



March 12, 2008

Barry Jacobs, Chair  
Orange County Board of  
Commissioners  
P.O. Box 8181  
Hillsborough, NC 27278

Mark Chilton, Mayor  
Town of Carrboro  
301 West Main Street  
Carrboro, NC 27510

Kevin Foy, Mayor  
Town of Chapel Hill  
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

**SUBJECT: OWASA RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS REGARDING  
COLLABORATIVE WATER CONSERVATION STRATEGIES**

Dear Chair Jacobs, Mayor Chilton and Mayor Foy:

At the February 14, 2008 OWASA Board of Directors meeting, we received and strongly endorsed the enclosed recommendations regarding Water Conservation Priorities and Initiatives for collaborative action by the Town of Carrboro, Town of Chapel Hill, Orange County and OWASA. These recommendations result from the efforts of the interlocal staff workgroup which was formed to evaluate potential conservation strategies for joint consideration.

On November 9, 2007 we provided you with a preliminary draft of the interlocal staff workgroup's recommendations and report. We very much appreciate your respective board's support for your staff's continuing participation in this important effort.

The most significant recommendation that the OWASA Board strongly supports is the call for OWASA to require all development and redevelopment to submit water use efficiency plans and to install state-of-the-art water saving fixtures and devices as conditions of receiving OWASA water and/or sewer services. We believe this "conditions of service" approach will best ensure increased water use efficiency in all new development within our community.

Additional near-term recommendations which we support include local governments and OWASA pursuing and/or continuing our collective commitments to "lead by example" by incorporating state-of-the-art conservation measures into all of our public properties, where cost-effective, and by establishing sustainable landscaping guidelines and requirements as local government policies. The recommendations also include longer-term actions, such as establishing requirements for the use reclaimed water where it is available in the future.

We request your Boards' endorsement of the conditions of service approach and associated recommendations, and your support for your respective staffs to continue working with OWASA staff to develop a proposed implementation plan including timetable, funding and other resource needs, roles and responsibilities, etc. We have prepared a draft resolution for your consideration regarding this matter.

*Recommendations for Collaborative Water Conservation Strategies*

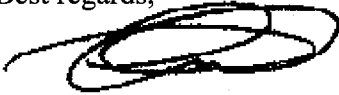
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We look forward to continuing our work with you and your respective staff to develop and implement collaborative strategies that will enhance long-term water conservation efforts in our community. As always, should you desire a presentation to your Board, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Please feel free to contact me (by phone at 651-5623 or by email at [rkabrick@ensr.aecom.com](mailto:rkabrick@ensr.aecom.com)) or Ed Kerwin (537-4211 or [ekerwin@owasa.org](mailto:ekerwin@owasa.org)) with any questions or comments you may have.

Best regards,



Randy Kabrick, P.E., Chair

Enclosures

- c: Ms. Laura Blackmon, Orange County Manager
- Mr. Roger Stancil, Chapel Hill Town Manager
- Mr. Steve Stewart, Carrboro Town Manager
- Mrs. Carolyn Elfland, Associate Vice Chancellor for Campus Services
- OWASA Board of Directors
- Ed Kerwin, Executive Director
- Bob Epting, General Counsel



## ORANGE WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY

*Quality Service Since 1977*

### RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING WATER CONSERVATION PRIORITIES AND INITIATIVES

February 14, 2008

#### **Background**

Water conservation and demand management are critical components of OWASA's long-term strategy for ensuring a sustainable water supply for the citizens and businesses of Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and the University community. OWASA has achieved significant progress over the past several years through its seasonal and tiered rates, process water recycling at the water treatment plant, and the reclaimed water partnership with the University. The Towns and County enacted uniform conservation ordinances that are among the most proactive and innovative in North Carolina. The University has implemented extensive conservation measures throughout all sectors of its Chapel Hill campus and has agreed to pay more than \$12 million for OWASA's reclaimed water system that will initially serve the main campus.

In February 2006, OWASA presented information about projected water supply and demand trends and the increasing importance of conservation in meeting long-term water needs to the elected boards of Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Orange County. The elected Boards asked that OWASA staff work with their respective staffs in developing information and recommending additional specific actions that would enable the Towns, County, and OWASA to achieve greater conservation of the community's water resources. This interlocal staff workgroup prepared a comprehensive consensus report and set of recommendations - *Collaborative Water Conservation Strategies for Joint Consideration by Carrboro, Chapel Hill, and Orange County, Draft, January 2008*. That document provides substantial detail about several potential conservation strategies in addition to those specifically recommended in this NRTS Committee report.

The workgroup recommended that the Towns, County, and OWASA adopt new water conservation policies and requirements that are consistent throughout the OWASA service area in order to assure their effective and equitable application among all OWASA customers, businesses, and developers in the community. One key approach endorsed by the staff work group and recommended by NRTS is that OWASA develop and adopt water use efficiency standards and requirements for new development and redevelopment projects as "conditions of OWASA service". The Towns and County would then reference OWASA's standards and requirements as conditions of their respective development approval processes.

#### **Recommendations**

The NRTS Committee recommends two phases of implementation for the following strategies:

#### **Recommended Near-Term Actions**

- 1. OWASA should develop specific standards and enact requirements for all new development and redevelopment to provide water use efficiency plans and to install state-of-the-art water saving fixtures and devices.*** Compliance with these standards would be required as a condition of receiving

OWASA water and/or sewer service. Such standards could include requirements for use of “high efficiency” toilets, faucets, showerheads, and other fixtures.

2. ***OWASA should require that, as a condition of continuing OWASA water and/or sewer service, an existing service location must be in compliance with OWASA water use efficiency standards and conditions of service upon change of ownership or use.***
3. ***Local governments and OWASA should conduct water use audits and cost-effective water conservation retrofit projects at local government-owned and managed properties, thus “leading by example”.***
4. ***The Towns, County, and OWASA should continue to incorporate and formalize our collective commitments to state-of-the-art water use efficiency in the design of new local government-owned and managed properties and, where practical and cost-effective, in renovated local government-owned and managed properties.***
5. ***The Towns, County, and OWASA should develop sustainable landscape guidelines and requirements to ensure that landscape and irrigation system design, installation, and maintenance are more water-efficient and environmentally-friendly than traditional practices.*** Such measures could include limits on the amount of turf that can be established on a given site and irrigated with OWASA-supplied potable water, as well as requirements for the placement and design of the irrigation systems. The use of harvested rainwater and reclaimed water would be encouraged as alternatives to potable OWASA water.

#### **Recommended Longer-Term Actions**

1. ***The Towns and County should enact requirements for new development projects to connect to OWASA’s reclaimed water system when such service is available.*** Requirements could mandate that existing irrigation systems served with OWASA potable water be connected to the reclaimed water system when and where available. A requirement that potable water-based irrigation systems be converted to reclaimed water service could be one of OWASA’s proposed new conditions of service.
2. ***If necessary, the Towns, County, and OWASA should seek enabling authority to enact a policy/provision that prohibits any restrictions via deed, covenant, Homeowners Association rules, etc., that would limit a property owner’s ability to implement sustainable landscaping, rainwater harvesting, or other water conservation practices otherwise permitted by law.***

The staff and NRTS look forward to receiving questions, comments and direction from the OWASA Board of Directors.

Upon direction and guidance from the OWASA Board of Directors, OWASA staff will work with local government staffs to develop proposed water use efficiency conditions of service, and to propose a more detailed implementation plan, including a timetable, projected funding and staffing requirements, and the proposed roles and responsibilities of each respective entity.