

# UTILITY COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 11, 2000

The Utility Committee of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on October 11, 2000 at 4:00 p.m.

**COMMITTEE PRESENT**

Mike Whalen, Chairman  
Bill Jaffa  
Claudia Walters

**COUNCIL PRESENT**

None

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mike Hutchinson

**COMMITTEE ABSENT**

None

1. Discuss and consider a proposed revised water feature policy.

Utilities Director Dave Plumb and Utilities Education Supervisor Ann Testa addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item. Mr. Plumb commented that the City's current policy relating to water features was adopted to encourage water conservation in new developments. Mr. Plumb noted that the Building Inspections Department is required to attach a copy of the policy to all plans that include ornamental fountains. Mr. Plumb stated that the policy requires that fountains be designed to cascade and recirculate water whenever possible. Mr. Plumb informed the members of the Committee that in response to complaints that have been received from both architects and developers regarding the restrictiveness of the City's current water feature policy, staff was directed to draft a new policy for consideration.

Mr. Plumb noted that in 1992 the City of Phoenix commissioned a survey to better understand public attitudes and opinions regarding decorative outdoor water features. Mr. Plumb said that the results of the survey indicated that while respondents were aware of the benefits of fountains, they felt that fountains should be viewed close up and appreciated directly and personally. Mr. Plumb added that the respondents did not support the commercial use of fountains and only one in five supported locating a fountain in a streetscape, in view of passing motorists. Mr. Plumb stated that the respondents reported that their concern regarding the excessive use of water dampened their appreciation of fountains as a decorative feature.

Mr. Plumb stressed the importance of projecting an image of utilizing the City's water as efficiently as possible for the benefit of all the citizens and said for that reason water conservation and community image should be an important consideration in the design and location of fountains and other water features. Mr.

Plumb stated that staff recommends that during the process of approval the following policy, which provides greater flexibility, accompany all plans that include fountains or other water features:

- \* Water features (i.e. pools, ponds, fountains, streams, waterfalls, etc.), unless serviced with reclaimed water or part of a publicly-oriented outdoor recreation facility, shall be sited only within small-scale pedestrian-oriented places. Entrance water features placed to be seen primarily from moving vehicles are discouraged.
- \* Water features which reduce evaporation, such as cascading rather than vertical spray, are recommended. Water features should be designed to be efficient users of water by maximizing the amount of water recycled and minimizing the amount of make-up water required. They should be designed using equipment and materials which would minimize leakage throughout the life of the water feature.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that fountains that spray a lot of water into the air would not be consistent with this policy, the fact that fountains that "bubble up" do not lose as much water as the spray-type fountains and the fact that the proposed policy will not require developers to do any more paperwork or pay any fees that are not in place at the current time.

Chairman Whalen questioned whether the policy would pertain to both commercial and residential fountains. Mr. Plumb advised that the policy pertains to commercial uses only.

In response to a question from Committeemember Jaffa, City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that the Centennial Hall fountain was donated by the Rotary Club in the late 1970's. Mr. Hutchinson said that staff is not proposing that the fountain be brought into compliance with the proposed policy.

It was moved by Committeemember Walters, seconded by Committeemember Jaffa, to recommend to the Council that the revised water feature policy recommended by staff be approved.

Carried unanimously.

2. Discuss and consider a rate for residential CNG fueling customers.

Utilities Director Dave Plumb addressed the Committee relative to this agenda item. Mr. Plumb stated that the City's current Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) service rate is G3.9 and noted that the rate applies to both residential and commercial customers and includes a service charge. Mr. Plumb informed the members of the Committee that the State of Arizona has enacted Senate Bill 1504, which went into effect July 1, 2000, and said that the legislation was adopted to encourage the use of CNG. Mr. Plumb reported that in accordance with SB 1504, residential customers may not be charged a service charge. Mr. Plumb stated that since the funds collected as a service fee are an integral part of the cost of service determination, staff is recommending the implementation of a residential CNG service rate, which would incorporate those cost of service factors into the commodity charge. Mr. Plumb said that staff is recommending that the current CNG service rate G3.9 be amended to apply to commercial retail customers and that a new residential CNG service rate of G1.9 be implemented for residential customers.

Mr. Plumb explained that the proposed residential CNG service rate is based upon a declining block rate which will encourage natural gas usage, cover the cost of service requirements, and improve the City's load factor. Mr. Plumb noted that the initial block charge of \$.4304 per Therm Summer and \$.5552 per Therm Winter for the first 50 Therms is equal to the current CNG commodity rate plus the service charge for 50

Therms. (Definition of Therm: That amount of gas having a heating value of 100,000 BTU.) Mr. Plumb added that additional units are priced at \$.0566 per Therm, which is equal to the current CNG commodity rate. Mr. Plumb stated that according to this proposal current residential CNG users will not be impacted.

Mr. Plumb commented that staff is also recommending that the Mesa City Code, Title 5, Chapter 14, Section 4.1.c be amended to qualify the home fueling appliances as the equivalent of two major gas appliances. Mr. Plumb said that this would allow the City to waive all service line and meter charges as is currently the policy for homes installing two or more major gas appliances.

Discussion ensued relative to the importance of utilizing two separate meters, instead of combining them into one, in order to ascertain the amount of vehicle fuel being used for excise tax purposes, the fact that the waiving of fees and service charges to customers who install home fueling appliances will serve as added incentive to participate in the CNG program, the benefits of a home fueling station and CNG system safeguards.

In response to a question from Chairman Whalen, Mr. Plumb discussed staff's opinion that sufficient pressure exists in the lines to accommodate the fueling appliances without impacting other appliances.

It was moved by Committeemember Jaffa, seconded by Committeemember Walters, to recommend to the Council that staff's recommendations that the current CNG service rate G3.9 be amended to apply to commercial retail customers, that a new residential CNG service rate G1.9 for residential customers be authorized, and that the Mesa City Code be amended to qualify home fueling appliances as the equivalent of two major gas appliances, resulting in the waiving of all service line and meter charges to citizens who install home fueling appliances in their homes, be approved.

Carried unanimously.

3. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Utility Committee Meeting adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Utility Committee Meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 11th day of October, 2000. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2000

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK