

Palomino Lakes Water Newsletter

April 2006

Annual Meeting Special Edition

Annual Meeting May 6

The Palomino Lakes Annual Meeting is scheduled for 10 AM, Saturday May 6 at the Cloverdale Veterans Memorial Hall, 205 West First Street.

There are important issues to discuss and officers to elect. Plan to attend.

New homeowners: This is a great way to meet your neighbors and gather valuable information about your new community.

Good news – rates unchanged

The PLMWC Board is very pleased that it will be able to provide water through the 2006/2007 fiscal year without an increase in water rates. Although many costs have increased, rigid adherence to time-of-use electric usage and replacement of old, inefficient electrical equipment have reduced electricity costs by nearly 50% since 2002. Since electricity represents the largest single cost in providing water, savings here have a big impact.

Road slippage to be investigated

The PLMWC and PLPOA will conduct a geophysical study to investigate three problem areas of the community's roads. The areas include a section of Palomino near Willow, a section of upper Mountain Pine between Willow and Toyon, and an area of lower Mountain Pine near the site of last year's water main leak. The areas chosen are showing movement or are high potential movement sites.

Test holes will be bored to acquire core samples of the soils beneath these areas.

These samples will allow the geologists and soils engineers to provide the PLMWC and the PLPOA with recommendations to stabilize the areas.

The community will be notified of the date and time of any work and any detours or temporary road closures that may be necessary.

Surveying underway

You may have recently noticed one or more people surveying on the roads or have spotted red, orange and blue marks on the pavement or stakes and orange flags along Palomino Road.

This work represents the final phases of a multi-year project to map the precise routes of our underground water mains.

The results of these efforts will allow:

- Repair work to zero in on main locations thus minimizing road demolition
- Reduced digging as new fire hydrants are installed
- Exact main location for the planned work in three potential slide areas
- Exact main location for future road and utility work

A second purpose of this work is to locate the property line between the Palomino Road parcel and the property owners who border Palomino Road. Many property owners are unaware of where the property line actually is located.

As the points indicated by the road markings are recorded by our surveyor, Tom Mannatt, the bright colors will be painted over with matte black paint.

Survey problems

Recently stakes and flagging set by the surveying crew have been removed or otherwise vandalized. Surveying is being done to improve the community and any stakes or markings are placed on the roadway, within the utility easement, or on the boundary between the owner's property and adjacent property or easement. In California it is *illegal* to tamper with the work of a surveyor. Any future vandalism will be reported to the sheriff and, if identified, the vandal will be billed for work required to replace the markings.

PLMWC cited by DHS

A failure to sample and report to the Department of Health Services in a timely manner has resulted in PLMWC being cited for non-compliance (a non-fineable offence). The DHS required a sampling of our water system for disinfection by-products during the summer of 2005. This requirement was communicated to the Board and to our water system specialist, Zastrow Water Treatment Service. The Board reminded Zastrow of this requirement but sampling and reporting did not occur as required. While it is Zastrow's responsibility as a DHS certified treatment and distribution operator to ensure all state requirements are met, the Board has now instituted procedures to more closely monitor the performance of the water system specialist. DHS has allowed the required sampling to occur in the summer of 2006.

At no time was the safety of our water compromised due to this oversight. A statement in the 2005 Consumer Confidence Report (which will be completed and mailed to all water company members by June 31, 2006) will describe this non-compliance issue.

PLMWC 05/06 financial report

The water company's 2005/2006 financial report is included in this mailing. You may wish to bring the report to the Annual Meeting.

Some explanation of the financial report and the PLMWC financial structure are in order. PLMWC uses three broad categories to collect funds, track expenses and cover costs.

We use the Operations account to handle the routine, recurring activities of running the water system and delivering water. Examples include electricity, water testing, bookkeeping, water sanitation, insurance, alarm system and so forth.

The Capital Improvement account is used to handle significant, one-time expenses that modernize or improve the water system. Examples include the hydrant installation program and our new well.

The Reserve account is set aside to handle unexpected one-time high-cost events. This reserve is specifically intended to avoid the unscheduled special assessments that were required in the past when system failures occurred. Although reserve funds have been collected and tracked separately for several years, this year we created a specific account to hold and track these funds.

You'll also note that Accounts Receivable is now shown on the financial report. While PLMWC uses cash-basis accounting and accounts receivable don't show up on the balance sheet until the funds are received, they represent real money owed to the company and their listing helps to present a more complete picture of the company's finances.

As you can see by the financial report, your water company is healthy. We are

paying our bills and have built up funds to deal with the need for a new well and to handle the problems of an aging water system.

ISO review and tests

On March 24, an Insurance Services Offices (ISO) inspector visited the community. The ISO is an independent organization which collects information for insurance companies to use when these companies establish rates.

The inspector reviewed the system and made field measurements of water pressure and hydrant flow rates at various points in the system.

The inspector rated our pressures and flow rates as acceptable and was pleased to hear of the fire hydrant installation program. He asked to be notified when the six new hydrants were installed.

On the down side, the inspector felt the storage at tank site #1 should be increased and he *strongly urged* we significantly increase the storage volume at tank site #2 as soon as possible.

We have asked the inspector to put his recommendations in writing.

PLMWC express concerns about SCWA wastewater proposal

Our potable water supply well and our community depend on the Russian River riparian underflow as our only source of potable water. Our well is immediately adjacent to planned transmission, storage, and dispersal points of the Sonoma County Water Agency's proposed Northern Sonoma County Agricultural Reuse Project (SCWA-NSCARP). The NSCARP poses environmental and health issues with the proposed discharge of

Tertiary Treated Municipal Waste Water that, if not mitigated, would negatively impact groundwater under-flows, the waters of the Russian River and Dry Creek, and the potable water supplies of property owners and communities throughout northern Sonoma County.

Tertiary Treated Municipal Waste Water contains non-organic components (lead, copper, mercury, high TDS, mineral salts, boron, pharmaceuticals, and household/industrial cleaning and sanitation products) not removed by a municipal waste treatment plant. When used for irrigation, these chemicals are deposited on the soil surface to percolate to lower strata by winter rains. Most landscape plants are impacted by high boron concentrations. An imbalance in the Sodium Absorption Ratio (SAR) will impair the ability of the soil to absorb and transmit water, making landscaping areas and agricultural land sterile in time

Your PLMWC Board of Directors prepared a document to be included in the SCWA-NSCARP environmental impact report, requesting many issues and concerns be addressed in the CEQA-EIR. This document can be viewed at the Palomino Lakes website:

<http://www.palominolakes.org>

PLMWC bares all for state DHS

The 2005 Annual System report for the Department of Health Services requested far more in-depth information about our system than in previous years including:

- Total service connections / population
- Length and size of water mains in each pressure zone / piping material composition
- Gallons per year supplied / highest use month and amount / highest use per day

- Detailed description of how the water leak on lower Mountain Pine Road was addressed
- Description of improvements planned for 2006

This document can be viewed in its entirety on the Palomino Lakes website.

Tank site #2 improvements

Bids have been received for a new transfer pump for site #2. The old pump mount and piping will be upgraded when the new pump is installed. The old pump will be overhauled and the motor reconditioned. Then, for the very first time, our system will have back-up pumps for the well and both tank pumping sites.

Water system details

Our water system represents a very substantial community investment and resource. It is fairly large for a private system and moderately complex. Here are some interesting details.

Our well is located in vineyard west of River Road and approximately 600 feet northeast of the active channel of the Russian River. The well was drilled in 1972 to a total depth of 20 feet. The 20 horsepower well pump has its intake set at 19 feet and is capable of pumping approximately 180 gallons per minute.

Tank site #1, at 1100 Palomino Road, is 4,991 feet from the well and 284 feet above it. The site has one steel tank and one redwood tank, each with a capacity of approximately 15,000 gallons. The steel tank was installed in 2001, the redwood tank is approximately 35 years old. A 20 horsepower transfer pump moves water from tank #1 to tank #2 at a rate of 180 gallons per minute.

Tank site #2, at 1164 Mountain Pine Road, is 2,846 feet from tank site #1 and 301 feet above it. This site has a single 35 year old redwood tank with a capacity of about 15,000 gallons. A 20 horsepower transfer pump moves water from tank #2 to tank #3 at a rate of 100 gallons per minute.

Tank site #3, at 26888 Toyon Lane, is 1,651 feet from tank site #2 and 250 feet above it. This site has one 108,360 gallon steel tank and one concrete tank with an approximate capacity of 10,000 gallons. The steel tank was installed in 2000. The concrete tank is about 30 years old and is currently full but off-line due to concerns about structural integrity.

Underground water mains include 6,598 feet of 4" concrete transite pipe and 12,257 feet of 6" concrete transite pipe. Each of the 110 water meters is connected to the water main by 3/4" or 1" copper service lines.

For firefighting purposes there are 2 standard fire hydrants and 15 "wharf" type fill points located in the community.

Future articles will discuss the sanitation and control systems and the air eliminators.

Board Members

Howard Blake, President, 894-4709, hcblake3@comcast.net

Lee Tolbert, Vice-President, 894-4582, j-l_tolbert@comcast.net

Rick Corriea, Secretary/Treasurer, 894-0432, rmcorriea@comcast.net

Emergencies

Clover Alarm, 445-2951