



WATER COMMISSION MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2025

MINUTES

Monday, April 28, 2025

3:30 – 5:00 PM

Hearing Room

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Hilbert called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. and asked for a roll call.

PRESENT: Chair, Jack Hilbert (Dist. I)
Vice Chair, Donald Langley (Dist. I)
Regular Member James Eklund (Dist. I) (*remote*)
Regular Member Clark Hammelman (Dist. II)
Regular Member Jim Maras (Dist. II) (*remote*)
Regular Member Evan Ela (Dist. III)
Regular Member Mickey Conway (Dist. III)
Regular Member Harold Smethills (Dist. III)
At-Large Sean Tonner (*excused absence*)
At-Large Tricia Bernhardt

2. Approval of Water Commission Meeting Minutes from March 24, 2025

Chair Hilbert asked for comments or a motion for the March 24, 2025, Water Commission Meeting Minutes.

Roger Hudson moved to approve the March 24, 2025, meeting minutes.

RESULT: APPROVED
MOVER: Roger Hudson
SECONDER: Harold Smethills
AYES: Hilbert, Langley, Eklund, Hammelman, Maras, Ela, Conway, Smethills, Bernhardt
NAYS: none
ABSTAIN: none

3. Referral Items for Possible Consideration – a “No Comment” will be provided for any and all items unless the Commission indicates otherwise

a. ZR2024-031 - Ramblewood Planned Development

Tricia Bernhardt requested that will-serve letters for the Ramblewood and Pinery developments specify the breakdown between groundwater and renewable water use, noting this detail is currently missing. No additional comments were made.

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b. SP2024-081 – 2006 Kelty RD

Concerns were raised about increased water use from converting the property to a restaurant/coffee shop, particularly given the lack of connection to a central water system. While some members felt the water impact would be minimal and manageable through the state permitting process, others questioned the consistency and effectiveness of County policies if exceptions are routinely granted. Staff clarified that the property falls under older zoning and that case-by-case exceptions are used in areas like Franktown that lack central infrastructure. It was noted that formal processes exist for requesting such exceptions.

c. SB2025-009 – Pinery Meadows Preliminary Plan

Concerns were raised about the referral process, specifically the lack of staff presentations, public comment opportunities, and access to relevant ordinances when reviewing projects. It was suggested that offering informed input is difficult under these conditions. Additionally, concerns were noted regarding the density of the proposed development and reliance on groundwater. The chair clarified that the commission's role is to provide individual comments to inform the County Commissioners' decision, not to take a formal vote.

Comments from the Water Commission will be provided to the Project Planners for all projects discussed.

4. Discussion and Action Items

There were none.

5. Information Items

a. Legislative Presentation – Colorado Water Congress

Presented by Diana and Richard Orf, contract lobbyists for the Colorado Water Congress. The presentation focused on several bills on the County Commissioners' legislative tracking sheet related to water regulation, infrastructure, and land use. Specific bills discussed included HB 1113 (turf restrictions in new development), HB 1120 (septic system enterprise), HB 1211 (tap fee flexibility), SB 203 (small community grants), HB 1334 (special district eminent domain), SB 305 (health department permitting), and HB 1332 (state trust lands study).

Board members discussed the balance between state mandates and local control, stating that local jurisdictions are most appropriate to handle land and water use policy. Several concerns were raised about the long-term impacts of the proposed legislation on development, affordability, infrastructure, and the permitting process. There was a shared interest in ensuring that legislative solutions support, rather than hinder, local innovation and implementation capacity.

It was agreed that comments from the Commission will be documented by the County staff and shared with the County Commissioners.

b. Well Monitoring Presentation – USGS

Presented by Kelly Palka, Courtney Ambrose, and Megan Bell from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

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The presentation covered the USGS-Douglas County cooperative Groundwater Network project, which has monitored Denver Basin bedrock aquifers since 2011. The presenters discussed the methodology for measuring static water levels, the current status of the well network, and previous trend data showing declining groundwater levels in a portion of wells with statistically significant data. Data is made publicly available through the National Water Information System (NWIS).

Board members discussed data interpretation challenges due to limited well coverage, homeowner access issues, and the importance of historical trend data. Members noted the value of USGS's long-term data in shaping water planning efforts and the need for continued investment in the project. Appreciation was expressed for the presentation and continued partnership.

6. Member Discussion

No additional items were raised for discussion.

7. Adjournment

Chair Hilbert declared the meeting adjourned at 4:56 p.m.