ORANGE WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY

A public, non-profit agency providing water, sewer and reclaimed water services to the Carrboro-Chapel Hill community.

MEETING SUMMARY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

October 13, 2015 at 6:00 PM in the OWASA Boardroom

Committee Members present:	Ruchir Vora, Committee Chair; Bob Morgan
Other Board Members present:	Barbara Middleton-Foushee
Staff:	Ed Kerwin; Stephen Winters, CPA; Patrick Davis; Greg Feller; Denise Battle; Mary Tiger
Citizens:	Janice Tyler, Director, Orange County Department on Aging

1. Review and discuss potential Draft Affordability Outreach Program Plan for the next year.

Mary Tiger, Sustainability Manager, presented background on the proposed objectives, performance measures, and target audience for an ongoing affordability outreach program to help customers reduce their bills through water conservation. As proposed, an essential part of the program would be to enhance our partnership with local social service and affordable housing agencies. The Committee and Board members present asked questions and provided comments on the proposed strategies.

Comments by the Committee included:

- Overall, it is a good plan.
- Bill payment reminders from OWASA should (and do) include information about assistance provided by local social service agencies.
- Information about the Care to Share program should note that donations are tax-deductible.
- OWASA will work with owners and managers of multi-family properties to identify potential strategies for increasing water use efficiency and water and sewer affordability in master-metered multi-family developments.
- A case study of the pilot project's retrofit program has the potential to distort the measured impact of such a program, due to the small sample size. Staff believes the case study would be an important source of feedback and could help generate support for outside funding.

2. Invite and consider questions, comments, and suggestions from the public regarding our affordability outreach efforts and plans.

Janice Tyler said that her staff had reviewed and supported the proposed Program Plan. Mary Tiger reported that the proposed plan had been circulated to and discussed with other program partners and that all of the responses were positive and constructive.

3. Discuss if the Committee wishes to make any comments and recommendations at the October 22, 2015 Board meeting.

Two members of the Committee agreed that the proposed Program Plan should advance to the entire Board without modification. It was noted that Committee member Terri Buckner emailed the Committee Chair on October 12, 2015 and expressed her support of the Plan, as proposed.

4. Revisit the memo prepared for the December 2, 2014 CEC Meeting and discuss what is needed to define our overall community engagement approach.

Mr. Vora said OWASA should have tiers for the appropriate level of effort in community engagement planning for various projects.

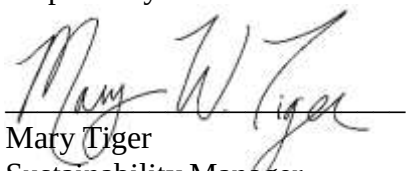
The Committee will discuss OWASA's community engagement strategies in future meetings.

5. Next meeting

The proposed topic for the next Community Engagement Committee meeting will be to discuss our approach to define our overall community engagement expectations. Ed Kerwin suggested the Committee meet in mid-November to early December. The Committee will discuss its proposed next steps with the Board of Directors.

The Committee adjourned at 7 PM.

Prepared by:



Mary Tiger
Sustainability Manager