

Kim Shirley's Council Report for Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Friday, October 18th- ReGen Monterey Board Meeting- Compared to our other meetings, this month's meeting had a shorter agenda which was a nice change. After passing typical consent items, we recognized Javier Ayala for his 25 years as a level II sorter in the materials recovery facility (MRF). These recognitions are always nice and meaningful as we are truly grateful for the dedication of our employees!

Next we had two items we addressed for actions. The first was a discussion about authorizing the general manager to negotiate a reimbursement agreement with California-American Water Company (Cal Am) for staff time related to the Monterey Peninsula Water Supply Project. Basically, Cal Am's desalination plant would be located right next to ReGen and in their need to move water to Monterey One Water would require that they locate pipes across our property. With this planning, Cal Am would need to work with our employees to talk about their requests for easements and exact placement of their pipes. Such that Cal Am is a private company, we would need our public agency to be reimbursed for this cost in time and effort. After much discussion and a failed vote on the motion to move forward the recommendation that was before us, we ultimately voted to **not** have our employees take up their valuable time in discussing this project with Cal Am and to wait until the supply and demand decision comes from the California Public Utilities and Commission (CPUC). This decision is expected to come before the end of the year (it was supposed to be completed by the end of the summer, but so far, we haven't heard). Since at this time, it's very uncertain if this desalination plant will be completed, many of us felt it was not worth our employees' time taking on this additional task when their plates are already full. Once the CPUC announces their decision then we'll have a better idea regarding the direction of the project. If they give approval, then it makes sense for our employees to spend time on this project. And with that, this agenda item will likely be revisited at the beginning of next year.

The second item was a discussion around the 15-year base term compost operations and lease agreement with Keith Day Company. We've covered this topic in a few different meetings, so this was the final version which allows for two 5-year extensions and allows both parties to terminate after 10 years. The recommended motion for this item included a "subject to approval of form by district legal counsel" because we were still waiting on feedback from the city of Marina. Over the years, there have been several complaints of odors which prompted an odor study. The study did not identify one source and acknowledged that odors could be coming not only from our compost practices but also from the wastewater treatment plant (M1W) as well as the surrounding agricultural fields when they're spreading compost and fertilizers. ReGen has taken these complaints very seriously and has shared with Marina that within the next year or two we will be moving to a covered aerated static pile system which cuts down on odors. Regardless, given these

worries, ReGen reached out to Marina regarding this contract and presented it to their council. At this time, we were still waiting for their counsel to reply to the contract, so our approval of this contract was essentially waiting for Marina's response so we can move forward. The Marina City Manager was at our meeting and shared his appreciation for this cooperation. I'm not expecting to see this again and once the lawyers talk about any small additional details, then I'm sure it will move forward. Update: I signed the final contract on Friday, Nov. 8th after a couple of minor edits from Marina.

After a few additional reports, the last item of consequence was appointing an Ad Hoc Nomination Committee which would consider the board chair and vice chair appointments for next year. I solicited volunteers for this task and Supervisor Wendy Root Askew volunteered. And after some arm twisting, Mayor Bill Peake joined the committee.

Saturday, October 19th- Repair Cafe- Kevin and I stopped by this super cool event which was being run by a friend of ours who shared this idea with me last year. These "Repair Cafes" have been run in other cities and she wanted to bring this concept to the Monterey Peninsula. The idea is that people bring items that need fixing and then it prevents these items from ending up in the landfill. I was happy she chose Old Town Hall for this event and I'm grateful that she had sponsors such as the city (thanks for Old Town Hall!) as well as ReGen Monterey who advertised the event. She had all kinds of volunteers who were fixing bikes, small appliances, and helping with clothing items (Kevin had several shirts brought back to life with new buttons!). It wasn't super busy but they seemed to have a steady stream of people. I look forward to hearing her stats on items fixed when she has some time to total it all up. I hope she's able to run more of these in the future.

Tuesday, October 22nd- City Council Meeting- If you missed this council meeting then you missed the warm and always generous hospitality of Vice Mayor John Uy! We began this meeting with three proclamations. The first was recognizing October as breast cancer awareness month. The second and third were recognizing LGBTQ+ history month as well as Filipino-American History month. After our Mayor read the first, then Vice Mayor Uy read the remaining two which are both very meaningful for him. After the readings, we broke to eat Filipino food which was a real treat! Big thanks to Vice Mayor Uy and his family for always bringing the party and providing such heartfelt messages for all of us. It's always appreciated!

Once we came back into session, we passed the consent agenda and then passed two items. The first was an approval for our city manager to execute a maintenance agreement for FORTAG with Caltrans. This agreement covers the areas of the trail which are on the Canyon Del Rey (Hwy 218) right of way. The second item we discussed was an amendment to the contract with Julian Treecare for their work clearing the areas along Del Rey Park and Work Memorial Park for fire prevention by reducing potential brush that can easily become fuel for fires. Their original bid did not use up the entirety of our CalFire grant, so we were able to go back and with this amendment, authorize the rest of the grant

to do even more clearing. I'm grateful for this work and the effort our staff has put into this project as it truly will protect our city from a potential fire that could have devastating impacts.

The last item on our agenda was informational and was an opportunity for city manager Guertin to tell us once again how Ron Fucci is looking out for Del Rey Oaks. Knowing that PG&E had a bunch of trees that they were willing to give away (this offsets all of the trees they've been cutting down near wires), Ron took advantage of this and was able to get about 75 trees donated to DRO! It will take some time to figure out where exactly they'll go, but we're excited to have all of these trees beautify our city.

Monday, October 28th- Monterey One Water Meeting- We had two main action items for this meeting which were both approved. Ironically, they had nothing to do about water and were all about M1W's ability to produce biogas which can then be turned into renewable natural gas (RNG) and sold back to PG&E in the pipelines or can be turned into electricity. Regardless of what they do with their biogas, they're looking to get up and running at the start of next year, so these items will support that effort.

The first item was a contract with a company that will provide food waste in addition to personnel that will help M1W utilize their anaerobic digesters. I know there's some irony in M1W shipping in food waste when ReGen is next door, but we were not able to provide M1W with the amount of food waste that they needed, processed in a manner that can be utilized in the digesters. Their digesters were largely funded with a Calrecycle grant which required a certain amount of food waste to be used in the digesters, satisfying SB 1383 (organic waste composting legislation). It's predicted that after 18 months, the tipping fees M1W will receive for accepting this waste will exceed the total cost of the services, so it was easily accepted by the board.

The second item was a contract for professional engineering services which will help M1W design their "Digester Gas Handling and Heating Improvements." With the increased production of biogas, they'll need to be ready for processing that biogas in the most economic way possible. This contract will provide a plan and the more detailed work needed to set up the system. This was also easily approved.

Wednesday, October 30th- Joint Planning Commission and City Council Meeting-

This meeting was to review the latest edits for our 6th cycle Housing Element that was adopted in December. We're still looking for final approval from the State Housing and Community Development (HCD), so this was an effort to look at what's been added to the document since HCD gave their initial feedback (with some additional feedback sessions in between). I was grateful that Denise Duffy posted the document on our website about 2 weeks in advance and then gave all of the council members and planning commissioners opportunities to talk with her about their questions during "office hours." After I reviewed the document, I took advantage of that opportunity and spent about an hour talking with

Denise and Troy (Denise's associate who has done much of the work on the document). Having this time to review was helpful for me to ask questions and get a better understanding of the document.

Overall, the meeting went very well with Denise providing a thorough overview of the new and edited programs that were detailed in the document. We all had an opportunity to ask additional questions and the public was also given a chance to provide feedback. This version of the document is currently at HCD for an informal review, so we should be hearing back in the next 30-60 days for their additional edits. I look forward to continuing the necessary work on this document so we can be compliant with the state. Although it's a huge document that seems like overreach from the state, I do appreciate the effort to create more affordable housing and I look forward to DRO utilizing all of the programs to increase housing for our community.

Sunday, November 3rd- Airport Meeting with Residents- When I canvassed this season, many of the comments I received were complaints about the airport. In general, people feel like the noise has greatly increased with the increase in flights and noise guidelines are not being followed (more early and late planes and pattern flying that doesn't follow the established rules). To let people know they weren't alone in their individual comments, I decided to bring them together at a Rosita resident's backyard that backs up to the airport. I also invited Monterey residents from the Monterey Fly Safe Coalition and Airport Board Candidates Uwe Grobecker and Jonathan Ahamdi. Although everyone has a slightly different experience based on where they live, I listened to stories about the increase in noise (I was actually quite surprised at the level of noise we experienced just during the meeting), flight paths over homes, concerns with a lack of communication regarding maintenance of the airport's open space next to the homes on Rosita, the number of repeat touch and goes by the flight school, concern over black dust that they repeatedly see on their window sills, and concern with the clean up of PFAS that was discovered a couple of years ago. In general, there is a level of stress that people are feeling living so close to the airport that is affecting their mental health. What concerns them (and me) is that the airport doesn't seem to value including regular communication to start addressing these concerns. In the end, everyone appreciated the meeting and showed a lot of interest in continuing to meet to see if they can do anything to help elicit some changes. I know it will take a large movement, along with time and coordinated efforts to make some inroads, and I'm happy to provide opportunities to get us working together towards a happier coexistence with the airport.

Monday, November 4th- MST Board Administrative Performance Committee- MST's ridership continues to grow each month. The State legislative update shared that our goals for 2025 will largely be the same as this year. The legislators will be back on Dec. 2nd where we'll have over 30 new members, but there are no changes to our delegation. In terms of the Federal update, it was noted that the lame duck session begins Nov. 12th and

they'll be working to keep the government running. There are some proposals for reductions in multimodal transit and rail, so we'll see where that lands.

We also talked about the contactless payment system at MST. It continues to grow. When seniors and veterans register their cards they will automatically get their discounts when they use the contactless payment system. Riders will be able to use their Discover and Diners Club cards, too. The contactless system will also be added to the Rides and paratransit system, as well. They will also be adding "family" or "multi-fare" abilities (having one person tap for multiple people). They're also looking into student fare validation and allowing users to pay with their American Express cards.

Monday November 4th- MST Board Meeting- Please see the MST Board Highlights in our agenda packet.

Wednesday, November 6th- ReGen Monterey Finance Committee Meeting- The first item we discussed was an update on the LoCi pilot program on our gas wells. Basically, LoCi is a remote system that sits on top of the wellhead which allows remote data collection and adjustments on a more frequent basis (usually a person has to walk out to each wellhead to make the change). This more frequent adjustment has allowed us to increase our gas production and receive higher quality gas which is what we'll need if we start using it to produce renewable natural gas. This system also helps us to reduce our overall emissions. Since this is a pilot program, we'll need to look to see how we can build it out for our entire system. I'm sure we'll be seeing this at the board level soon.

Next we had a discussion about our CalPERS unfunded actuarial pension liabilities. This is a debt that increases every year and so our conversation was geared towards looking at the various ways we could approach this issue to help us lower interest and costs that accrue every year, beyond just making our minimal payment, which we have already been doing every year. With the recommendation from the staff, we agreed that making an additional payment in January of \$500,000 would help us reduce our ever ballooning costs down to a reasonable amount within the next 10 to 15 years. I was happy to have this conversation and I think it's an interesting one to have with the city, too. This will be coming back to our board for further discussion.

The last items were addressing the purchase of various heavy machinery to replace older versions. Every purchase that's made gets us closer to meeting the low emissions rule for all of our equipment. I truly appreciate our efforts in this area.

Wednesday, November 6th- Seaside Groundwater Basin Watermaster Meeting- We began this meeting with two presentations from our neighboring groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs). The first was a presentation from the Salinas Valley GSA and the second was from Marina Coast Water GSA. It's so interesting because Marina has a lot of projects going on and the Salinas Valley is working hard at figuring out their next steps to

take care of seawater intrusion. These presentations are important since our basins are connected in various ways and how we approach the problem of seawater intrusion can affect all of our basins.

We approved many budget items during this meeting, which had all received prior review from the budget committee. We also approved the declaration of the 2025 water year and that there is no replenishment water available—only what is currently available plus any additional carry-over. Our largest discussion for the meeting was about the amount of replenishment water we would need for seawater intrusion protection for the basin. The less conservative approach shows that we'd need 1,000 Acre Feet/year for 10 years (in other words, putting in that amount and leaving it in the basin). The more conservative approach which takes into account the possibility for multi-year droughts, requires 3,600 Acre Feet/Year for the next 10 years to achieve protection. In the end, we moved that we should use the 36,000 AF in 10 years as a target for planning for protective levels in the basin. We're not sure where this water will come from but it's good to know what we need to shoot for.

Friday, November 8th- M1W Budget/Personnel Committee- During today's meeting we recommended approval of the MOU for the agreement with the City of Monterey for their wastewater charges which will now be billed through the county property tax bill. We also recommended approval for some wording that needed to be changed for several of the employee groups that dealt with educational incentive pay. These changes were brought about because CalPERS did an audit of several agencies and found that many were out of compliance. Moving forward, all of the current resolutions now have the correct language.