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91st KZGN News Talking Points Editorial
By: Tom Wiknich

Important: the council will discuss the new state-mandated groundwater sustainability agency on Wednesday evening. Yes, you heard me right. The council is going to start discussing this GSA agency tomorrow evening.

As we reported in yesterday’s regular news segment, the city council will hold its first official discussion of the new GSA tomorrowevening at their regular council meeting.

It would be very smart that everyone with thoughts about the new agency attend this meeting.The council may stress the agenda item is only consideration of whether the city should send a letter of intent to join the county in the establishment of this new GSA.It is also an opportunity for the council to start hearing from us our thoughts about the new agency.There will be time for public comment.The council should relish the opportunity to hear from the people on this important matter.Afterall, how can they represent us, if they don’t take the time to hear us?To all of you, it’s not too early to start telling the council your thoughts on the set up this new agency.I encourage all valley residents to attend the meeting, not just city residents.

Here’s my suggestion:Along with the council notifying the county they will participate in this new agency, they should start setting a true course for that to happen.My suggestion is that we start having public meetings soon to discuss this one issue.A town hall would be great.Notify the people of these meetings.Open them up to the people for comment.Open the meetings up to us.We want to also start hearing your thoughts on this as well.I recommend that county supervisor Mick Gleason, Mayor Breeden, and one of the elected board members from the water district, start leading the way.Step up.Start making this a decision we all can participate in. I’m not saying these three would be the whole new agency.I know others will join the agency as this comes to being actually set up.But they are sure to be voting members in it ultimately.If they want to add more people to the start-up group, that’s ok too.At least these three people are elected individuals, elected by us in the Indian Wells Valley.Someone has to lead.Those three can step up.Set a date, and let’s start talking about this new agency.Let’s start addressing the questions on this.I want to start hearing our elected officials take a position on this.It’s not too soon to start having meetings.It’s almost too late.There is a long ways to go to get this agency set up. To the people out there, don’t think that if you’re on your own well, or already a customer of the water district, that this GSA won’t affect you.I guarantee you; every resident in the valley will be affected by this new agency. For tomorrows council meeting,I would recommend comments and questions should probably be limited to the particulars to whether the city should participate, and about setting up this new agency.Not about the actual planning to correct the problem.We need to go one step at a time.At the public meeting about a week and a half ago, the first questions asked and that need to be discussed are:How will the people that serve on the board be selected?Will these people will be elected or appointed?

Public comment showed the public is advocating for an elected board……not appointed.If they were appointed by say the county supervisors, they would not be answerable to the people here.

We need to have people on the board elected by the people of the Indian Wells Valley.

Will they have taxing authority?Not exactly. It’s a play on words.They will have “fee” authority.While most people don’t see any difference, they are set under certain rules. Nevertheless, there will be fees coming, I guarantee that.What will it cost to run this new agency?No one knows yet. Rest assured that there will probably be a manager, secretary, attorney, maybe contractor support, facilities, etc.It won’t be cheap.Who will have to pay for it?That’s easy, we will pay for it. One big question I posed at the meeting was where will this new agency be based?As far as many are concerned, if this agency’s purpose is to provide management of the water basin in the Indian Wells Valley, the agency better be based in the Indian Wells Valley.Not in some distant location like Bakersfield or Sacramento.The right thing to do is to base it here.This board must be easily accessible to the people it will have authority over.Housing them in city hall would be beneficial, and there is plenty of room for them in that building.We need the agency to be based here.The decisions they make can change the way we use our lands, and what we pay for water.Transparency is very important.There is so much potential impact to us that this is going to be a very important subject in the very near future. One final comment I need to add,

Is that thanks goes out to the county for all the time and money they have spent getting us to this point.The county also has another agency on the west side that is going to be set up as well.They have gotten the ball rolling.And thanks to Mick, for getting this as far as it has come so far. Now it’s time for our local representatives to start getting involved.It’s time for us to get involved.It’s time for everyone in the valley to come together and work together.

In conclusion, the city council will eventually be participating on this new GSA. They need to start hearing our thoughts on this important issue. Supervisor Gleason, Mayor Breeden, and a water board member need to step up and lead on our behalf. We’ve got questions, and we want answers. First being, does everyone agree that this new agency will be based in the Indian Wells Valley?The answer has to be yes, it will be based here.

I’m tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think.I’d like to know what you think.If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to info@kzgn.net.