



MAYORS TOWN ADDRESS ABOUT WATER

1777 N Meadowlark Dr, Apple Valley
Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 6:00 PM

MINUTES

Summary of the Mayor's Town Address about Water

Date: March 19, 2025

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: 1777 N Meadowlark Dr, Apple Valley (held electronically via Zoom)

Notice: Properly noticed as a possible quorum on the Utah Public Notice Website

The Mayor hosted a town address focused on growth and water issues in Apple Valley. The meeting, which was posted as a possible quorum, included participation from two council members, thereby constituting a quorum under the Utah Open and Public Meetings Act.

Overview

The Mayor began by addressing recent and upcoming growth in the Town, providing visual maps and explanations of major development agreements (MDAs), zone changes, and land use. The Mayor emphasized that zoning decisions, once made, cannot be reversed and that several large-scale developments—including Gooseberry Preserve, Solstice Resort, West Temple, Crimson Peaks, Redstone at Canaan, and Gooseberry Springs Ranch—were already approved before the current administration, with one exception: Gooseberry Springs Ranch, which the current council approved as part of a package negotiation to reduce density and preserve town control.

The Mayor clarified the definition of an RDU (residential dwelling unit), explained density calculations, and discussed how larger units (e.g., 4,000 square feet) are counted as multiple RDUs. Most of the new development includes short-term rentals, which will contribute tax revenue without affecting local voting demographics.

Concerns about developers seeking disconnection from the Town were discussed. The Mayor explained that approval of Gooseberry Springs Ranch prevented a legal disconnect action that could have led to a loss of control, water resources, and tax revenue.

The Mayor also discussed future commercial development along Highway 59, including interest in a grocery store, restaurant, and retail walking street. Infrastructure agreements were highlighted, such as paving roads, improving fire access, emergency exits, easements for a new million-gallon water tank, and wastewater treatment facilities to protect the aquifer.

Pipeline & Infrastructure Updates

The Mayor provided a detailed update on the pipeline connecting Apple Valley proper to Cedar Point, including the following:

- The pipeline was nearly complete with only 100 feet remaining as of the meeting.
- The pump house was under construction but delayed due to easement issues and redesign.
- A temporary emergency generator would be used if electrical service was delayed.
- The project was expected to be operational by the end of April 2025.
- Contrary to local rumors, the pipeline is a transmission—not distribution—line, designed without capacity for new development tie-ins.

The pipeline project came in significantly under budget by an estimated \$300,000–\$500,000. Big Plains Water Special Service District (District) also applied for a \$1.2 million grant to fund additional water infrastructure projects, potentially leaving the District with \$2 million in surplus funding.

Additional improvements included:

- A new SCADA system for automated, remote water management.
- A new pump in the Gregerson well (with the old pump retained as a backup).
- Backup generators installed for both the Gregerson and Merritt wells and the new pump house.
- Measures to track and reduce water waste more accurately.

Aquifer Report & Water Planning

The Mayor provided a lay explanation of the verbal preliminary aquifer report, noting that Apple Valley contains two aquifers—Aquifer One and Aquifer Two—identified through collaboration with USGS, Washington County Water Conservancy District, and other specialists.

- **Aquifer One:** Currently serves Apple Valley proper. It is limited in size and nearly at capacity, with enough water to support existing residents, current agreements, and the new pipeline—but no further large growth. The aquifer’s recharge depends entirely on precipitation, and it is vulnerable during droughts.
- **Aquifer Two:** A larger and more sustainable aquifer located east of Main Street. The Mayor explained that Travis (the developer) would drill new wells into Aquifer Two to support future growth, including the developments at West Temple and Crimson Peaks. These wells, once drilled, will be donated to the District.

Council Member Kevin Sair asked for confirmation that water from the aquifers flowed west toward the Virgin River and sought clarity about whether older water rights could supersede the Town’s. The Mayor affirmed both points and explained that legally, older water rights take precedence—even over municipal rights.

Growth, Water Rights & Future Planning

The Mayor emphasized that no new large-scale developments were being approved beyond what had already been planned. The current Town Council shared a general opposition to additional growth. However, the Mayor noted that future Town Councils could reverse this direction depending on the outcome of local elections.

The Mayor explained how development agreements ensure water responsibility remains with developers, who must secure their own wells and water studies. If water shortages occur, service would follow the priority of water right dates.

Council Member Sair commented that while initially opposed to the golf course, they supported it after learning it would use recycled water and preserve open space—resulting in less water consumption than housing would. Council Member Sair also noted that connecting new wells from Aquifer Two to the million-gallon tank may ultimately be a blessing in disguise by creating a secondary water source.

Council Member Annie Spendlove added that, with a fire station already located on the east end of town, future facilities should be planned comprehensively and as a unified system.

Canaan Springs & Additional Water Sources

The Mayor discussed current conditions at Canaan Springs:

- One spring was shut down due to contamination (coliform).
- The remaining spring may be sufficient for summer use, but there are contingency plans to develop additional sources or treat the water with chlorine if necessary.

- The Town is also exploring restoring and expanding other springs in the area to potentially justify a pipeline connection from Canaan to Apple Valley proper.

Public Services & Facilities

The Mayor outlined preliminary plans for a new 20,000-square-foot town building, improvements to public works, and efforts to coordinate public safety:

- A new fire station and fire truck would be part of the Oculita Roca Public Infrastructure District (PID).
- A joint venture was being discussed with Colorado City for law enforcement presence in Apple Valley.
- New developments would be connected to a wastewater treatment facility instead of septic systems.

Closing Remarks

The Mayor concluded by reiterating that water availability—not zoning—is now the primary control for growth. The Town of Apple Valley and Big Plains Water Special Service District is actively pursuing conservation, drought response, and infrastructure upgrades to ensure water security.

The meeting closed with additional public questions and responses, many of which focused on aquifer flow, well oversight, PID boundaries, and emergency exits.

Date Approved: 4/14/25

Approved BY: 
Mayor | Michael L. Farrar

Attest BY: 
Town Clerk/Recorder | Jenna Vizcardo

