

USIBWC Citizens Forum Meeting
January 28, 2010, 6:00-9:00 pm
Imperial Beach - Tijuana Estuary National Estuarine Research Reserve
Meeting Notes*

See attached agenda. There were approximately 20 members of the public present.

Welcome and Introductions

Citizens Forum Co-Chair Oscar Romo kicked off the meeting and asked board members to self introduce. All board members were present, with the exception of Jo Brooks.

Introduction of Edward Drusina, Commissioner, USIBWC

Mr. Romo then introduced USIBWC Public Affairs Officer Sally Spener who gave a brief biography of newly-appointed U.S. Commissioner Edward Drusina. Commissioner Drusina then made a brief statement. He was honored to have received the appointment. The IBWC has a long history and a 2000 mile border, and he acknowledged that the needs of the border were many and great. He was looking forward to working with all the stakeholders in planning and implementing projects.

Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association, Who We Are, What We Do: Past, Present & Future

Mr. Romo then introduced Dr. Mike McCoy of the Southwest Wetlands Interpretive Association (SWIA) who gave a history of the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve (TRNERR) and its origins, the fragile estuarine ecosystem, projects undertaken over the years, major storm flows and their consequences, and the impacts of development on the estuary. Dr. McCoy suggested that IBWC work on sediment control in Mexico.

International Boundary and Water Commission, Funding and Project Development

Mr. Romo then introduced Sally Spener, USIBWC Public Affairs Officer, who gave an update on how the USIBWC develops projects and budgets and receives appropriations for them. When asked if there were any projects that the IBWC was considering for San Diego, USIBWC Area Operations Manager Steve Smullen responded that, other than the construction of the secondary treatment plant and those that were being considered by the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team (TRVRT), there were no projects in the pipeline.

Status Update on Construction of the Secondary South Bay International Wastewater Treatment Plant

Steve Smullen, USIBWC Area Operations Manager, then gave an update on construction of the secondary wastewater treatment plant and mentioned that USIBWC had issued a unilateral modification to accelerate the construction contract. A question was asked on the date that the plant would be producing secondary effluent. Smullen responded that negotiations on that date would include discussions with contractor PCL, the Department of Justice, and the State of California. The contractor has committed to a

secondary compliance date of January 5, 2011 but there could still be issues that arise causing delay which are not the fault of the contractor. Doug Liden of EPA asked if Mexico would be contributing more cost for secondary treatment. Mr. Smullen replied that Mexico's cost sharing is based on secondary treatment and has been since the plant came on line. The IBWC recently renegotiated Mexico's contribution toward plant operations and maintenance, going from \$0.34/cubic meter of sewage treated to \$0.58US/cubic meter. Scott Huth asked what that yearly amount was. Mr. Smullen responded it amounts to approximately \$1.8M US/year.

Public Comment

Carl Nettleton of the Tijuana River Valley Recovery Team (TRVRT) expressed concern about the process for doing a binational project. He wondered if USIBWC could do a domestic project to address sediment and trash before it gets into the channel without involving Mexico. Commissioner Drusina responded that the IBWC does international projects.

A member of the audience requested IBWC's help with flood control, especially agricultural flooding that's occurring. He complained about lack of maintenance of the channels.

There was discussion on the need to clean out the "channel" below the Dairy Mart Road Bridge which was addressed at the last Citizens Forum meeting in October. Dick Tynan asked whose responsibility it is to dredge the channel. Mr. Smullen responded that the IBWC has jurisdiction on all IBWC property, including the strip below the Dairy Mart Bridge but does not include work downstream of that location. Mr. Smullen mentioned that the work envisioned in that ½ mile strip was strictly a cleanout and not a dredging operation -- that a dredging project would involve permitting and more cost which would have to be done under the auspices of the TRVRT. We were looking at using the Customs and Border Protection for this cleanout as the USIBWC's San Diego office does not have a maintenance crew. The IBWC's Tijuana River Flood Control Project in San Diego is too small. Typically if any larger silt removal or channel dredging were required the USIBWC would bring work crews from El Paso, Texas to perform the work.

Future Agenda Items

Oscar Pombo suggested he could present his work on the Baja California Climate Change Action Plan – a water resource study of which the Tijuana River Valley is only a small part.

Mike Williams suggested that the Orange County Water District Public Affairs Office could be contacted to make a presentation on Parado Dam in Orange County. This is a component of groundwater replenishment in that area where water is discharged to a marsh. Mr. Williams volunteered to make contact to see if a speaker could present at the next meeting.

Mr. Smullen mentioned the aquifer storage study being done by Dudek/USGS/County of San Diego. Dudek had agreed to present at the last Citizens Forum meeting but postponed until they had sufficient data to make a presentation.

Mike Williams would like to know about any fish that are in the Tijuana River. The Board is interested in the border water infrastructure tour. Mr. Smullen and Mr. Romo will try to come up with some dates. A weekday is preferred.

Next Meeting

May 6, 2010 at the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Board Discussion

Oscar Romo will draft a mission statement for the Citizens Forum Board. Jack Bransford and Carolyn Powers will assist.

Sally Spener provided information on meetings in the area that could be attended by Citizens Forum Board members so that information could be channeled from these meetings and reported back to the Citizens Forum. Members agreed to take a look at the meetings identified.

*Meeting notes are tentative and summarize in draft the contents and discussion of Citizens Forum Meetings. While these notes are intended to provide a general overview of Citizens Forum Meetings, they may not necessarily be accurate or complete, and may not be representative of USIBWC policy or positions.