Orange Water and Sewer Authority
Natural Resources and Technical Systems Committee
May 20 2010, 8:00-10:00 a.m.
OWASA Boardroom
Meeting Summary

Members Present

Alan Rimer (Chair), Mac Clarke, Joy Preslar and Randy Kabrick (*ex-officio*)

Other Board Members Present

Amy Witsil

Staff Present

Ed Kerwin, Ed Holland, Pat Davis, John Greene, Stephen Winters, Mason Crum and Bob Epting (General Counsel)

Visitors Present

None

Items Discussed:

OWASA-owned Land

Staff described the screening process used to identify OWASA-owned properties that are not deemed essential to OWASA's core mission and which could be declared surplus and then sold or otherwise transferred. Staff also noted the 1997 Board Resolution stipulating that *"The Executive Director may recommend to the Board of Directors that lands acquired by the Authority for the protection of the University Lake or Cane Creek water supply watersheds be offered for sale to the public, subject to such permanent restrictions as will afford certain protection assuring the quality of those watersheds as public supply sources"*, and reminded the Committee that the policy requires that *"All revenues from the resale of property acquired for the purpose of watershed protection shall be reserved for future water supply protection efforts."*

Staff briefly described and answered questions about the specific properties that might quickly be declared surplus and then sold or transferred.

Several Committee members expressed concern that a Biosolids Management Master Plan had not yet been completed and emphasized that OWASA's long term strategy for recycling biosolids might significantly affect any assessment of properties that would be deemed essential to meeting OWASA's core mission in the future.

General Counsel presented an historical perspective of OWASA's prior land acquisition activities, noting especially OWASA's efforts to be a good neighbor to all citizens of Orange County affected by OWASA activities, especially those related to the development of the Cane Creek Reservoir.

The Committee Chair suggested that the Committee and staff focus first on the "Ray Heirs" tract (the 74-acre parcel in the University Lake watershed that is already protected by a permanent conservation easement) and the Cane Creek Mitigation Tract (the 490-acre tract in the Cane Creek watershed that was acquired pursuant to OWASA's Section 404 Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct the Cane Creek Dam and Reservoir). He suggested that the other properties that might potentially be declared as surplus should be presented for the Committee's consideration at a later (to be determined) date.

The Committee agreed that the Board should obtain a written response to its September 25, 2009 letter to the Town of Carrboro regarding their interest in purchasing the Ray Heirs tract. If Carrboro is not interested in owning the property, OWASA should proceed to sell it; and that no actions should be taken in the meantime that would compromise the property's potential resale value. Discussion about the Mitigation Tract included differing opinions about whether OWASA should retain ownership and control, or if it should be offered to the State of North Carolina or another entity to own and manage, provided that OWASA's obligations under the Army Corps of Engineers 404 Permit and the property's source water functions not be compromised. No definitive decision was made regarding whether the Staff should be directed to discuss disposition options with the Army Corps of Engineers and the NC Wildlife Commission to determine what our options might be.

Staff was directed to make a presentation at the June 10, 2010 OWASA Board meeting that focuses only on the Ray Heirs and Mitigation Tract properties. Background information in the agenda packet would be essentially the same as what was provided to the Committee. Before the June 10 Board meeting, the Executive Director will remind the Carrboro Town Manager that the OWASA Board is expecting a written response to its September 25, 2009 letter asking if the Town of Carrboro was interested in purchasing the Ray Heirs tract.

Water Supply Plan Implementation

Staff presented plans for implementing the recommendations of the recently adopted Long-Range Water Supply Plan:

1. **Expanded Quarry Reservoir.** OWASA has retained Hazen and Sawyer Engineers to develop a 20-year decision tree or systematic "to-do list" of actions, including additional technical studies, to guide future Boards, staff and consultants in bringing the expanded Quarry Reservoir into service after mining operations end in 2030.

2. **Water Purchase Trigger Conditions.** Staff is developing "trigger" tables that will be used to guide future decisions about when to declare mandatory water use restrictions as part of OWASA's (State-approved) *Water Shortage Response Plan* and when to purchase treated water from neighboring jurisdictions.

3. **Jordan Lake Allocation.** Staff will continue to participate in activities of the Jordan Lake Partnership, including the development of a region-wide water supply plan. OWASA's efforts will be geared toward retaining its 5 percent (~5 million gallon per day) water supply

storage allocation and ensuring its cost-effective access to that allocation through secure and permanent agreements with nearby utilities.

The Committee Chair suggested that the Hazen and Sawyer report be made available for the Committee's review upon completion, and that it ultimately be presented to the full Board for review and formal adoption.

The Committee Chair also requested that staff's recommended "trigger" tables be presented to the Committee and full Board as "information only," although in subsequent discussions with the Chair it was determined that the Trigger Table(s) might need Board approval.

Next Meeting

Time and agenda items for the next Committee meeting will be determined at a later date in consultation with the NRTS Committee Chair.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 a.m.

Meeting Summary Prepared by: Mason Crum, PE
Director of Engineering and Planning