter. Councilmember Heustis confirmed all water utilities have different rate structures; the City's water is potable so we are using drinking water for landscape irrigation. Mr. Jackson reported rates that landscape users currently pay are well below the City's costs; the City's other customers are subsidizing the landscape rates. It will take a few years to phase in a rate plan to cover all of the costs. Councilmember McAchran expressed concern about using potable water for irrigation. Councilmember Hess expressed her appreciation for staff's work and thinks the rate is fair. Vice Mayor Orsborn agrees the revenues collected should pay for the cost of service plus replacement costs. Councilmember Strauss agrees the rates are fair and responsible. Mayor Meck confirmed staff will meet with Homeowners Associations on the rates. Mayor Meck would like staff to go back to the developers regarding the fees and rates, and agrees that we need to stop using potable water for irrigation.

Mr. Nigh presented an overview of flood irrigation options. An average loss per year is \$150,000; until 2010, the General Fund subsidized the service then it was transferred to Water Resources. Staff has met with customers and the Revenue Study Group. Councilmember Strauss confirmed the options of subsidize; raise rates to pay for itself; or, create a district; have any residents offered any other solutions. Mr. Nigh reported the majority of the residents want the City to pay the difference. Mr. Jackson addressed Council and reported there is no profit for the City; only asking customers to pay for the cost of the service. Councilmember McAchran expressed his concern for the community and would like to proceed with the least expensive solution. Councilmember Heustis expressed concern with using contract personnel for irrigation. Mayor Meck suggested not making any changes until October.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m. by Mayor Meck.

Jackie A. Meck, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lucinda J. Aja, City Clerk

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the Regular Council Meeting held on the 18th day of March, 2014. I further certify that a quorum was present.

Lucinda J. Aja, City Clerk