

**BIXBY VILLAGE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
LANDSCAPE COMMITTEE and LB WATER DEPARTMENT MEETING**

January 22, 2010

Colleen Pando (LC Chair), Judie Irving (TC Chair), John Coleman (Irrigation), Claude Prince (Irrigation), and Marilyn Heron (Plants) met with Ralph (Irrigation Technician) and Daniel Cardoza (Water Planning & Conservation) from the Long Beach Water Department on January 22, 2010 at the BV Clubhouse.

The meeting was organized and chaired by Claude Prince. The purpose of the meeting was to seek irrigation and conservation recommendations and advice from the LBWD experts.

Controllers

The primary concern of the LC is the planning for replacement of 37 aging controllers. The options are:

- Controllers similar to what we have now: are manually set to defined times and duration; have no backup battery thereby requiring resetting after power failures; have to be manually turned off/on before/after rain.
- Smart controllers: use data from rain sensors and soil temperature probes; can be hooked up to central computer for on/off control and to increase/decrease irrigation duration for every valve. Some computerized systems are smart enough to determine if the sprinkler system is malfunctioning. There is a single annual fee for the computer.
- Controllers controlled using satellite data: data from weather satellites is used by a central computer to control the irrigation. There is an annual fee of approximately \$225 per controller. The cost of one controller is about \$2K. It is a very efficient system and likely to save irrigation costs if it is used as designed.

Ralph and Dan felt that use of the satellite system would not be desirable as it is more expensive and we cannot use it as intended due to the LB water restrictions. LBUSD has a satellite system but is exempt from the three day watering restriction. We asked about obtaining an exemption, and Dan will look into it.

Ralph recommended that , as a minimum, we get cheaper smart controllers that have a temperature probe and rain sensor (\$30 - \$40); rain shutoff and percent adjustable features for every valve; and battery backup. These controllers run about \$200 for four valves plus \$50 for every four additional valves. This is much less money than was paid for our current system as prices have decreased over the years.

Restrictions and Rebates

The LBWD restrictions are not likely to be lifted in the future as water availability will be decreasing due to water sources and population growth. Even though we use about the same amount of water by irrigating three times per week at ten minutes as we did when we irrigated six times per week at five minutes, it is less efficient for our lawns and slopes as we have more runoff at ten minutes and longer dry periods. The LC recommended that homeowner associations should be considered for the same exemptions as parks and golf courses; and that anyone using satellite controlled systems should be exempted as well. Dan said that he would forward our comments.

LBWD has a limited number of rebates available to single family residences for landscaping with water-wise plants. We may qualify for landscaping an island or two. There also is a rebate available for controllers, \$80 for single family residence. The LC will look into our eligibility. After all, we are not a commercial or rental property and have 374 homeowners in the community.

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The city also replaces old controllers (2 – 4 valves) for homeowners. Ralph will see if he can get a larger controller for us.

Reclaimed Water

The program is expanding. The university uses reclaimed water and is exempt from watering restrictions. If it were available to us, we would have to change our irrigation system as the less pure water impacts valves and plugs heads. Ralph recommended against it as the system requires a lot of maintenance.

Plants

The LC explained that we plan to use plants that require little or modest amounts of water. It is likely to be a slow process as we will do it on a replacement basis and begin by replanting the islands. One of the problems is that all plants per sprinkler system should be in the same hydro zone. Depending upon the controller, this means that the plants have to be in the same hydro zone per valve or per controller. It may become necessary to map out the irrigation system to the valve level.

Ralph and Dan recognize that we are making every effort to improve water use and are willing to work with us. Claude and John will meet with Ralph quarterly.

Harvest is working on estimates for redoing the controller system. The LC also will contact Toro, Rainbird, ET Water, and Weathermatic for information on their systems, recommendations, and estimates.

Submitted by Marilyn Heron, Recording Secretary, January 23, 2010.