

## **Kim Shirley's Council Report for Tuesday, January 23, 2024**

**Wednesday, December 13th- Seaside Groundwater Basin Watermaster Technical Advisory Committee Mtg-** This meeting is always one that keeps me on my scientific toes as most of the members are engineers or public works employees of sorts who look at the more technical data that's being prepared to analyze the health of the basin.

One of the topics for our meeting was the sentinel wells which are wells that follow our coastline and will help us determine if there is any seawater intrusion. These wells are regularly looked at by hydrogeologic consultants who determine the conductivity of the water (more salts would mean higher conductivity). Our fall analysis of these wells shows a very small increase in conductivity, but nothing that would warrant greater analysis.

We also had a presentation on the airborne electromagnetic surveys that were completed over portions of the basin. This technology uses an induction coil with electricity which is flown over the basin with a helicopter and looks at electrical resistivity which can help determine if salt water is being detected. There seem to be lots of limitations to this type of data collection, but it does provide some data that can be used in collaboration with ground well data. This data did determine that the top 150' of the entire shoreline is intruded with salt water, but that was not surprising.

Our next topic covered was regarding one of the wells along the coastline which is on land that is currently in litigation. This well had previously showed damage to its casing and although it's not in use, it was discussed that it can still allow seawater to intrude. With this possibility, I moved that we discuss this with our watermaster attorney to see if we would be able to bypass the current legal process, which could take many years to settle, and go in to either fix this well or destroy it sooner rather than later. I'm expecting this topic to be covered in closed session at our February mtg.

Another important topic that we covered was the annual Seawater Intrusion Analysis Report for 2023. This report showed that seawater intrusion is currently not occurring but that it is still likely for our basin.

Lastly, we looked at the draft 2023 Watermaster Annual Report that needs to be submitted to the court. We approved it with no edits and it will now go to the regular board for approval before it gets submitted.

**Wednesday, December 13th- Special Council Meeting-** This had to be on record, the shortest meeting ever! This meeting followed the Planning Commission meeting which reviewed the final draft of our 6th cycle Housing Element. Once the Planning Commission recommended approval, it was the council's turn to review and provide the final approval.

With Mayor Donaldson out of town, as Vice Mayor I ran this meeting, although I certainly got off lucky as it was super straightforward. We've all been discussing the Housing Element so much that there were very few questions and it was easily passed. Many thanks go to Denise Duffy and Associates and our city hall staff who worked so hard to get this document done by the Dec. 15th deadline- great work!

**Tuesday, December 19th- City Council Meeting-** Although this was our last meeting of the year, we had some important decisions to make as we looked towards 2024. The first was looking at regional board and committee assignments. Councilmember Bill Ragsdale-Cronin, who was appointed last March and hadn't received any regional appointments, was requesting to replace Mayor Donaldson on M1Water. The main reason Bill was choosing that regional board appointment was because he actually retired from M1Water after working there for many years, so his knowledge of wastewater is vast. Given his lack of regional appointments, his experience in this field, and his need for a board appointment that would meet at night and fit into his work schedule, I was happy to support this request.

Another topic we covered was the approval for the professional services agreements with Whitson Engineers and Denise Duffy & Associates for engineering and environmental services for the South Boundary Road Realignment and General Jim Moore Blvd. Intersection Project. Now that we've settled our agreement with the California Native Plant Society regarding the plant reserve, we are ready to begin the process of realigning South Boundary Road further north and creating an intersection between South Boundary and General Jim Moore Blvd. that is safer than our current intersection. It has been proposed in the past that this intersection include a roundabout in the area where General Jim Moore Blvd. widens and can accommodate this transition. The new South Boundary road would also include space for bikes and pedestrians while including a swale space for drainage. Ultimately, this decision begins our long road to development on our former Fort Ord property, so I deeply encourage everyone to stay engaged and follow these steps as we begin this exciting process.

Lastly, I'm thrilled to share that we unanimously passed two ordinances that work towards creating a healthier community for us all! Along with councilmember Hallock, we were able to bring the Tobacco Retail License (TRL) Ordinance and the Smoke-Free Public Places ordinance to the council for approval. The TRL ordinance will charge our tobacco retailers an annual fee that will go towards Monterey County Health enforcing signage while investigating and preventing sales towards youth. The Smoke-Free Public Places ordinance eliminates the ability to smoke in public places such as our park, outdoor dining, or in service lines (ex. lines to the ATM or food truck). In addition to the public support we received for these ordinances we also received public comments that support passing a multiunit housing smoke-free policy. Two members of The Oaks condominiums HOA board attended our meeting and offered their support and shared that having the city pass this type of ordinance would financially help them in terms of fire insurance and would be

easier for them to enforce rather than having their own rules against smoking. I look forward to having the multiunit housing smoke-free ordinance back at that council in another month or two. Overall, I'm very pleased with our efforts to limit smoking and make public spaces healthier for our residents and visitors of our community. We will be doing the second reading for these ordinances in January.

**Wednesday, January 3rd- Seaside Groundwater Basin Watermaster Mtg-** We were missing two of our board members in this meeting, so the decision regarding creating a hybrid version of our meetings to increase access to the public and a closed session item was tabled for next time. We did decide on board chair and vice chair appointments, keeping our current configuration of Seaside Mayor Ian Olgesby as our chair and Sand City Mayor Mary Ann Carbone as our vice chair. We did appoint Monterey County Supervisor Wendy Root Askew as our new treasurer.

Also in this meeting we approved the annual Watermaster report that needs to be filed with the court every year. This included approving the final draft of the seawater intrusion report. A request that was brought up during this agenda item was to bring the seawater intrusion presentation that was done for the TAC to the full board for greater discussion. In the interest of having more information that's shared in these meetings, it was also requested that we make more of an effort to have other water agencies present in our meetings. Both of these ideas are good, as I'm always supportive of learning more about what other water agencies are doing and providing this information during a meeting allows our board further opportunities to ask questions and create discussions, which is especially important since there are clear yet amiable factions on our board. We also need to recognize that our aquifers are all connected and therefore we should not silo our efforts since decisions made by one organization will always affect another.

**Saturday, January 6th- Braver Angels Meeting-** This was the second meeting of the non-profit Braver Angels Monterey Alliance that was recently created by our DRO resident Deanna Ross. This alliance brings together a mix of "red" identifying and "blue" identifying individuals to talk and learn about skill building as we work to find commonalities. At our first meeting, we ran a bit heavy on the "blue" side with 63% attendance (17 blues vs. 5 reds and 5 independents). The ideal percentage is a 50/50 split with an upper allowance of 60/40. Given that we're not there yet, we'll be working towards gaining more reds and it looks like we were moving in that direction with this second meeting.

With about 30 people in attendance, we shared one word about how we were feeling about 2024. Next we shared how we were feeling about the election year and an instance where we had a "depolarizing" moment. With these moments of sharing, in terms of 2024 and this being an election year there were varying amounts of hope, excitement, and downright fear as people shared their feelings and approach for the year. Many talked about altering their exposure to cortisol inducing news, while others talked about moving towards being kind to one another and creating a community where we all felt more gracious towards

each other. Overall, it was so nice to take part in something where we'll be able to break down barriers and remind each other that assumptions often get in the way of making positive connections with others. I look forward to continuing with these monthly meetings and would strongly encourage others to join (especially if you're "red" leaning!).

**Monday, January 8th- Monterey-Salinas Transit Board Mtg-** Please see the MST board highlights in our agenda packet. One thing you won't see in those board highlights is that after the board meeting...I got to drive a bus! Ok, so it wasn't on city streets, but several staff and board members were able to check out portions of the coach operator training course in a parking lot near CSUMB. MST is currently in need of 19 coach operators to round out our Better Bus Network. They are offering signing bonuses and are looking at convenient and efficient ways of getting people trained and able to pass the DMV driving test by simulating the course on our own property. For us, this entailed driving the bus in an elongated oval, which included driving the bus through a narrow lane of cones to simulate a construction site. I only knocked down one cone (better than most!) and ok, I ran a curb, but other than that, it was thrilling! If you're interested in applying, please go to the MST website and download the application (<https://mst.org/about-mst/employment/>).

**Friday, January 12th- City Finance Mtg-** Good news at the finance meeting! We received our 2022/23 financial audit and there were no findings, which means our financial status can be trusted and is in good standing. Several years ago, that was not the case for the city, but thanks to the work of our staff and our contracted financial employees, they have worked diligently to make sure our methods of accounting are cleaned up and accurately reflects our financial status. I'm grateful for their work! Additionally, we will be talking soon about mid-year budget adjustments. There shouldn't be too many, but we will need to talk about how we'd like to move forward with some of our capital projects. We unfortunately did hear that FEMA won't be covering the cost of many of our storm damaged areas, so we'll need to prioritize and talk about our next steps. Thanks goes to DRO resident Mike O'Brien who's been attending our meetings. I would encourage others, if you have the time, to drop into our finance meetings. I appreciate the engagement!

**Monday, January 15th- Seaside's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration-** Thank you to the Monterey County Black Caucus, Rosalyn Green, the city of Seaside, and the many other co-sponsors and supporters for putting on such a wonderful event! I walked down to the start of the march and jumped in with Sustainable Seaside as they marched to the Oldemeyer Center. I was happy to see DRO resident, Juan Sánchez, Founder and Executive Director of Palenke Arts who was there marching with his students and also performing during in the program. Dr. PK Diffenbaugh, MPUSD Superintendent was there marching as well. He gave remarks and then at the end of the program it was announced by MPUSD Board Trustee Dr. Bettye Lusk that for the first time ever, MPUSD will have a caravan of HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) representatives visit Seaside High School. The representatives will be providing seniors across the district with immediate entry and scholarships to their institutions. Love it! Overall, this event is always

inspirational and I appreciated its focus on youth, its acknowledgment of those who have worked so hard to get us where we are today with the knowledge that there is still so much work to do. True to Dr. King's focus, the event honored the pastors in our community that are doing good work while also recognizing our educational institutions that provide the space to grow leaders and advocates in our communities.