

Lake Merced Task Force Water Committee

Minutes, Meeting of September 9, 2003

Attendance:

Patrick Sweetland
Dick Morten
David Dawdy
John Plummer

Jim Stark
James Grant
Dick Allen

Tim Colen
Jerry Cadagan
Mondy Lariz

Representing the Public Utilities Commission: Greg Bartow, Hydrogeologist

Special Guest: Don Birrer

The agenda for this meeting had been a roundtable discussion of the current status of plans and programs for Lake Merced, and next steps for the Lake Merced Task Force (LMTF). We invited Don Birrer to join this discussion. Don has held a number of senior positions with the City, including City Engineer and General Manager of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Don is currently Executive Director of Bay Area Clean Water Agencies, a group working on clean water issues around the Bay, and is a consultant to the PUC.

Don presented a comprehensive view of water and stormwater management in San Francisco, illustrating the ways in which the various aspects of these programs must be integrated in order to achieve a workable whole. Don's central theme with regard to Lake Merced is that a sustainable solution to maintaining lake levels in an appropriate range (which Don did not attempt to define) depends upon good groundwater management. Further, he indicated that a surplus of groundwater in both the Southeast and Northwest quadrants of the City provides a potential resource for this purpose.

The Water Committee concluded, by consensus:

- The various plans being developed by PUC planners, the Clean Water Master Plan, Recycled Water Master Plan, Groundwater Master Plan, the Capital Improvement Program, and plans for Lake Merced must be integrated. Continued development of these plans as isolated entities will not produce a satisfactory product.
- The general outline described by Don Birrer should be added to the list of four alternatives currently being reviewed as a fifth alternative. Further it is likely that additional, sixth and seventh alternates, are available and have not been described, one of those being the restoration of the Westside Basin aquifer.

- The stated target dates, November for the completion of a program plan by EDAW, including the establishment of new target levels for Lake Merced and a program to achieve and maintain those levels, and the environmental review and Commission approval of this plan by January, is unrealistic.
- That successful development of a program that can achieve broad community support depends upon involvement by the community on a continuing basis. The experience with the current EDAW effort, in which quarterly updates were promised but never delivered, provides an excellent example of an approach unlikely to succeed. Extensive criticisms of the EDAW Report on Phase #3, offered by a number of groups and individuals, could have been avoided had periodic reviews been conducted.

The Water Committee requested that Greg Bartow set up a meeting with EDAW at the earliest opportunity to thoroughly review all options and to define the ongoing program. David Dawdy and John Plummer will provide a summary of Don Birrer's proposal to be included as an alternative to be evaluated.

Minutes Prepared by
John Plummer
September 10, 2003