



TOWN OF PALM BEACH

Town Clerk's Office

REPORT OF THE WATER COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 29, 2009, @ 3:00 P.M.

1 I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

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3 The Water Committee Meeting was called to order on January 29, 2009 at 3:00
4 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers. On roll call, Chair David A. Rosow and
5 Committee Member Denis P. Coleman were found to be present. Also present for
6 all or a portion of the meeting were: Mayor Jack McDonald, Town Council
7 President Pro Tem Gail Coniglio, Council Member Susan Markin, Town Manager
8 Peter B. Elwell, Assistant Town Manager Sarah E. Hannah, Director of Planning,
9 Zoning and Building John Page, Director of Public Works H. Paul Brazil, Town
10 Engineer James Bowser, and Town Clerk Joanna Cunningham. The following
11 were present from the City of West Palm Beach: Eduardo Balbis, Assistant City
12 Administrator, and David Hicks, Utilities Director.

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14 II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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16 The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Rosow.

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19 III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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21 The Agenda was approved as printed.

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23 IV. PRESENTATION BY CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH OF FOUR (4) WATER
24 SUPPLY OPTIONS

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26 Mr. Eduardo Balbis, Assistant City Administrator, provided the Committee with a
27 Power Point Presentation that addresses the issues requested from the previous Water
28 Committee Meeting:

29

- 30 • Completing Regulations

- 1 • Desalination Water Plant
- 2 • Floridan Water Plant
- 3 • Town Remains as Equal Customer
- 4 • Town Becomes Bulk Customer
- 5 • Next Steps

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7 Mr. Balbis indicated that the South Florida Water Management District will be
8 holding a meeting next week (February 5, 2009). SFWMD is stating they have the
9 authority to regulate sea water. The City of West Palm Beach will be attending to voice
10 their opposition. Member Coleman asked if they have the legislative authority to regulate
11 sea water. Mr. Balbis predicts that there will be legal challenges.

12
13 There was discussion regarding the usage of water by Town residents. Member
14 Coleman asked if the City of West Palm knew the amount of potable water that is actually
15 being used for irrigation purposes and is not really potable water. He also asked if there
16 was a program where the City would come evaluate a home for water waste. He and
17 others, would be willing to pay for such a program. Mr. Balbis stated that if a water meter
18 is faulty, the City will replace it and refund 50% of the estimated overcharges for water. If
19 the Water Department makes a home inspection and the meter is working correctly, there
20 is a \$75.00 charge. Member Coleman indicated that just like smart homes, we need smart
21 water. Chair Rosow cited four examples of the highest water users in town and the
22 quantities that they consume.

23
24 Bill Diamond, 220 Wells Road, asked if any of the four proposed plans would be
25 restricted by water restrictions, and they would. He also asked if there is a possibility that
26 the Floridan Aquifer would run out of water. Mr. Balbis indicated that was a possibility,
27 and that in recent years, the water is becoming more brackish and will require more
28 treatment processes.

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30 **Mr. Balbis was willing to create such a program, and said he would report**
31 **back to Council with more details.**

32
33 Town Manager Elwell clarified what Member Coleman had asked about regarding
34 the rate structures, if the same rate structure applied to the condominiums as to a single
35 family home, the condominium, on the first day of the month, hit the threshold where they
36 are in the higher usage bracket, and charged the premium fee. The penalties that come in
37 from the rate structure that encourage conservation, the expectation is that it is possible fo
38 revery individual to be conserving, yet when all combined, could hit the threshold for the
39 higher rate structure.

40
41 Chair Rosow asked Mr. Balbis what he needed from the Town next. Mr. Balbis
42 indicated that he will address the rule-making and regulations on the water restrictions.
43 That meeting will determine if the restrictions would apply to all water sources, including
44 sea water. He will keep the Town apprised of their decision that is due next May
45 regarding the treatment technology the City will be using. As a result of this meeting he

1 will put together a proposed program to determine normal water usage based upon lot size
2 and vegetative plants, and grasses. Member Coleman suggested that eventually the
3 Building Department would need to get involved with the various requirements for lawns
4 and landscaping that would promote water conservation and be required in the permits.

5
6 Mr. Balbis continued and stated that once the City has the information collected
7 and analyzed, and what the demands should be, they would reassess the same four options
8 again. Chair Rosow asked if that assessment of water need could be done within 30 days.
9 Mr. Balbis will work with the Town Staff to identify "typical" homes within the Town to
10 assess, along with the horticulturists and botanists etc.

11
12 Wendy Victor, Via Tortuga, reminded the Committee that it is important to
13 recognize that Palm Beach is noted for its lavish green spaces and being green. She stated
14 that the people of Palm Beach do not bathe more often than the people in West Palm
15 Beach, but there usage is most likely used for irrigation purposes. Chair Rosow agreed
16 that the Town does not want to change the greenscape.

17
18 Member Coleman stressed that two issues are to reduce the water waste and
19 increase efficiency.

20
21 Susan Markin, Town Council Member, 1450 N. Lake Way, asked that if West
22 Palm Beach acquires new customers, is the Town of Palm Beach informed, and does the
23 Town have a say in whether or not the City takes on new customers. She also asked if the
24 City would run out of water. Mr. Balbis responded that the City was issued a consumptive
25 use permit for 53 millions of gallons of water per day and on average is currently using 30
26 million gallons of water per day, and does have capacity to add new users. As of right
27 now, the City does not contractually have an obligation to inform the Town when it
28 acquires new customers. She also asked about the results of the Water Study that the
29 Town conducted.

30
31 Town Manager Elwell asked Mr. Balbis if it would be possible for the City to build
32 a treatment plant on Town property and Mr. Balbis agreed that it would.

33
34 The next item discussed was the question of West Palm Beach's water quality
35 compared to New York City, as asked by Member Coleman at the last meeting. Mr. David
36 Hicks, Water Utilities Director, gave a summary and indicated that treatment processes
37 will differ based upon the water source. West Palm Beach uses the Floridan Aquifer and
38 New York City uses a reservoir system. Other factors also can impact water quality such
39 as water temperature and outside heat temperature.

40
41 Mr. Hicks analyzed the results and said that both cities met or exceeded the EPA
42 standards for drinking water quality. He noted that every city has to either meet or exceed
43 the standards, regardless of location. He noted that water in Florida is more difficult to
44 treat because the temperature is warmer and because of the use of the Aquifer, which tends

1 to be more brackish water. He also added that the report from the Town consultant also
2 confirmed the same results.

3

4 Mr. Michal Fisher spoke next regarding the water testing that the Town contracted
5 with HAS Engineers and Scientists to conduct. He was the Consulting engineer and
6 determined that the water from West Palm Beach is of good quality and confirmed that it
7 does meet the EPA standards. Mr. Fisher indicated that he conducted an independent
8 study of the West Palm Beach water supply.

9

10 Town Manager Elwell asked if it was fair to say that the EPA standards do not
11 relate to taste, odor, or color of the water. Mr. Fisher responded that the EPA is concerned
12 with the safety and health relating to water, and to make sure it is free from contaminants
13 that may harm an individual. The aesthetic issues which include color taste and odor, are
14 the responsibility of the municipality.

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16 The Committee thanked the City of West Palm Beach and Mr. Fisher for attending.

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18 V. DISCUSSION OF INDIVIDUAL PRIVATE WELLS FOR IRRIGATION

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20 Paul Brazil, Director of Public Works, had previously been directed by the Water
21 Committee to research the costs of providing independent irrigation wells at a private
22 residences. Mr. Brazil indicated that because Palm Beach is an island, there are
23 parameters that a landlocked city may not encounter. The water is much more brackish
24 and there is the possibility of salt water intrusion from wells.

25

26 While doing research, there are a few options, but a deeper well with a less
27 sophisticated treatment plant for a one acre site would cost approximately \$100,000.
28 There would be the option of digger a well not as deep, but then the operation, treatment
29 and electrical costs increase, up to \$500,000, as was a 12 acre site in Manalapan. There
30 would need to be a balance between the depth of the well and the total treatment costs.

31

32 **Staff was directed to evaluate the top 100 users and develop a typical range of**
33 **lots, water usage, and green space. Staff would also work with the City of West Palm**
34 **Beach, arborists, horticulturists, etc. to develop rates for normal water consumption.**
35 **Upon completion, Mr. Balbis would re-evaluate the four proposals and report back**
36 **to the Water Committee next month.**

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38 VI. FOLLOW-UP ON PRIOR WATER COMMITTEE INFORMATION REQUESTS

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40 Assistant Town Manager Sarah Hannah indicated that the requested information
41 had already been discussed under Mr. Balbis' presentation and discussion.

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43 VII. ANY OTHER MATTERS

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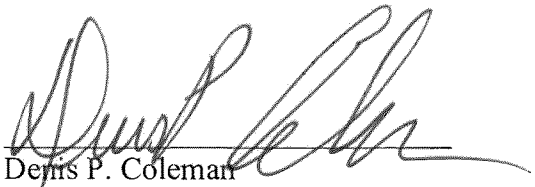
45 Chair Rosow indicated that this would be Member Coleman's last Water
46 Committee meeting and presented him with a hat as a departing gift.

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1 VIII. ADJOURNMENT
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4 There being no further business, the Water Committee Meeting of January 29,
5 2009, was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.
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9 _____
10 David A. Rosow
11 Water Committee Chair



Denis P. Coleman
Water Committee Member