



ORIGINAL

**Aransas County Groundwater Conservation District
Workshop Meeting Minutes
5:30 PM, January 27, 2016
Aquarium at Rockport Harbor Education Center
706 Navigation Circle, Rockport, TX**

Directors Present

Director Tom Callan
Director Lynn Wildman
Director Ed Hegen
Director Robert Walls
Director John Alexander

Directors Absent

None

Staff Members Present

Elected Officials Present

Commissioner Jack Chaney
Commissioner Betty Stiles

Guests

Brian Olsen
James Dodson
Richard Rock

Opening Agenda

1. Call to order.

With a quorum of Directors present, the second Workshop meeting of the Aransas County Groundwater Conservation District (ACGCD) was called to order by Commissioner Tom Callan at 5:30 PM on Wednesday January 27, 2016, at the Aquarium at Rockport Harbor Education Center, 706 Navigation Circle, Rockport, TX.

2. Format for Presentation to the Public

Tom gave a little history of what has been done the past couple of weeks. He made a presentation twice—once to the Harbor Oaks Homeowners' Association (HOA) and the other to the Aransas County Democratic Club (ACDC). The ACDC presentation was somewhat better than the HOA. At this point, Richard Rock was introduced. Tom continued discussing the difference between the two presentations. The Harbor Oaks was the first one. He sent everyone a copy of what was basically presented to the second one—the ACDC. Questions were put forth from both. One of the main questions was “where do we get our drinking water”? There was discussion of this. Tom suggested that whenever there is a presentation that there be two people—one as speaker and one to serve as a backup and/or take notes of the questions so we'll be ready next time. Tom discussed the problem of three directors being employed full time which would make it difficult to coordinate but it would still be important to think about how to do it. The other thing was that the Harbor Oaks presentation probably went 15 minutes and was not as prepared as the second presentation. Richard Rock gave his view of what he had heard from the ACDC presentation and felt it was “on the money”. Questions from both presentation audiences were asked and answered. The next presentation on the books is to the Chamber of

Commerce and we will have two minutes to do that one. Commissioner Stiles commented that it is too important for just two minutes and to continue longer as necessary. Chairman Callan indicated he could say a lot in two minutes but probably could not convey the main points in that time. Commissioner Stiles suggested using a handout with created list of bullet points to refer to with which Chairman Callan agreed. The next point is that all presenters must avoid the tendency to speculate. Chairman Callan had a person ask whether everyone was going to have to permit or not and he responded that it has not been decided yet. We have no rules yet...we have no management plan yet, and without these we cannot specifically say yes or no. And what about registration...every well is going to be registered, yes or no? Mr. Dodson responded that if it was drilled after 1970+, they've already been registered. Up until the clean water act, it was not required for any state to set up a well registry—some already did, but some did not, so it's not necessary. Someone else responded that some of those data bases are very sparse and sketchy, and only about 10% of the state's wells are in those data bases. Chairman Callan said his point was that the only point of registering a well for this district is that we know it exists. I don't necessarily care whose property it is on or how deep it is, I just want to know it exists, because otherwise how are you ever going to forecast consumption if you don't know what all the active wells are. A Director responded, yes, you're predicting a 125-gal per minute draw on every well in the county and you missed 50 of them, that's a big change. Chairman Callan said that regardless of what the State has required up to date, we've got to go back and identify what's not in the database. Director Alexander said we could talk about well-head protection programs to protect the water supply. The Texas Water Development Board has been doing this for years. Chairman Callan said it might be a matter of terminology...to register or permit—both of which have connotations in the minds of the public. Director Alexander said that we have that rule-making that ability to register or permit, but we have to have public input whether we even make a rule whether you permit or not. So they will have the opportunity to voice whether they want their well registered or not, at least if we form this district. Commissioner Stiles asked if TCEQ is requiring you to register a well? Chairman Callan responded yes. Mr. Dodson said there is a form that the well drillers are supposed to send in to the State. There is no local requirement unless the District enacts it and has it in their rules. If there is no groundwater district, no information is received. Chairman Callan reiterated we have to have public hearings, we have to form a management plan and we have to decide what gets permitted and what does not. We're not going to know that until we have a district actually, but once we do, it's likely that it would be mandatory that some recordkeeping will be done. Commissioner Stiles mentioned that another presentation upcoming is the Lamar Women's Club on February 17th—that's a Wednesday, at noon. Chairman Callan said we needed someone to volunteer for it and asked other directors to fill in. Director Wildman asked when the presentation for the Chamber was...Commissioner Stiles answered February 9th. Richard Rock suggested that if the district was interested in making a presentation to the South Rockport Neighbors, they meet on the third Thursday, and they are having a meet the candidates forum for Sheriff, and they will probably draw a crowd of about 40 people, and Jim Godfrey or George Riekerts are the ones to be contacted, and they could work that in with the Sheriff's debate. Chairman Callan said we could do handouts, a slideshow/power point, or just speak. Let's talk about other forms of presentations. How about articles in the media...any suggestions? Commissioner Stiles suggested WWN (wonderful women's network). Chairman Callan added the Rockport Pilot and asked about the Herald. Mr. Rock said yes, especially as there are a lot of democratic readers of the Herald and these are people who are going to support this cause. Commissioner Stiles added Facebook and Chairman Callan agreed, yes, social, and if we're going to do that we should have a page (Betty said Collin could prepare one) and it should be pretty snazzy and all that because black and white doesn't work very well. We could hire someone to help us on that like Nancy Paulson or Karen Mella. There is a lot of well logo, etc. Director Hegen suggested using the Chamber resources, and City newsletter, and County webpage and newsletter. Mr. Rock attended the City Council meeting and asked them to support the water district. Chairman Callan responded they really don't know what it's all about yet. Mr. Rock said they found out from me and did get a couple of smiles when I talked about the district and one frown and asked them for support on protecting our water. The Pilot was on hand as well. Chairman Callan said he was going to make a presentation to the Chamber and had talked to the Mayor about addressing City Council. Director Alexander asked about the ACISD but no one was sure of whether they put out a newsletter or who to contact but Chairman Callan suggested getting in touch with Mr.

Patek. Another Director had another suggestion of where we could get info to the public and asked about the American Legion, GI Forum, etc. Chairman Callan said we were coming around to that shortly but what has been suggested are probably the principal media sources. Now getting around to organizations, we can probably brainstorm this a bit and let's just use that kind of format and start with Director Wildman. Director Wildman volunteered to go to the Lamar Women's Club (Betty reminded him she had already scheduled that but suggested the RCC ladies' club. Director Wildman agreed that would be good. Director Alexander suggested the two political parties and since Democrats have already been done, there was still the Republican Party which meets on a Thursday night. Commissioner Stiles suggested talking with Debbie Williams who is President or Vice President. Director Hegen volunteered for the service clubs—the Lions Club and Rotary Club, and they are always looking for speakers. Director Hegen said that if we were going to the City of Rockport we needed also to go to the Town of Fulton. Director Walls did not have any suggestions at this time. Chairman Callan asked if the Good Samaritans and whether they actually meet. Director Hegen said they had a Board of Directors but it's not an informational exchange to the community organization but strictly how they conduct business meeting. Church organizations were brought up as were men's club organizations and Director Hegen volunteered to talk with the Methodist Men. Mr. Dodson suggested those environmental groups like Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists and any other organizations of a similar nature. The Bird and Nature Club and the 4-H Club were brought up and Director Hegen said if there was a presentation poster, he could put one up in the Aquarium and the Education Center lecture series is already booked through March or April, so there would be a lot of visitors. He also mentioned that the Maritime Museum has brown-bag lunches. This time of the year, though, most of the visitors are winter Texans so the locals come in fewer numbers. In regards to the poster idea, Director Alexander said he would check his contacts and see if they had something similar he could get copies of. Chairman Callan asked him if he knew Karen Mella, but he responded no. Callan went on to say Karen Mella is in the advertising business here in Rockport, and she is very creative and would be great to connect with. Director Alexander brought up the Rockport Pilot again and suggested the first article could be about places to talk with people and get contacts. Director Hegen brought up a Tree Committee...protected water is important for the good of trees as well but was not sure the County had one. Commissioner Stiles said yes, in fact she was the county liaison on that committee. The City also has a Tree Ordinance but it's different from the County's. We only affect an acre plus. We don't affect residential. Director Hegen mentioned the Keep Aransas County, Keep Rockport Beautiful teams. The Chamber has a list of addresses for most organizations where information or a one-page fact sheet could be mailed. Mr. Dodson suggested at the time speakers are presenting they give handouts and a website link so those that are really interested in coming to organizational meetings and learning more would have access to more information. Chairman Callan said the 'more information' is the booklet which you can google "about Texas groundwater conservation districts" and you get that. Mr. Dodson said people would want to know the rationale for this local district...what the goals are to protect local groundwater resources and why they would vote to create the district here and what's the benefit to the County. Director Hegen said the presentation has benefits in it and discussed time issues wherein some organizations you would have 2-5 minutes and others you might get 10-15-minutes. Chairman Callan said there was so much to talk about, you could easily fill 15 minutes unscripted because each one of these bullet points in the presentation is a springboard to a discussion. Chairman Callan discussed putting together a spreadsheet with organizations, names, contacts, phone numbers, and a potential date, then put all this together and have something to work with. Commissioner Stiles commended she had a database for Lamar Women's Club and also the Republican Club. There was much discussion on how and where to get contact information. Chairman Callan reiterated that what we needed was a list that shows these are the ones we need to talk with to schedule a meeting, where's it going to be and when can it be. Director Wildman volunteered to contact Chamber to get a copy of their database of organizations and contacts. Director speaker assignments for several of the organizations were ironed out. Director Hegen discussed publishing rules for the Rockport Pilot and what is acceptable and what is not. Chairman Callan said the Pilot always accepts paid ads but is very selective on what it will print at no cost. For instance, if we write an article about saving the trees, that would not cost anything, but writing a thank you in the letters to the editor might not be published since this is technically political information, they may have different rules. I know that every

now and then an article about water quality is published at no cost, but we have to write it. Director Hegen suggested we not write a long article but a short one that we can build on with a next chapter coming. Everyone agreed that was a good idea. Chairman Callan discussed one of the first things that needs to be put up regarding presentations is the link that describes what a conservation district is. (Handouts of “Questions about Groundwater Conservation Districts in Texas”). He said most people would want to know where the aquifers are in Aransas County/Texas and that is already included in the presentation contents already. There is also some Texas Water Law (the stealing of water particularly) which is going to be important.

3. **Information to be Presented**

There was much discussion on what information should be presented to the public. (Basing audience water usage on a one-acre foot consumption/300 gallons per day per family vs say Cheniere utilizing 10,000 acre-feet per day which is relevant and a scare factor but is necessary in the overall picture.) Commissioner Stiles said this is how she has been talking with people so they can understand how a \$20 billion dollar industry can take 10,000 acre feet a day, then they can relate it to one-acre foot for a family of four for a year, then they truly get the picture. Mr. Dodson commented that the 10,000 acre feet was hypothetical as no one uses 10,000 acre feet a day—the average is one million gallons a day or 3-acre feet a day. Chairman Callan replied that the basic difference between what was given to the HOA and the ACDC was that the aforementioned was not discussed at the ACDC but was discussed at the HOA and that was because there was more time allowed at the HOA. If you only have two minutes, you don’t have time to talk about it. So this should probably be put in a Texas Water Law slide and work it in there rather than in movement of groundwater aquifers.

Chairman Callan continued discussing what was talked about concerning the groundwater conservation district and that was the fact that it was created by the Texas Legislature and some of the things that the district does. He felt what was already at hand was adequate. In looking at the questions, they are all questions that might need an answer in a q&a situation, but in terms of just being informed...he asked the board what they thought. They agreed what was at hand was fine. Chairman Callan said that at the HOA he gave them a hierarchy...Legislature over TCEQ over TWDB over GMA 15 over individual districts, etc. Districts are political entities essentially bounded by county lines where the GMA are geographic boundaries encompassing the political backers. Mr. Dodson brought up that one of the most important points in the document are on Page 16 and 17 that are simply questions...what does groundwater conservation districts do, etc. and has a good description of that and has the management plan and the benefit part on Page 21 could be added to the benefits bullets. Prior to the May election, you might want to tell voters “I just want to give you the information to help you make an informed decision”. There was discussion on how the ballot item would read which is specific. Commissioner Stiles commented that it would be two-fold...asking for creation of the water district and approving the additional tax of up to one-cent. There was discussion on districts doing water well monitoring and measurements around the county and sometimes monitoring water quality among those wells, not usually doing any well drilling, and that it varied among the districts as to what was required. Mr. Dodson said some districts go a step farther and do some very specific modeling activities and not just taking the State’s model and they will actually hire hydrogeologists to come in and consult with them to develop district specific models to assess management plans. But then again with some districts there is a lot of discrepancy between the productivity of the aquifer throughout the district. Educating the public about groundwater conservation is part of our responsibility. We could sponsor rain barrels, we could sponsor whatever....Director Hegen asked if the Aransas County Groundwater District would encompass the entire county and even transcend into the City and Navigation District and Chairman Callan replied yes. Chairman Callan commented that we needed to build a budget. Mr. Dodson said yes, because when it comes time to setting your tax rate, you need a budget you can point to and say that we believe this is the minimum budget necessary to be a functional district. We will have to have a public hearing on the DFC’s but not on the budget.

4. **Potential Audience**

No discussion.

5. **Presentation Schedule**

There was discussion on getting list of organizations and contact information and then each Director could take about four of them as a personal challenge. The contact person for the Aransas County Groundwater Conservation District regarding questions is Chairman Tom Callan through email at tcallan23@gmail.com or Director/Secretary Lynn Wildman at 361-729-3410. There was discussion on getting with the IT Director to set up county email addresses for the Directors to help establish perimeters between personal and business communications. Most other entities have company issued laptops rather than using personal computers and there is good reason for that so you want to keep public information off your private resources and your private information separate from the public. Mr. Dodson agreed saying public information on your private computers or phones are subject to Freedom of Public Information Act requests.

6. **Review of GMA 15 Meeting Held on January 14, 2016**

Director Callan presented a handout from the meeting which he and Commissioner Stiles attended. He suggested talking with Mr. Dodson about this since it is so technical. Intera is the Engineer for GMA 15. We have to consider the plan in its entirety, have a public hearing about it, record that in the minutes, and report that to GMA 15. Mr. Dodson agreed and gave specifics on timeline for DFCs for GMA 15. Director Alexander commented that it is a 50-year plan that has to be revisited every five years, and we will have to indicate that we are going to monitor x-number of wells, x-number of times each month for a whole year to see if there are any changes, and we have the ability to go back and say, whoops, we suddenly have more drawdown than we thought. Mr. Dodson replied that it was important to note that the weighted average across the entire district, in fact they also come up with a weighted average across the entire GMA 15 and that's actually what is getting adopted is that GMA wide weighted average. So even if you get some well values that show some change, you have to plug all of that into the model to get how it really affects this weighted average across the whole. Chairman Callan said that is what Intera is doing...all the math. Commissioner Stiles interjected that they were talking strictly about the Texas Gulf Coast Aquifer which doesn't affect us since we are not in that aquifer. Chairman Callan and Mr. Dodson replied that the ones we were in like Jasper are part of the Gulf Coast Aquifer as are the minor ones like Chico and Evangeline. Chairman Callan said there were no DFCs for those. Chairman Callan said the data to support all this is quite lengthy. Commissioner Stiles commented she thought it would be necessary to have it for the public hearing. Chairman Callan replied that due to the length, it would be best to have a link to it and also have it at the Library where those wanting to see the data to support these decisions would have it available to look up. At this point there was discussion on the timeframe for posting and publishing notice and having the public hearing which would be sometime in March.

7. **Adjourn**

On motion of Director Hegen and second by Director Wildman, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Garcia