Pojoaque Valley Planning Committee Meeting Notes
November 4th, 2004, 6:30-8:30pm
PV Administrative Building

The meeting commenced at 6:40pm and was chaired by David Dogruel. He was assisted by Jack Kolkmeyer, Santa Fe County Planning Director, and Renee Villarreal, Community Planner. David started by mentioning that the last meeting on October 28th was cancelled at the last minute due to a conflicting meeting with the Rio Pojoaque Acequia and Water Well Association (RPAWWA) that was held the same evening. There was a note posted on the door of this administrative building to inform anyone who didn't get the email that the meeting was cancelled. David apologized to those who were inconvenienced that evening.

David D. brought up the election and said that regardless of what the outcome was, there are two good things: No more annoying television ads; and the highest voter turnout since the 1960s. The bonds were passed with an overwhelmingly majority. Voters preferred water and fire initiatives based on the higher number of votes. Taxes will go up over a 20-year period. Which means that each taxpayer will be paying $86 a year in taxes, which in his opinion, is cheap to support County infrastructure.

David Ortiz announced that the S.P.M.D.T.U would be holding a clean up day of State Road 503 starting at 8am on Saturday, November 6th. The fraternity organization could certainly use help if people want to get out on Saturday. He thanked SF County for providing the bags, and gloves that were donated by the Solid Waste Division.

Also, on Saturday, November 20th, the S.P.M.D.T.U will be celebrating their 75th anniversary by having a fiesta. The event will be held at either the Nambe Headstart or the Elementary School. There will be food, various entertainers, including a performance by the elementary school kids, and other activities. Then the S.P.M.D.T.U will be hosting the 6th Annual Hispanic Arts Festival on November 27th. The event will be held at the fraternal hall on NM 503. It will give a chance for local artists to sell and display their arts and crafts, and will give local residents a chance to stop by to do their early Christmas shopping.

David D. gave a recap of the RPAWWA meeting and told the committee if anyone wanted a copy of his notes, he would email them out. He stated that the Association is in a difficult position. They have very little resources to pay for all the initiatives they would like to pursue. At the end of March 2005, Judge Vasquez will make a decision. Until then there is a rule and requirement for gag orders mandated by the federal judge.

David D. also mentioned that the composition of the board has changed to blend the original board of the RPAWWA with the PVWBA board. Also materials carried by the board into negotiation would be available to Association members.

David D. also added that there was a good overview of legal funding, options and likely outcomes with the litigation. A poll will be sent out to get feedback as to how the residents of the Valley feel about continuing litigation with Aamodt. Steve added that

the idea of the poll is to also give the board some comfort that people want to continue under the auspices of the Association to continue fighting in this manner.

David D. also pointed out that it was a civil meeting. There were some people out of order, but it was kept under control. David O. asked why he thought it remained civil this time around. David D. answered that he didn't know but maybe people are realizing that bickering doesn't get anyone anywhere. David also said that he didn't filter the notes and it's up to the committee if they think he should send out the notes and other information handed out at the meeting to the entire list-serve. Mary Lou Williams said she thought it would be a good idea. Other members agreed that David should send out the information.

David O. said in the meeting that he did not feel that the discussion on incentives should even be an issue. He does not feel that it is valid to set incentives for something that should not occur; that is, the capping of wells. More people would be willing to concede water if it was through a filtered wastewater treatment facility. He added that he sees the settlement as a way to limit trying to get more water. It will set a water limit as opposed to a gamble of knowing the amount of water being used. Levi Valdez added that he felt those with acequia water rights will benefit and those with just wells will lose out.

Jack said that with so many groups and discussions going on, we all need to remember and think about what this committee can do through the planning process. Other plans have been criticized for not taking a strong stance on water and wastewater issues. We need to realize this group has a different mandate and different challenges.

David O. said that the settlement agreement will be finalized at the end of March 2005. We have an opportunity to provide input. Defendants will either accept or not accept – hearings will then be held for objections. If significant amounts of people do not accept, he's not sure what will happen. He added that a water system depends on a critical mass in order to become economically viable.

Jack stated that the committee needs to think about what are the possible actions that they want to consider. As a group, we can bring this plan together in February.

David D. said that if we can take a stance on the lawsuit as a committee it could be unworkable or dangerous. If we gave options for water for the Valley, this may be wiser and it will support the vision and mission of our plan. David O. added that the plan should be based on what we want the Valley to look like.

David D. said that we do need to be flexible to work around or over the settlement issue. Levi added however we need to be realistic. This settlement is an obstacle that is real and we have to work with it one way or another.

Jack said that Steven Wust will be with us the next meeting on November 18th to discuss water and wastewater. Then we will have Carl Moore begin facilitation on the December meeting. After the group will take a break for the holidays. We will reconvene with Carl in mid-January where the facilitation of scenario and strategy

creation will address these issues in a clearer way. He said the group will need to keep focus and not deviate away from the original vision and mission, although we can also re-evaluate them as well. There will need to be some clarity that comes out of these discussions.

Steve said he wonders if the committee should not take Aamodt on in an explicit way. He added that the group should not keep focusing on the Aamodt deadline, and just keep on with our own schedule and deadlines for the plan. He also said that he is not hearing anything in our water discussions about keeping the acequias viable.

David O. said that we need to get back to the planning process. We need to look at how the planning process will get done with or without the settlement. Mary Louise added that we've got to think about what will be a realistic outcome that we can deal with.

Levi said speaking of reality; we need to realize that our wells will be capped. This is a given and a regional water system will be created in the process. The acequias will be protected as well, and our water will be secured; not really the way we want it, but it will be secured.

Steve added that there is no such thing as totally secured water in the Valley – all it is, is "*studied ambiguity"*. Jack said that this is the challenge of the planning process. Things evolve and change, but we do need to ask the question about secured water sources – what does this really mean? Steve said he thinks it means equitable division of water rights throughout the Valley based on need and prior use. Nobody really can make wet water secure. When we say secured water sources it makes it look like we have to go out and buy water rights. What we should be saying is being secured against a reasonable demand of Pueblo water rights.

Mary Louise said we know surface water is connected to ground water which means some people are not secure. For those people that live upstream there is a secured water source, but downstream from there, this may not be the case.

Jack asked what was the reason for wording secured water source in the original vision and in our discussions at the moment.

Ken Mullen said that recognizing water sources cannot be secured because of prior right to the Pueblos and the declining levels of ground water. How do we see this committee affecting this issue? David O. said this group has the ability to set a plan, create ordinances and consider growth restrictions. Ken said that he didn't think wells gave us security, especially since the Pueblos have first rights.

Carl Berney said that it seems that the water system is more secure than wells. The problem is a shared problem if we are going to have to rely on the federal government to get the Valley water, instead of alone with one's individual well.

Jack asked about why vision was written in this way if the group feels like there is no way to have completely secured water source. Carl added that the group didn't' think

about this when the original vision was being formulated. Dave added that it was not put entirely in context as well.

Doug stated that he didn't understand why this group needed to take a stand on the Aamodt settlement. He said that it really doesn't matter – we as a group are not in the business of water rights. The way we can assist for a secured water source is by focusing on conservation; making sure water consuming corporations are not allowed to build, using water-conserving technique in new construction. He said that he did not understand why we needed to take a stand on Aamodt or no-Aamodt. Jack stated that Doug articulated a way to take a stance for this group on the water issue.

Ken questioned where this will actually get us by not taking a stance. Steve stated that he thought it was safer that we do not take a stance because we cannot affect the outcome as a group.

David O. said that we need to look into the future. If we leave it out there in very general terms and do not state the consequences of not having a secured water source, then this will be bad as well. Santa Fe is a good example of not planning for secured water sources.

Ken asked wasn't the original plan a statement about where we want to be in the future? Mary Louise said that by not taking a stance, it is avoiding the issue. Doug stated that he didn't think this was the group to do this. Mary Louise stated that this was the point of planning. We don't need to take a stance, but we have to face if we don't settle we need to consider the implications.

Steve said because the traditional communities are not a political subdivision we should want to cooperate as best as we can with the Pueblos, the State, the Feds etc. We don't have this kind of political power. Mary Louise clarified by saying that we do not have to take a position, but this will be the result if we do not engage in the settlement.

Doug said that maybe the secured water sources can be achieved through scenario discussions. Carl added that planning with scenarios is a good idea, but it can't affect the issue. We need to come up with options.

Jack said that scenarios affect the strategies. That's why it is important to start off with the scenarios and out of this, we can come up with strategies that are most viable. Dave added that we also need to consider, not just the reliability of a water source, but also the quality of it. One out of four wells in the area exceed uranium water levels. Not many places identified nitrates as a problem. However it may be because of the co-introduction of carbon that may prevent nitrates from being identified.

The group took a break to enjoy the snacks that David D. brought and the beverages that Diane provided. Thanks for providing us with the good refreshments.

The committee began looking at the SWOT analysis on water. Renee explained that the majority of the key facts were gleaned from the Sangre y Jemez Regional Water Plan. She explained she tried to just focus on the facts about the water basins, ground

water storage and recharge and other water facts that were the focus of the plan. The group then began discussing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

David D. said that the economic value of a water right is both a strength and a weakness. Water is being commercially bought and sold. If water is treated as a commodity, this will danger the existence of the acequias.

Carl commented that he didn't understand what we meant by the "current configuration" of acequias as being a weakness. Levi felt we should take this out. Jack explained that he thought it meant the way the acequias are lined. Also it could mean the diversion points of the river may not be efficiently functioning and there may be a need for a more efficient diversion system. Doug asked if there were meters on acequias? David O. said yes – the majority of them are metered and the water is allocated based on acreage and distributed in this manner.

The committee ended with more announcements and comments. Renee said that Amelia could not make the meeting, but wanted the group to know that the first graffiti/vandalism warning sign was put up at the Pizza Inn building. Jack said the next meeting will be on November 18th. We may have a couple meetings back-to-back after Thanksgiving on December 2 and 9th, depending on how much we get done at the next meeting. Jack asked that the group really try to put the word out that we are getting into these important discussions and we need more participation from the communities.

Doug volunteered to bring a snack for the next meeting. Thanks Doug!

The meeting concluded at 8:45pm.

Notes taken by R.V.