

**WASHOE COUNTY COMMISSION
RENO CITY COUNCIL
SPARKS CITY COUNCIL**

JOINT MEETING

TUESDAY

9:30 A.M.

DECEMBER 14, 2004

PRESENT:

Bonnie Weber, Washoe County Commissioner, Vice Chairman

Jim Galloway, Washoe County Commissioner

David Humke, Washoe County Commissioner

Pete Sferrazza, Washoe County Commissioner*

Robert A. Cashell, City of Reno, Mayor

Dave Aiazzi, Reno City Councilmember*

Dwight Dortch, Reno City Councilmember

Dan Gustin, Reno City Councilmember

Sharon Zadra, Reno City Councilmember

Jessica Sferrazza, Reno City Councilmember*

Mike Carrigan, Sparks City Councilmember

Geno Martini, Sparks City Councilmember

John Mayer, Sparks City Councilmember

Phil Salerno, Sparks City Councilmember

Ron Schmitt, Sparks City Councilmember

ABSENT:

Tony Armstrong, City of Sparks, Mayor

Pierre Hascheff, Reno City Councilmember

Jim Shaw, Washoe County Commissioner, Chairman

The Board and Councils met in joint session in the Reno City Council Chambers, One East First Street, Reno, Nevada, with Reno Mayor Robert Cashell presiding. Also present were Washoe County Manager Katy Singlaub, Deputy District Attorney Melanie Foster, County Clerk Amy Harvey, Reno City Manager Charles McNeely, Reno City Attorney Bill Sherman, Reno City Clerk Lynnette Jones, Sparks City Manager Shaun Carey, Sparks City Attorney Christi Thunder, and Sparks Deputy City Clerk Lenda Ulrich. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerks called the roll for their respective entities, and the Commission and Councils conducted the following business.

AGENDA

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, on motion by Councilmember Dortch, seconded by Commissioner Weber, which motion duly carried, Mayor Cashell ordered that the agenda for the joint meeting of December 14, 2004 be approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Al Hesson, area resident, discussed the homeless situation in Washoe County and the City of Reno, and the priority given to the Animal Shelter over the Homeless Shelter.

Sam Dehne, Reno resident, voiced his objection to the one-minute time allotted to speak on agenda items, and he encouraged Commission and Council members to attend each other's meetings.

***9:53 a.m.** Commissioner Sferrazza arrived at the meeting.

***10:00 a.m.** Councilmember Sferrazza arrived during the following item.

***10:17 a.m.** Councilmember Aiazzi arrived during the following item.

04-1269 STAFF REPORT: TRUCKEE RIVER FLOOD CONTROL PROJECT

Steve Varela, City of Reno Director of Public Works, gave an overview of the status of the Truckee River Flood Control Project and reviewed the impacts of the 1997 flood. Mr. Varela summarized the flood damage to the private and public sectors with costs estimated at \$700-million. He stated that 2008 would be the earliest probable start date for beginning construction. Mr. Varela noted major concerns about the increase costs of the project, with an upper end of the cost estimate at \$343-million, as compared to the cost estimate in 1998 of \$130-million. He reviewed the following items that have occurred concerning the project: the early warning system, a Community Coalition Plan, the Army Corps of Engineers' request for a cost-sharing agreement, and the approval for the purchase of Steele Ranch.

Paul Urban, Washoe County Flood Control Manager, detailed a Power Point presentation regarding the Truckee River Flood Management Project, which was placed on file with the County Clerk. He reviewed the project schedule changes, cost changes, timeline and background. Mr. Urban discussed the timeline of the project, and he stated some phase of construction should begin in 2007. He stressed the importance of coordination and following the established structure.

Wayne Seidel, City of Sparks Director of Public Works, summarized the magnitude of the Truckee River Flood Control Project. He acknowledged that working with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal process was complex; however, he

questioned if there has been enough time and effort focused on the project, even with staff from all three entities working on it since 1997. Mr. Seidel stated not enough has been done locally with the elected bodies to line up agreements and to obtain the technical consulting and expertise to work with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Peggy Bowker, Nimbus Engineers, said efforts concerning flood control need to be elevated and flood control deserves the attention given to sewer, water, and other important infrastructure.

Robert Dickens, Director of Governmental Relations for the University of Nevada, Reno, voiced the University's interest in the flood control project and process. He said the early Army Corps of Engineers' planning documents had designated the University's Main Station Farm to be a retention basin for floodwaters without consulting the University. Dr. Dickens stressed the University was interested in being a full partner with the local governments in determining what flood control plans, public works, and river contouring kinds of activities occur up and down the river. He encouraged the entities to move ahead with the project.

Roberta Ross, President of the Downtown Improvement Association, stated the Association's primary concern was within the Redevelopment Agency boundaries that presently exist. She referred to pictures displaying the volume of the water during the 1997 flood. Ms. Ross expressed that the issue of flood control is urgent, and she encouraged the local governmental entities to continue in a strong, united force concerning the completion of project.

Gary Duhont, Truckee River Water Management Council, said the region has an opportunity that has never presented itself in the past and cooperation is a must to receive funding from Congress for the project. He stressed the importance of commitment on an individual and collective basis in order for the project to become a reality. Mr. Duhont requested a committee be formed that would meet regularly to discuss how the region could work to bring the project to fruition. He suggested the committee include one elected official from each entity, the managers, and sufficient technical personnel.

Commissioner Humke requested clarification on the make-up of the committee Mr. Duhont had suggested, and Mr. Duhont explained the local sponsors at all appropriate levels of Reno, Sparks and Washoe County would be the basis of the committee.

Vern Miser, Washoe County resident, questioned the decision to build on the old Mapes site when that area was flooded in 1950. He encouraged the entities to expedite the process and include a plan that would be possible in a short period of time.

10:45 a.m. Commissioner Humke temporarily left the meeting.

Red Catell, Washoe County resident, discussed the anticipated costs associated with damage from future flooding, and the anticipated costs of modifications required to preclude the damage. He said the \$343-million cost of modifications would be worth the investment considering the anticipated \$1-billion of anticipated damages. Mr. Catell expressed that local officials must become more aggressive concerning the issue. He noted that nothing along the Truckee River has ever been done in terms of flood control, and the channel through downtown Reno needs modification.

10:48 a.m. Commissioner Humke returned to the meeting.

Jerry Purdy, Washoe County resident, discussed flooding trends, the 1997 flood, and the Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Impact Study (EIS) of 1985. He recommended that the issues suggested in that EIS be explored.

Elisa Maser, Contractor, noted that a major flood event occurs on the Truckee River every decade. She said the strength of the project is the community partnership that has been set in motion, and it is critical to maintain the partnership as the project moves forward. She reviewed a list of items that have been completed concerning flood control since the 1997 flood occurred.

Dennis Golari, Reno resident, said the interlocal agreement should be a top priority, and he stressed the importance of the Community Coalition Plan.

Sam Dehne, Reno resident, mentioned the dam being opened at Lake Tahoe intensified the 1997 flood. He suggested the entities discover how the Reno-Tahoe International Airport has been able to obtain Federal funding and follow their process to gain funds for the flood control project.

In response to Councilmember Dortch, Mr. Urban explained how many staff members were working on the project from the County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks. Mr. Urban said it would be a benefit to bring the staff members together with the direction of one focused approach on the flood control project. Councilmember Dortch noted that a flood could occur soon, and he inquired if money was the only item holding up the project. Mr. Urban responded that money was an issue, and the environmental review and requirements need to be in place. Councilmember Dortch asked what could be done to speed up the process. Mr. Urban stated all entities need to realize if the area wants the money from the Army Corps of Engineers, their process has to be followed; and a concentrated effort has to be made to get through it as fast as possible.

Councilmember Dortch asked why Mr. Urban would be against an interlocal agreement as suggested by the Army Corps of Engineers for the decision making process. Mr. Urban explained that in the Corps' process, their label of project sponsor is the entity that has the funding and the ability to spend funding to provide cost share, purchasing of real estate, and legal items involved in doing contractual responsibilities. From that standpoint, Washoe County, in the Corps' view, is the potential project sponsor. He noted the Corps desires to work with one entity and to have

that one entity be the sponsor to work on local issues through an interlocal agreement, and he has no disagreement with that.

Katy Singlaub, County Manager, clarified that Washoe County desires to have understandings among the three local governments about how communication occurs and how decisions are made. The Corps has specific requirements, and they do not acknowledge interlocal agreements. She explained that Federal law prevents Washoe County, as a region, from having a coalition that is a signatory to the project.

Councilmember Martini inquired how the City of Sparks could be involved in the process. He said the Council was given no information about the purchase of the Steele Ranch, and that information should have been shared. Ms. Singlaub explained that the three local governments reviewed the Early Land Acquisition plan and that project was prioritized and adopted with criteria that guided the selection of those projects that would be funded. She confirmed the staff from the City of Sparks has been involved in those priorities, and she offered to make improvements to the communication protocol.

Councilmember Martini asked what types of special requests the Corps has responded. Mr. Urban said the Corps responded to the request for the Community Coalition processes that are not normal in Corps projects, and he cited an example from Napa, California. Councilmember Martini observed that he has not sensed urgency locally or at the Congressional level, and he questioned what was being done at that level. He noted the project was six years behind, and he was frustrated with the process.

Mr. Urban stated there has been success and cooperation from the Congressional Delegation. He explained the Congressional Delegation has helped the project by gaining funding for continuation of studies and reprogramming money from other Corps projects that were not spending their money within the fiscal year timeline.

Councilmember Schmitt stressed that this body needs to show that flood control is a priority by working together to move this project forward.

In response to Councilmember Schmitt, Mr. Seidel outlined the next steps and processes for the project. He said part of the process would involve the interlocal agreements with the Corps, getting action plans and financial plans in place, and doing all that is possible on this side to keep the project moving ahead.

Councilmember Gustin inquired how much money had been collected and spent from the 1/8-cent sales tax enacted in 1998. Mr. Urban stated there is approximately \$33-million in the fund for the flood project, and he explained the tax also went towards the Police and Fire Training Center, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and some funds are being used to buy back the bonds for that. Mr. Urban noted details could be obtained from the Financial Director.

Councilmember Zadra noted Mr. Purdy stressed the importance of getting the emergency work done. She asked what response should be given to that. Mr. Seidel replied that the EOC was built and all three agencies have been working on flood response plans. He also noted the silt and debris build up and blockage in the Truckee River and said a plan is in place to carry out a project in winter or spring of 2005 to remove some of the silt from the river.

Commissioner Galloway said he was committed to accomplishing tasks to offset the affects of the delays, and he would support silt removal. He asked if Mr. Seidel's plan would cover the entire nine-mile stretch that is critical in terms of monetary damage from a flood. Mr. Seidel said the plan was to cover sections in Sparks.

In response to Commissioner Galloway, Mr. Urban explained silt removal falls under Operation and Maintenance within the 1960's Corps project and most of the Truckee River was part of a flood project back in the early 1960's. He said if there was a decision to perform silt removal, it would fall under that authority. He noted the authorities that perform maintenance of the river are the Carson-Truckee Conservancy District and the State Engineer. Mr. Urban stated it would be vital to examine the environmental impacts of dredging silt. He added there is a process where elements of a flood project could be completed early if desired by the local sponsor. There would be risks financially, as there would be no guarantee that the final Corps authorized plan would include projects that had been completed out of the timeline. Mr. Urban confirmed there are a series of early implementation items that could be completed that would have a minimal impact and not disturb the major plan.

Mayor Cashell asked how the Virginia, Lake, and Sierra Street bridges fit into the studies. Mr. Urban said the flood water levels could be improved and at least half of the problems solved with improved bridges. He noted there has been work done through the Corps and agreements with the Nevada Department of Transportation to do bridge improvements.

11:34 a.m. Councilmember Schmitt temporarily left the meeting.

Commissioner Sferrazza asked what would be needed to repair the Martis Creek Dam to ensure that additional water could be stored upstream to avoid what happened in the 1997 flood. He also inquired about the Lake Tahoe floodgates and what would be required to ensure that they are not open during a flood event. Mr. Urban replied the Corps is aware of the need to repair the Martis Creek Dam, but it is currently low priority on their list. He suggested a resolution by this body to recommend the Corps look into making those repairs. Mr. Urban explained that the gates at Lake Tahoe are run by the Federal Water Master according to legal directives that are handed down by the Courts. He said there is no leeway for judgment or decision when water levels reach certain key marks; and, when water supply and potential run-off meet, the Court decrees the action that needs to happen. Mr. Urban stated in the last twelve years a number of agencies have been renegotiating the Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA) and part of that action has asked for increased ability for the Water Master to use limited

judgment in the timing of those gates. He added there has only been once in 100 years that water has spilled over the gates in any significant amount during a flood peak and that was in 1997.

11:30 a.m. Councilmember Zadra left the meeting.

Commissioner Weber stated flooding impacts every citizen in Washoe County, and the elected officials should be more involved in the flood control project. She stressed the importance of informing the community about the project.

11:38 a.m. Councilmember Schmitt returned to the meeting.

Councilmember Aiazzi asked for a more specific timeline for the project, and Mr. Urban said he would gather that information. Councilmember Aiazzi inquired about the environmental review, and Mr. Urban stated baseline studies for the environmental review have been going on as staff has been doing the existing conditions work. Mr. Urban explained the next steps would be implemented more and more by the Corps as the process continues. In response to further questions by Councilmember Aiazzi, Mr Urban clarified that Storey County is considered a stakeholder in the project. He further clarified how the project in Napa, California coordinated with the Corps and their Community Coalition and added the Napa project was the model staff has been using as a guideline.

Mayor Cashell inquired if the \$33-million for the flood project could be used for bonding, and Ms. Singlaub confirmed that to be true. She explained the Finance Committee for the project includes staff from the Cities of Reno and Sparks. She added a rigorous financial review by the Finance Directors from the County and both Cities occurs frequently. This review is completed to ensure that the County has an adequate revenue stream into the future to meet the local share that would have to be funded locally, which would be in excess of \$100-million.

Commissioner Galloway requested Mr. Urban and staff come to the Executive Committee and present options that would be financially and legally possible to pursue, such as the bridge option mentioned by Mayor Cashell and silt removal. Commissioner Galloway said the purpose of this would be to proceed on the options under early implementation and maintenance. He asked staff to examine options that would not impair the project into the future. Mr. Urban remarked if a process could be established where staff was given direction as to what items were desired for presentation, then a series of workshops could be arranged for discussion.

Mayor Cashell suggested joint meetings be held monthly or bi-monthly to hear reports on a timely basis.

Councilmember Sferrazza said having a member from each of the bodies sit on a committee would assist in moving the process along and requested these items be placed on the Councils and Commission agendas. She stated the bridges and debris

should be looked at immediately and asked that updates on the project be given at monthly joint meetings.

11:48 a.m. Mayor Cashell left the meeting and Vice Mayor Dortch assumed the gavel.

Councilmember Aiazzi suggested the entities could direct their staffs to examine the Napa model and report back with plans, along with a draft of an interlocal agreement, in early February.

Commissioner Weber suggested there be a five-minute staff report presented monthly to the Board of County Commissioners. She said this would go far in educating the public about the flood control project. She asked that the report be provided to the Cities of Reno and Sparks and the University of Nevada, Reno.

Councilmember Carrigan voiced the importance of agreeing today to set plans in motion to implement work on the bridges in Reno and/or silt removal in Sparks. He noted the liability to the County and the Cities could be decreased in case of a future flood if steps have been taken concerning flood control.

Councilmember Schmitt said he was interested in what staff wanted to present, including solutions for moving ahead, and he stated he did not want the issue delayed for another two months.

Councilmember Aiazzi made a motion to direct the staffs of the County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks to look at the models discussed and present a written report with their recommendations to the entities at the January meeting; and, he directed that there be elected officials placed on the Technical Advisory Committee with the election to the committee to occur at the January meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Martini. Vice Mayor Dortch inquired if separate motions were required from the entities, and discussion ensued amongst legal counsel.

Commissioner Sferrazza asked for additional items to be added to the motion. He requested that staff report specifically on silt removal from the river, bridge repair or replacement, the Martis Creek Dam, and the floodgates at Lake Tahoe.

11:50 a.m. Councilmember Salerno left the meeting.

Commissioner Galloway asked that the report include the possibility of reinforcing or raising the banks in certain low areas.

Shaun Carey, City of Sparks Manager, suggested the following items be included the motion:

1. In regard to early implementation aspects of the project, a regional flood operation plan should be developed which takes the early warning system and turns

it into the real operations that the private and public sector must utilize; and, a set of early flood mitigation measures should be implemented.

2. A written communications plan of where communications would occur and how they would be carried out.

3. An immediate review of staffing and resource needs that would be necessary to achieve success in a project of \$343-million.

4. Present to the entities a written interlocal agreement on decision-making that would include local officials being part of the decision-making process.

5. Consider a written accountability plan where the managers are reporting the results on a regular basis and showing this body where goals are being met and where additional resources would be needed to meet objectives.

Commissioner Humke stated he considered the motion to be ambitious and too much for staff to undertake with a successful outcome. He said he could not support the motion.

Commissioner Galloway asked if the maker of the motion would restrict the motion to the five items and ask that Mr. Carey submit his proposals in writing at the next meeting.

Commissioners Humke and Weber inquired if what was being requested was possible for staff. Ms. Singlaub commented that many of the items are underway, and it would be possible to report in January on the five items that have been requested. She said it would be important to give the Technical and Steering Committees from all the entities time to prepare the gait chart and action plan. She confirmed she would get the items from Mr. Carey.

Charles McNeely, City of Reno Manager, said what Mr. Carey stated is of critical importance in terms of the overall project, and City of Reno staff would assist in pulling together a list of items for discussion and consideration for the January meeting.

Councilmember Carrigan asked if additional help could be provided for Mr. Urban, and Ms. Singlaub agreed. She noted a new hydrologist began with the County on December 14, 2004 who would work full-time on the project. She mentioned there are discussions underway to retain a government relations manager who would work with the Corps, communicate with all entities, and work with the Legislature in regard to the flood control project.

For the County, on motion by Commissioner Sferrazza, seconded by Commissioner Galloway, which motion duly carried with Chairman Shaw absent, and for the City of Reno, on motion by Councilmember Aiazzi, seconded by Councilmember Sferrazza, which motion duly carried with Mayor Cashell and Councilmembers Hascheff

and Zadra absent, it was ordered that staffs from the County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks examine the models discussed and present a written report with their recommendations to the entities at the January meeting. It was further ordered that elected officials be placed on the Technical Advisory Committee and the elections to the committee occur at the January meeting. It was also ordered that staff be directed to present a report at the January meeting on silt removal, bridge repair or replacement, the Martis Creek Dam, storage at Lake Tahoe, and the reinforcing or raising of the banks where appropriate. It was additionally ordered that Mr. Carey submit his proposals in writing at the next joint meeting of the entities.

For the City of Sparks, on motion by Councilmember Schmitt, seconded by Councilmember Carrigan, which motion duly carried with Mayor Tony Armstrong and Councilmember Salerno absent, it was ordered that staffs from the County and the Cities of Reno and Sparks examine the models discussed and present a written report with their recommendations to the entities at the January meeting. It was further ordered that elected officials be placed on the Technical Advisory Committee and the elections to the committee occur at the January meeting. It was also ordered that staff be directed to present a report at the January meeting on silt removal, bridge repair or replacement, the Martis Creek Dam, storage at Lake Tahoe, and the reinforcing or raising of the banks where appropriate. It was additionally ordered that, in regard to early implementation aspects of the project, a regional flood operation plan be developed which takes the early warning system and turns it into the real operations that the private and public sector must utilize, and a set of early flood mitigation measures be implemented; a written communications plan of where communications would occur and how they would be carried out be prepared; an immediate review of staffing and resource needs that would be necessary to achieve success in a project of \$343-million be completed; a written interlocal agreement on decision-making that would include local officials being part of the decision-making process be presented to the entities; and, a written accountability plan be considered where the managers are reporting the results on a regular basis and showing this body where goals are being met and where additional resources would be needed to meet objectives.

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

ATTEST:

BONNIE WEBER, Vice Chairman
Washoe County Commission

AMY HARVEY, County Clerk
and Clerk of the Board of
County Commissioners

ATTEST:

ROBERT A. CASHELL, Mayor
City of Reno

LYNNETTE R. JONES, City Clerk
City of Reno

ATTEST:

GENO MARTINI, Mayor Pro-Tem
City of Sparks

DEBORINE J. DOLAN, City Clerk
City of Sparks

*Minutes Prepared by
Lori Rowe, Deputy County Clerk*