

Memorandum

To: Mayor and Council

From: Tom Baker, Town Administrator

Date: February 18, 2014

Re: Consideration of Projects for Priority List

Purpose: The purpose of this item is two-fold:

- First, to discuss the process we will use to establish work plan priority for ideas that have a potentially significant impact on staff time and/or town budget.
- Second, to establish a meeting date for Council's retreat follow-up.

Background: At Council's January 21, 2014 meeting, Bob Gordon identified several ideas that he wanted the Council to review to determine if the time was right for further exploration: micro-hydroelectric installation, expansion of the raw water irrigation system, development of a solar garden/solar array, and co-generation.

Greg Russi elaborated on past work for some of these projects and noted that since the Town first looked into micro-hydro the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) has revised its regulations to allow smaller hydro projects to file for permits that are significantly less onerous than their previous permitting requirements. To that point, Terry Porter recently has filed for a FERC permit to install hydro on Alkali Creek (we received notice from Nicole at Garfield and Hecht) and it may be worth a field trip to the Porter Ranch to understand what and how he will undertake this project.

The raw water irrigation expansion is limited by the feasibility of creating a system in specific areas. Staff will submit a DOLA grant this fall to upgrade the water treatment plant and also to improve or ability to deliver raw water for irrigation.

On February 5, 2014, Bob Gordon, Bruce Leland and I met with Shirley Moore of GRID Alternatives. GRID Alternatives is a non-profit organization with a mission to provide low income home owners with photovoltaic electricity systems. GRID also has the ability to develop a solar garden and Bob and Bruce identified possible locations for this idea. In the near-term, GRID has a goal of qualifying 2-3 low income home owners and raising funds to install PV systems. In future years, GRID would be interested in a solar garden in New Castle.

Discussion: At Council's September 14, 2014 retreat, Council requested a 6-month follow-up discussion to review their Strategic Plan. It has been 6-months and staff would like to schedule the retreat follow-up. At that session, council can review the Strategic Plan and their Economic Development Strategy: Council Priorities and determine how the above ideas fit into Council's project list.

Recommendation: Staff requests Council set a meeting date and staff will prepare a packet for discussion.