

PV will restructure its water committee

Group will work with 3 providers to ensure adequate supply

by **Diana Balazs** - Dec. 26, 2008 10:32 AM
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PARADISE VALLEY - The town's water committee is being restructured to develop a water-supply plan for Paradise Valley.

The advisory group not only will change its focus but also grow in size from three to seven members, including citizens.

"Its primary mission would be to develop a strategic plan for providing an adequate water supply to all property located in the town of Paradise Valley and review matters relating to the implementation of such plan," Town Manager Jim Bacon said.

Bacon recently briefed the town council about the changes. No timetable was discussed as to when the new group will be formed.

Bacon said changes in the committee's scope should not suggest that the town is considering getting into the water-distribution business.

Unlike Scottsdale and Phoenix, the town does not provide water service. Residents obtain their water from three providers - the private Arizona American and Berneil water companies and Phoenix.

The committee would develop the strategic plan by working with the providers, Bacon added.

The water committee has existed for more than five years. It has not met since March.

The committee was formed in response to a devastating house fire in which firefighters encountered problems drawing water from neighborhood hydrants to fight that blaze.

The group studied problems throughout the town associated with low water pressure and poor hydrant flow caused by aging pipes and increased demand. It received updates from the three water providers at each of its meetings and discussed a variety of topics from conservation to water rates.

The current committee consists of three council members. The plan is to expand the committee to seven. It would include two council representatives, two community representatives appointed by the council, the town engineer and planning director or their designees.

"Those six people would get together and among them select a seventh member," Bacon said.

Since its inception, the committee has tackled a number of issues, including negotiating specific agreements. The new committee would forward recommendations to the council.

"It is intended to be advisory to the Town Council, and it is presumed that the Town Council would consider any recommendation from the water committee," Bacon said.

If the council agreed with the committee's recommendations, the staff would then enter into negotiations, Bacon said.

Vice Mayor Ron Clarke served on the water committee. He lauded the group's accomplishments but added he supports changing the committee's focus to one that is more advisory in nature.

"We need this advisory group, and it's a good idea to have people from outside the council in the group," he said.