



COMMITTEE REPORT

PRESENTED FOR COMMISSION MEETING DATE: 11/19/19

SUBMITTED BY: David Freedman

COMMITTEE NAME: Standing Committee on Water Conservation

SUBMITTED DATE: 11/11/19

COMMITTEE MEETING DATE: 11/06/19

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE: 12/04/19, 9 am

Committee Meeting Goals:

- City turf conversion project
- City water conservation rules and enforcement
- Water conservation for new residential projects
- Methane capture at wastewater treatment plants
- Work plan for 2019-20

Summary:

Desert Water Agency (DWA) Outreach and Conservation Manager Ashley Metzger joined the meeting, which began with a discussion of the City turf conversion project. Manager Tallarico said he would follow up with Facilities Manager Staci Schafer on a project to remove turf along the edges of Victoria Park. Although the turf would be replaced by a walking path and not desert landscaping, Ms. Metzger said that DWA could be flexible on the project eligibility for a DWA turf conversion rebate.

Manager Tallarico reported on his discussions with Airport Director Tom Nolan on turf conversion at the airport, including a demonstration project. Manager Tallarico will work with City Manager David Ready and Assistant City Manager Marcus Fuller on the process for obtaining Airport Commission and City Council approval for the project. Commissioner Miller asked to be involved in discussions on the landscaping and requested that the project not include any plastic weed barriers. Commissioner Freedman asked that the project include pollinator-friendly plants, in recognition of the City's participation in the Mayor's Milkweed for Monarch's Pledge.

Committee members agreed that water waste reports should be referred to DWA for its enforcement. Manager Tallarico will follow up with Code Enforcement to see whether reports made using the City's app can be assigned to DWA. The City will handle any water waste reports involving its own facilities.

Commissioner Freedman reported on the discussion at the previous day's DWA Board meeting on the Palm Springs Surf Club approved by the Planning Commission at its October 23 meeting. Ms. Meltzer confirmed that DWA would like to have more advanced notice from the City of residential and commercial projects with substantial water use, so DWA can work with the developers on water conservation measures. Manager Tallarico will discuss with Planning Services staff the possibility of a sustainability review on projects subject to Planning Commission review.

Commissioner Miller expressed strong interest in having the methane generated at the City's wastewater treatment plant captured and converted to energy. She will follow up with Doug Loar of Veolia, which operates the City's wastewater treatment plant, to discuss available technology and arrange a tour of the

plant. Ms. Metzger will follow up with DWA staff on whether this technology could also work at the DWA wastewater treatment plant.

Committee members then discussed projects for further work in the remaining months of the fiscal year. Commissioner Miller would like to see plastic weed barriers banned in the City and will work on a recommendation for the City to stop using them and to educate gardeners about them. Manager Tallarico expressed concern that an outright prohibition on plastic weed barriers would be challenging for the gardeners, who are still dealing with the ban on gas-powered leaf blowers. Ms. Metzger expressed interest in seeing the recommendation and said that in 2016 DWA stopped requiring weed barriers as a condition of eligibility for its turf removal rebates.

Ms. Metzger mentioned pre-rinse nozzles for restaurants that would help them reduce their water consumption. Manager Tallarico will include them as part of the educational outreach to restaurant owners in connection with the proposed ban on single-use plastic food ware.

Recommendation/Request:

As noted below.

ACTION ITEMS REQUEST TO COMMISSION	Approve recommendation on plastic weed barriers when ready for consideration.
ACTION ITEMS REQUEST TO OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY	Work with airport, parks and rec and maintenance staff on turf removal projects. Work with DWA on water conservation education.
POTENTIAL FISCAL IMPACT/REQUEST IF ANY:	The Office of Sustainability and the Airport have each budgeted \$100,000 for the airport turf conversion. A \$60,000 grant from Prop 1 funds is being sought for the airport demonstration project. DWA has \$100,000 in rebate funds available for City projects in FY 2019-20. The Office of Sustainability and the Airport have each budgeted \$100,000 for the airport turf conversion. A \$60,000 grant from Prop 1 funds is being sought for the airport demonstration project. DWA has \$100,000 in rebate funds available for City projects in FY 2019-20. Costs for turf conversion efforts at Victoria Park are still being assessed.