



**TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY**  
**Sustainability Committee Meeting**  
**October 20, 2022**  
**7:00 PM**

**Scott Elrod**, Chair  
**Jason Saleh**, Vice Chair  
**Rebecca Flynn**, Secretary  
**Walter Hays**, Member  
**Ronny Krashinsky**, Member  
**Loverine Taylor**, Member  
**Anita Wotiz**, Member

**VIRTUAL MEETING**

**1. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

**Scott Elrod (Chair), Rebecca Flynn (Secretary), Ronny Krashinsky, Loverine Taylor, Jason Saleh (Vice Chair), Brandi di Garneau, Melvin Gaines.**

**Absent: Walter Hays, Anita Wotiz**

**Residents: Elizabeth Gillbrand, Caroline Vertongen**

**2. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

*Speakers' time is limited to two minutes.*

Caroline Vertongen: practical and sustainable solutions. Concerns about Cal water rate increase, water quality. Referred her directly to Cal Water and CPUC to address her concerns. See her attached message.

LT: Bawsca offering sustainable landscaping classes.

LT: survey from Cal Water about water quality and programs. Missed the point of drought. Unclear the point.

SE: meeting with Brandi and Melvin about SC goals. Request for more information related to the drought.

SE: Town staff is very busy. New staff requests should go through the committee first before asking for resources.

RF: Attended PGE webinars on electrification and PCE home tours – Bayren has a list of contractors that are trained in heat pump installations.

SE: Induction cooktop ordered and received. Working on the library information-should include diffuser plate.

**3. INTRODUCTIONS**

**none**

**4. PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

a. Committee member changes – Walt Hays has decided to step down.

b. Anita Wotiz is approved as a new member.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

a. Minutes of 9/15/2022 – Lovey's name misspelled 3 x plus some typos.

b. RF made a motion, LT seconded. All present approved as corrected.

**6. OLD BUSINESS:**

a. Updates from Brandi

- i. Reach codes went to Town council for first reading. Second reading next week. Changes: Town changed from separate Green Building ordinance to Cal Green ordinance within the building code. All new construction will be all electric. Exception for commercial and public building and emergency services. All new residential construction required to have an EV-ready space with available plug for charger. Graywater ready and potable water for turf will be referred to Sustainability Committee for review for future evaluation. Existing building: reservation in panel to accommodate increased future electrical load and to run wires to a future WH if there is an upgrade to the electrical panel and a requirement to install reverse cycle heat pump if you are replacing an AC. No new gas infrastructure allowed for new outdoor installations. Third party verification required for new construction. No requirement to replace gas furnace with heat pump for existing appliances. Amendments go into effect Jan 1, 2023. Education needed by the Sustainability Committee. SC needs to review solar readiness and cost effectiveness of efficiencies for smaller additions and alterations. All new ADUs will need to be electric.

- ii. Climate Action Plan – Brandi and intern met with County – doing forecasting of specific measures in SPARK tool to find out best measures to implement based on our GHG inventory. BdG reviewing with Melvin on communication plan.
  - iii. SB1383 – first electronic report was completed with state dept of recycling and submitted compost capacity. We can use the MWELo to meet the compost procurement. Residents can help the Town meet the procurement requirement by using certified compost. Greenwaste and Lyngso are certified.
  - iv. Meeting with Cal Water next week on smart meters.
  - v. BdG and MG met with SE about staff support of committees and better integration with council priorities. MG has started providing quarterly updates on priorities. Request to have the drought portion of the website updated. RF to meet with Brandi and Kari about changes in late November.
- b. Updates from MaryAnn
- i. CGAG meeting – Plan review software for rooftop solar – Solar APP+ - PV might be exempt. \$25 fee by installer. Same day permit approval.
  - ii. Mobility study for ebikes in RC, Fair Oaks, Daly City – close to transit.
  - iii. CGAG equity – define what equity means in SMC and SamTrans to get federal money from the IRA – environment justice project.
- c. Review ongoing effort to issue “Public Service Announcements” on PVForum (October – Greenhouse Gases, Jay)
- i. Latest PSA from Jay on Tipping points – good feedback.
  - ii. Next one from Scott: Ideas on promoting electrification and the new Cal Green. Rebates from Bayren and PCE. Resources available. Market the two demos
- d. Summary of opportunity to update Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (WELO); possibility of forming a working group with other committees (Lovey)
- i. LT: Spoke with Laura Russell, BdG, and Al Sill (ASCC). WELO ordinance is being gamed and putting in large water wasting landscaping. Potential changes recommended. May need to have SC evaluate the plans from a sustainability perspective. Excellent report from LT on the current status of WELO and issues.
  - ii. Working group for future implementation in middle of 2023 – LT and looking for another person to start in the new year. Plan for January committee.
- e. Reminder of Safety Element joint meeting with other committees, Wednesday, October 26th at 2:00 pm – will cover the entire draft of the Safety Element. Schedule discussion in Nov and Dec meeting in the SC to discuss the Safety element and provide recommendations by mid-January. PC meeting to review in mid-January 2023.
- f. Finding new members
- i. Need at least 1 new member.
  - ii. Elizabeth Gillbrand interested. SE to follow up with her.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. Choose representatives for a joint meeting with Woodside Environmental, Sustainability, Open Space and Climate Change Committee
  - i. SE and JS joining the subcommittee/working group.
- b. Prepare inputs for January 2023 Committee Workshop Regarding Major Town Council Projects and Expenditures for FY 2023-24
  - i. Discuss in November and December.
- c. Update on start of hybrid meetings in December
  - i. At least one person must be in the physical room to operate a hybrid meeting.
  - ii. Committee members need to be trained on the CODA hybrid system.

## **8. NEXT MEETING AND PROPOSED AGENDA TOPICS**

- a. **Safety Element**
- b. **New members**
- c. **Cal Water AMI smart meter**

- d. **Committee priorities – for council update**
- e. **Cal Green review**
- f. **PSA for Nov.**

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

LT moves to adjourn. RF Second.

The next regularly scheduled meeting date is November 17, 2022 at 7:00 PM.

**scottelrod1@gmail.com**

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**Subject:** FW: missing document submitted Oct 20, 2022

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 17, 2022 12:47 PM  
**To:** Town Center <[TownCenter@portolavalley.net](mailto:TownCenter@portolavalley.net)>  
**Subject:** missing document submitted Oct 20, 2022

Good afternoon Chair Elrod and Members of the Sustainability Committee,

Unfortunately I cannot attend the meeting tonight, but I noticed that the minutes of October 20, 2022 do not mention "application 1807-001 and CPUC's decision of December 2020, which I submitted for that meeting to substantiate my comments -

Town Manager Dennis, Assistant to Town Manager DeGermaux, and Town Counsel Silver did negotiate the new rates and the installation of the smart meters. If PG&E has to disclose the health risks of smart meters and provide a OPT out option, then CalWater must do the same. It is important that residents in Portola Valley are properly informed.

I have attached a copy of the shorter version of that application pertaining to PV and the PUC's decision, which I hope the Town is respecting.

Please add it as a public document

thank you,  
Caroline Vertongen

Decision 20-12-007 December 3, 2020

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

In the Matter of the Application of CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICE COMPANY (U-60-W), a California corporation, for an order (1) authorizing it to increase rates for water service by \$50,673,500 or 7.6% in Test Year 2020, (2) authorizing it to increase rates on January 1, 2021 by \$31,461,900 or 4.4% and on January 1, 2022 by \$33,000,700 or 4.4% in accordance with the Rate Case Plan, and (3) adopting other related rulings and relief necessary to implement the Commission's ratemaking policies.

Application 18-07-001

**DECISION APPROVING A PARTIAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT, RULING ON POST-HEARING MOTIONS AND AUTHORIZING CALIFORNIA WATER SERVICE COMPANY'S GENERAL RATE INCREASES FOR 2020, 2021 AND 2022**

## **5. Plant Issues**

We discussed and resolved the dispute over whether Cal Water should be authorized to invest \$10 million in plant upgrades to improve water quality in its Dominguez District in Section 3.2, above, because water quality is closely related to Covid-19. Below, we address another plant issue, one that is not impacted by Covid-19.

### **5.1. Should Cal Water Be Authorized to Spend \$2.92 Million for AMI Pilot Projects in Bear Gulch, Los Altos and Redwood Valley Districts?**

Currently, Cal Water subsidizes 50 percent of the surcharge for leaks that its customers suffer whenever there is a leak on a customer's side of the meter. To reduce this cost, as well as to reduce the workhours necessary to read water meters manually in portions of the above-referenced districts (due to hilly topography, narrow winding streets and extended distances to walk from curb to house meter) and to avoid injuries to meter readers (for example, in areas where violent gangs are known to be present), Cal Water proposes to distribute Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) type meters or AMI add-ons (collectively, AMI equipment) to some or all residents of these districts, not to exceed more than 1 percent of its systemwide customer total. It asks for authority to spend up to \$2.92 million over two years.<sup>78</sup>

The Town of Portola Valley, a party to this proceeding, is part of the Bear Gulch District. It supports Cal Water's request and asks that all 5,000 of its residents be included in the AMI program.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Exh. CW-104, at 140, line 19.

<sup>79</sup> The Town did not specify the number of Cal Water customers within the Town's border nor provide an estimate of cost to install AMI for all its residents.

Cal Water describes its proposal as an extension of an earlier pilot program launched in 2012 in its Dominguez District and continued through its 2017- 2019 rate case cycle, involving both Automated Meter Reading (AMR) and AMI equipment.<sup>80</sup> It abandoned its test of the AMR-type equipment due to a manufacturing defect in the meters it purchased and a growing preference in the utility industry for AMI equipment.<sup>81</sup> Cal Water argues that expansion of its earlier pilot program to one percent (1 percent) of its total customer count will not only demonstrate the cost-savings and achieve the safety goals described above, but also provide a more reliable database for analyzing the value of AMI equipment.<sup>82</sup>

Cal Water previously indicated that it would provide a report on its earlier pilot program before distributing more AMR or AMI equipment,<sup>83</sup> however, it has not yet produced such a report. Consequently, Cal PA argues that the Commission should deny Cal Water permission to install AMI equipment for any more of its customers systemwide until (1) Cal Water credits those customers who had the defective AMR-type meters installed with the cost of

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<sup>80</sup> Automated Meter Reading (AMR) technology involves reading meters using mobile radio equipment. D. 16-12-042, Attachment A, at 121. Current Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) equipment uses cellular phone technology to transmit data, CW Opening Brief, at 78, hence there is no need for deploying employees outfitted with mobile radios to collect data.

<sup>81</sup> For 2017-2019, Cal Water was authorized to expend approximately \$1.5 million annually on both AMR and AMI installations in its Dominguez district only. D. 16-12-042, Attachment A, at 121-123. In the rate case proceeding for 2017-2019, Cal Water initially requested authority to spend nearly \$12 million/year to install either AMR or AMI in several of its districts. Here, Cal Water requests authority to install only AMI equipment, in only the three districts listed above, and spend no more than \$2.5 million per year.

CW Opening Brief, at 73-79.

<sup>82</sup> CW Opening Brief, at 76.

<sup>83</sup> D. 16-12-042, Attachment A, at 124, line 11 to 125, line 7.

installation and removal of those meters and (2) provides a report to the Commission showing the equipment installed in the previous pilot program produced cost-savings.

We approve Cal Water's request for authority to extend its pilot AMI program into the Bear Gulch, Los Altos and Redwood Valley districts on condition that Cal Water shall, if it has not already done so, credit all customers who received defective AMR equipment for the cost of installation and replacement of the defective AMR equipment before moving forward with the extension of its pilot program.

Furthermore, while we acknowledge that there is a growing preference in the utility industry for AMI equipment, Cal Water must track its improved safety statistics and the cost-savings produced by the automated equipment previously installed and to be installed.<sup>84</sup> The total number of equipment installations, including those installed as part of the initial program and still functioning properly, shall not exceed one percent (1%) of Cal Water's systemwide customer count.<sup>85</sup>

Since the initial pilot program was marred by the installation of defective AMR meters, we excuse Cal Water's tardiness in providing a report on the improvement of safety for employees and realization of cost-savings. However, we order Cal Water to provide a preliminary report on safety improvements and cost-savings 18 months after resumption of the pilot program and, regardless of when Cal Water resumes the program, Cal Water must provide a final report in

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<sup>84</sup> The effects of the automated equipment that Cal Water should track and report on are listed in D. 16-12-042, Attachment A, at 124, line 11 to 125, line 7 and will remain the same.

<sup>85</sup> The defective AMR meters installed by Cal Water shall not be counted toward the one percent cap.



its next GRC application, assuming it completes installation of AMI equipment for one percent of customers systemwide or for any other reason ends the pilot program short of that limitation.

We grant the Town of Portola Valley's request that its residents be considered for inclusion in the AMI pilot program. However, we will refrain from ordering that all or any specific number of residents of Portola Valley be provided AMI equipment. It shall be Cal Water's decision as to how many and which of the Town's residents are provided AMI meters as part of the pilot program, so that Cal Water has freedom to decide which customers within the Town, if any, suit the design parameters of the pilot program.

We recognize that Cal Water may conclude that only a limited number of residences in the Town are suitable for installation of AMI equipment, however, it must give due consideration to including Portola Valley customers in its pilot AMI program. And, in the event some AMI equipment is installed in Portola Valley, Cal Water must provide the appropriate Town official both the preliminary and final reports referenced above.

## **6. Disposition of Post-Hearing Motions**

Several motions, seeking both evidentiary and substantive rulings, were filed by parties to the proceeding, after the evidentiary hearings adjourned.

### **6.1. Motions Regarding Confidentiality**

On September 9, 2019, Cal Water filed a motion for leave to file a confidential version of its post-evidentiary hearing opening brief. Cal PA filed a similar motion with respect to its post-evidentiary hearing reply brief on September 23, 2019. Public versions of all post-hearing briefs were filed with the Commission and served on all parties. Only the assigned Administrative Law Judge received copies of the confidential versions of the post-hearing briefs.