

## **Council discusses modifying water restrictions**

**By Anthony Welch**

Having been doused with citizen input, whether it was questions or complaints about imposing Level One water restrictions, the Manitou City Council assigned the task of revising restrictions to City Administrator Jack Benson.

Benson provided Council with preliminary "tweaks" to the city's water restriction ordinance at Council's regular meeting Tuesday night. Benson said he was aiming for a short-term fix and wanted to focus on ... Council's water conservation efforts.

The major issue drawing public input was the time window. Level One restrictions allow for watering between 6 a.m. and 8 a.m. and between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. Benson is looking to change those times to 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Benson looked at a number of different cities' water ordinances and found they use the similar time frame.

"It's different for the people who , have automatic watering systems and the person who's running around in their robe and curlers moving sprinklers around in the morning," Benson said. "The later you can water, the better it's going to be for some of these properties."

Councilwoman Aimee Cox thought the window for watering should be extended an extra hour. Citing her own personal schedule, Cox said the times allotted could be tough for some people who work different schedules or are up at different times.

"I understand evaporation, but we need a better balance between convenience and conservation," she said.

Councilman Michael Gerbig said looking at what other cities are doing is crucial, and that the city should look for more statistics regarding restrictions. Benson said he found the policies of other cities to be complicated.

Other cities use a water index that's tied to types of sprinklers, length of watering time and how deep water gets into the ground. For now, Benson said he'd like to stick to a simple approach that deals with Manitou's current water restrictions.

Mayor Marc Snyder questioned why people couldn't just be allowed to water a few hours between a time window such as 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Benson said it's an enforcement issue. Having the two-hour window makes it easier for police officers to monitor and enforce the restrictions.

Benson also mentioned he's asked Public Services Director Bruno Pothier to put together a task force to look at overhauling the city's water restriction ordinances. Snyder mentioned that, down the road, Council may have to consider a tiered system, where residents are charged by how much water they use.

"Right now, 1,000 gallons of our water is cheaper than buying a gallon of milk," he said.

Manitou charges \$3.80 per 1,000 gallons of water, according to City Finance Director Mike Leslie.

## **Manitou Springs Forward update**

Manitou Springs Forward (MSF) Committee Chairman David Chorpenning updated Council on the community, citizen-driven effort to update the Rainbow Vision Plan. The organization's community vision potluck on June 26 was a success with 90 residents attending. Chorpenning also thanked Council for supporting MSF.

"I think we're on track with what we're hoping to make happen," Chorpenning said.

MSF is organizing focus groups and recruiting residents and business owners. They have 10 Key Vision Areas, which include health and wellness, education, built environment, natural

environment, historic preservation, economic development, transportation, arts and culture, community engagement and public services.

MSF will also conduct a survey to try and get diverse input from the entire community. The group wants to reach out to those who may not come out for events such as the potluck and wants to make sure their voice is heard as well, Chorpenning said.

MSF's budget may exceed the \$10,000 that Council allocated for it. Chorpenning said an additional \$ 1,700 may be needed with the planned survey.

Snyder said he's impressed with what he's seen so far from MSF, but said he thought the original plan for the group was to go further than just 10 vision areas and focus on an implementation plan.

"We never talked about what form it would take and how we it'd apply to city processes," Snyder said. "I'm looking at this as being a wonderful base, public-built process and vision statements we can build upon. The final question is how this document will be used."

Councilman Matt Carpenter also wondered how the City will turn all these "dreams" into policies it could implement. Chorpenning said MSF is meant to engage the community, and that it certainly wasn't up to Council to make all things in the vision areas happen. He added the final product could be a tool to offer the Council ideas of what the community wants.

Normally, Snyder said, creating a vision plan would be a city-initiated thing. He appreciates MSF's efforts, but when the time comes Council and MSF will have to find a proper way to insert the visions into City government processes.

Cox said when the process of updating the Rainbow Vision Plan was started, she thought MSF would also look at zoning, possible growth, commercial development and housing redevelopment.

"I would like to see this council, if we're going to invest more money in this process, look more at the data-driven issues," she said.

Planning Director Dan Folke added that the Rainbow Vision Plan is a legal document that the City uses for zoning matters. In the current plan are specific land use policies and goals, and if the new vision plan is going to replace it, it'll have to have that kind of specific information.

"As the path has kind of shifted a little bit, we need a document that structurally is similar to Rainbow Vision Plan," Folke said. "To take all this information you're gathering from the public and turn them into policies and procedures is very difficult."

## **In other business, Council...**

- Approved a special event permit for The Chair Project art installation, happening on Oct. 9 in downtown Manitou.
- Approved the Pikes Peak Rural Transportation Roadway Maintenance 2011 contract which will help the City finish paving all its dirt roads.
- Approved a gardener/landscaping services contract.
- Approved ordinances amending the City's personnel manual and giving more power to the city administrator.

[Return to Article Index](#)