

Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study

Stakeholder Oversight Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes February 6, 2012

1. Call to Order

Chairman Allen Ishida called the meeting to order.

2. Additions/ Deletions from Agenda

There were no additions or deletions from the agenda.

3. Public Comments

There was no public comment.

4. Approval of Minutes from December 5, 2011 and January 9, 2012

Chairman Ishida asked for a motion to approve the minutes

5. Summarize Goals of this Meeting

Laurel Firestone offered a recap of the last meeting, saying that the SOAC had established priorities at the last meeting. The top five priority issues will be the focus of solutions generated by the project team, but not to the exclusion of all of the other priorities.

Ms. Firestone explained that the focus of this meeting would be to 1) develop potential solutions for the priority issues; and 2) evaluate the criteria that the SOAC will use to prioritize pilot projects.

Ms. Firestone indicated that the March meeting would possibly be postponed until April so that the project team would have time to develop potential pilot projects. She added that simultaneous translation was being conducted and asked participants to speak slowly.

Vice Chairman Richard Valle asked if postponing the March meeting would create a problem with the grant funding. Ms. Firestone answered that the study was progressing on schedule and postponing the March meeting would not adversely affect the grant funding.

6. Recap Priority Issues

Ms. Firestone recapped the priorities developed by the SOAC at the January 2012 meeting. She explained that all the priority issues would be considered by the SOAC and explained how that information would be used. She explained that a brainstorming session will be held on each cluster of priority issues, and then an evaluation of prioritization criteria would be discussed.

Chair Ishida suggested that many of the issues are inter-related. Ms. Firestone emphasized that it was important that the group agree by consensus to the priorities established and clarified some confusion around the issue. Sue Ruiz suggested that the SOAC move forward with the priorities established at the January meeting.

7. Potential Solutions

Participants broke into four working groups to discuss four different clusters of issues.

Ms. Firestone asked the groups to bring their discussions to a close and report back to the larger group.

Matt Hurley reported for Group One. The main emphasis was on developing economies of scale, combining administrative and professional services. He reported that discouraging development of segregated communities through policy decisions and encouraging consolidation was important. Key points were: coordination among entities, professional facilitation to create models for entities working together. Identify needs in communities and work on addressing those needs collectively and individually. Building models for creating greater efficiency.

Michael Tharp reported Group Two's potential solutions were: the need to partner with neighboring communities to find solutions that solve common problems; Developing models at neighboring communities to demonstrate viability that can be reproduced in multiple communities; Creating momentum at the grass roots level by just getting started—for example, capitalizing on community service clubs like Rotary to purchase and distribute bottled water. He also reported that educating people on the problem makes progress towards goals; Educating stakeholders through organizations by creating JPAs and MOUs; and creating regional framework by changing the way projects are funded at the State level.

Jesse Snyder with Group Three reported the following solutions: managerial consolidation, which would address funding constraints and create vision; Economies of scale would be created and help use resources more efficiently; Creating regional authority that would facilitate consolidation. Their group had arrived at a 3-step model: 1) Technical assistance to help communities understand how consolidations work; 2) This would support forming a management consolidations that would encourage a common vision; and 3) a common vision would improve the potential of creating viable, sustainable, and fundable projects.

Sue Ruiz presented from Group 4 and emphasized the importance of local focus. She conveyed a personal anecdote to demonstrate that solutions don't just evolve- leadership is needed, and that requires an investment in developing leaders. She stated that the larger jurisdictions need to inform the smaller ones of needs, resources, and solutions. She acknowledged the importance of Self

Help Enterprises in working with local communities at the grassroots levels. She said that you must find champions or raise them up. She went on to say that communities need help establishing a common vision, and that engaging communities should be a part of developing pilot projects. She reported that the creation of a leadership institute was an outgrowth of RCAC, and such resources are necessary. She reported that Group Four discussed the need to develop mechanisms for conveying information, like going door to door, using media, etc. Ms. Ruiz said that residents should capitalize on the Board of Supervisors as champions to spread the word about best practices. She concluded that, overall, there is a need to educate residents on the reality of water quality so they understand the importance of advocating for clean water. She wrapped up by stating the need to be sensitive to your audience: communicate the right message to the right people.

8. Scoring Criteria Breakout Session

Groups formed by numbering off. Each group discussed how to evaluate the criteria that the SOAC will use to prioritize pilot projects.

Ms. Firestone announced that there would not be enough time for group reports but said that the project team would synthesize the information gathered for the next meeting.

9. Administrative Matters

There were no administrative matters.

10. Committee Comments

Ms. Ruiz reported on statistics of special districts in the State. She said that special districts simply do not have the resources to address needs of mobilizing the communities to address their own needs.

11. Meetings

Ms. Firestone asked the SOAC whether skipping the March 5 meeting would be alright. The group would reconvene on April 2nd and May 7th, 2012.

Meeting adjourned.