

MINUTES OF THE
WATER SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE OF
VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

July 17, 2023

A meeting of the Water Sustainability Committee of Vista Irrigation District was held on Monday July 17, 2023, at the offices of the District, 1391 Engineer Street, Vista, California.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Committee members present: Miller and Sanchez

Committee members absent: None.

Staff present: Brett Hodgkiss, General Manager, Brent Reyes, Management Analyst, and Shallako Goodrick, Director of Administration.

Other attendees: None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

No public comments were presented on items not appearing on the agenda.

5. ALTA VISTA BOTANICAL GARDENS

Management Analyst Brent Reyes, provided a summary of three proposals Director Kuchinsky presented during the June 7, 2023 Board meeting as to how the District may support or work with the Alta Vista Botanical Garden (Garden). The three proposals included the District becoming a member of the Garden as a Garden Fellow, supporting the Garden's Fall Fun Festival by sponsoring a scarecrow and partnering with the Garden on a joint water education project at the Garden.

Addressing the District becoming a member of the Garden, Director Sanchez pointed out that outside of the Chamber of Commerce, the District is not a member of organizations that are not water industry related. The Committee reviewed the District's Charitable Contributions Policy (Policy) and determined that sponsoring a scarecrow or becoming a member of the Garden does not meet the District's criteria for charitable contributions.

Mr. Hodgkiss informed the Committee that staff had contacted the Garden about providing District outreach materials to post at the Garden, and about participating in water-related events

sponsored by the Garden; staff informed the Garden that District staff can be available to participate in the Garden's water-related events with advance notice.

Director Sanchez said that Mr. Kuchinsky's proposal of a joint water education project at the Garden has merit, and a joint project may comply with the District's Policy. Director Miller commented that the Water Conservation Garden in El Cajon is too far for north San Diego county residents to visit; but he would be concerned about the on-going costs of a joint water education project. It was mentioned that the District already has two demonstration gardens located at headquarters, and the District conducts water wise landscape workshops each year. Mr. Hodgkiss said the District will be providing flyers to the Garden to distribute regarding an upcoming water wise landscape workshop.

The Committee concluded that both becoming a member of the Garden and sponsoring a scarecrow are charitable contributions that do not meet the District's Charitable Contribution Policy; therefore, the Committee recommended that the District not become a member of the Garden or sponsor a scarecrow. With regard to a joint water education project, the Committee recommended that the District consider supporting an existing water education project (that compliments or enhances a service provided by the District) at the Garden but not create a new project.

Director Miller mentioned that he was glad that Director Kuchinsky is out in the community representing the District and his proposals were worthy of consideration by the Committee.

6. COMMENTS BY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

None were presented.

7. COMMENTS BY GENERAL MANAGER

None were presented.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, at 10:25 a.m. Chair Miller adjourned the meeting.


Marty Miller, Chair

ATTEST:



Lisa R. Soto, Secretary
Board of Directors

VISTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

 **VISTA
IRRIGATION
DISTRICT**
**WATER SUSTAINABILITY
COMMITTEE
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Item: 5

Meeting Date: July 17, 2023
Prepared By: Brent Reyes
Reviewed By: Shallako Goodrick
Approved By: Brett Hodgkiss

SUBJECT: ALTA VISTA BOTANICAL GARDENS

RECOMMENDATION: Consider opportunities to support the Alta Vista Botanical Gardens, including becoming a member, sponsoring a scarecrow at the Fall Fun Festival and partnering on a joint water education project at the Alta Vista Botanical Gardens.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION: None.

FISCAL IMPACT: The fiscal impact would vary based on the membership/sponsorship level and/or the type of joint water education project selected.

SUMMARY: The Alta Vista Botanical Gardens (Garden) is a non-profit botanical garden located in Brengle Terrace Park. At the June 7, 2023 Board meeting, Director Kuchinsky requested that the District consider opportunities to support the Garden, including becoming a member (Garden Fellow for \$500), sponsoring the Fall Fun Festival (sponsor a scarecrow for \$100) and/or partnering a joint water education project at the Garden. These items were referred to the Water Sustainability Committee to review and make a recommendation to the Board.

DETAILED REPORT: The Garden is a 14-acre botanical garden, which features 16 individually themed gardens, walking trails, and event spaces, located on a hilltop in Brengle Terrace Park. According to the Garden's website, its mission is to "create a botanical garden for the education, enlightenment, and inspiration for our children, and the child within us all." The gardens are a living, changing and interactive environment which brings people together with nature and art; it serves as a gathering place, educational center, a forum for the arts and an exhibit of the most remarkable, beautiful and rare plants in the world. Throughout the year, the Garden hosts educational events and classes mostly geared toward children and families.

During the June 7, 2023 Board meeting, Director Kuchinsky presented several proposals as to how the District may support or work with the Garden. He requested the District consider opportunities to support the Garden, including the District becoming a member as a Garden Fellow, supporting the Garden's Fall Fun Festival by sponsoring a scarecrow and/or partnering with the Garden on a joint water education project at the Garden.

The cost to become a Garden Fellow member is \$500; benefits include free admission to the Garden, free subscription to Better Homes and Gardens magazine, invitations to special member only events at the Garden, Garden newsletter and special pricing for members for Garden sponsored classes.

The Garden provides the opportunity to sponsor a scarecrow as part of the Garden's Fall Fun Festival to be held on October 14, 2023. Children and families construct scarecrows at home and bring them to the Garden for judging during the Fall Fun Fest; businesses and individuals can sponsor individual scarecrows. For the \$100 scarecrow donation, as suggested by Director Kuchinsky, the Garden will attach a half sheet sign with the District's logo to a scarecrow in the Garden which will remain on display until August 2024; additionally, the District's logo will be featured on the Garden's sponsor poster and display in the kiosk at the Garden for the whole year.

Director Kuchinsky also suggested that the District consider working with the Garden on a joint project to develop a water education display or demonstration garden at the Garden. As an example of a potential project, he provided information on a rain harvesting display consisting of a cistern, dry stream bed, and low water use plants that Olivenhain Municipal Water District (Olivenhain) installed at their headquarters. Like Olivenhain, the District has installed two water-wise demonstration gardens at its headquarters building; one in the front of the building where the customer parking is located and the other in the lobby inner courtyard.

District Rules and Regulations Section 1.15, Charitable Contributions Policy (Policy), provides useful guidelines, including qualifying criteria (subsection 1.15.4 c), for evaluating financial contributions in support of various organizations. As noted, the District's policy is to expend District funds for District-related purposes in accordance with the District's mission; charitable contributions must have a District-related purpose or provide an identifiable direct benefit to the District. Additionally, a charitable contribution must be made in the best interests of the District's ratepayers.

The Water Sustainability Committee is being asked to review and make a recommendation on each of the proposals to support the Garden brought forth by Director Kuchinsky.

ATTACHMENT: Rules and Regulations Section 1.15, Charitable Contributions Policy

1.15 CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

(Adopted 2/16/05: Minute Order 05-02-21)

1.15.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for responding to requests received by the District for charitable contributions.

1.15.2 Governing Statute

Article XVI, Section 6 of the California Constitution, along with a California Appellate Court decision in 1970, specifically prohibits the gift of public funds or resources to individuals or organizations. Expenditures by public agencies must be for valid public purposes that benefit the agency. An expenditure may be legal but may not be the best use of resources in light of competing demands on the agency in fulfilling its mission. Special districts must also demonstrate that the expenditure falls within the specifically enumerated powers of that particular district.

1.15.3 Definitions

- A. Charitable Contribution: Any funds or resources given to a not-for-profit charity.
- B. District Mission: The District's Mission Statement is as follows: "The mission of the Vista Irrigation District is to manage our available resources to meet the present and future needs of our service area by providing a reliable supply of high-quality water in an environmentally and economically responsible manner in an atmosphere of courtesy, integrity and quality of service."

1.15.4 Policy

- A. It is the District's policy to expend District funds for District-related purposes in accordance with the District's mission. A request for a charitable contribution will not be considered if the contribution does not have a District-related purpose or provide an identifiable direct benefit to the District.
- B. Staff is authorized to deny requests for charitable contributions that do not meet the District's criteria for charitable contributions as specified in this Policy. If staff believes that there might be such a benefit, the request will be brought before the Board of Directors for consideration.
- C. In order for a request for a charitable contribution to be considered, it must meet one of the following criteria:
 - a. The organization is special district or water industry-related, provides direct benefits to the District, and is one in which the District is a member; or

- b. The organization provides a service that complements or enhances something the District provides, such as water education programs; or
- c. The organization provides an identifiable direct benefit or service to the District, such as avoided staffing costs, while performing a District-related purpose.

D. Charitable contributions outside of the District's service area will not be considered, except for those associated with industry-wide organizations.

Charitable contributions will not be made to any single individual, or with the intention that the contribution will directly benefit any particular District employee or official. If approved, a charitable contribution must be made in the best interests of the District's ratepayers.