

## Report on Neighborhood Meetings

Four neighborhood meetings were held on September 4, 16, and two on the 18<sup>th</sup>. A total of about fifty people attended. Margot Garcia, president, and Steve Brigman, design engineer, presented the plan for the improvements and then answered questions.

The member comments were focused around three ideas; could the new mains be put in the existing easements behind the houses; we don't need new mains because some have been recently replaced; could the SVMWC pay the cost of replacing the house laterals since it is the entity requiring the property owner to replace those pipes.

The Board asked Shaw Engineering to assess the feasibility of using existing easements for the new mains. See article on page 3 for a discussion of this idea.

It was explained that the SVMWC needs new mains for several reasons. One reason is to improve fire flow and provide the needed additional fire hydrants. Another reason is that the existing pipes continue to break. There was a break in a pipe in the easement behind Lanny Lane during the week of October 10<sup>th</sup>. It is cheaper to replace all the old pipes than one by one as they break. Thirdly, the pipes in the easement uphill of Sandy Way would be almost impossible to repair in winter due to the steepness of the slope. A section of that water main is 2 inch galvanized pipe - what one uses

for irrigation systems - and thus inadequate as a water main. Only about 40% of the *(continued page 2)*

## Annual Meeting Well Attended

SVMWC members came to the Annual Meeting on September 4, 2010 to learn more about the proposed improvements and voice their concerns about the size of the capital improvement project and costs.

President Margot Garcia reported that the Mutual had a successful year with no boil water notices and no increases in member dues. The John Chisholm Water tank was completed, put into service, and dedicated. Already the utility bills are lower as a result of less leakage from the water tank. The company ended the fiscal year on June 30 with a carry-forward of \$101,914 which is being used to fund the design work for the improvements. The application for a USDA Loan of \$4,066,000 to fund the needed improvements was turned in September 1. Hopefully, within three months, SVMWC will learn if it has been approved.



Steve Brigman of Shaw Engineering in Reno presented four parts to the capital improvement project:

- 1) adding homes on Navajo and Apache to the upper pressure zone

- 2) put new water mains in the street where they are currently behind the houses and add new fire hydrants;
- 3) upgrade all service boxes and install automatic read water meters;
- 4) rehabilitate wells #1 and #2, build a new well house, and install new standby generator and safe chemical storage.

Elections were held; Margot Garcia, David Salinger, and Lynn Suter were re-elected to the Board.

## Neighborhood

*(continued from page 1)*

water mains are being replaced; pipes that are newer than 10 years and in good condition will be left as they are.

Some members felt that as a matter of equity, SVMWC should pay for the new house laterals required by the new water mains in the street. A general principle of public finance is that public monies cannot be spent on private property for the good of the owner. In addition, there is an issue of equity among the members. Each property is different in the sense of the cost to put in the line - some close to the street, others far back, some easily built to the house, other lines complicated with boulders, trees, and landscaping.

The houses and lots in the SVMWC service area are each unique. Therefore the engineer will have to look at each situation and decide where the service box will go as is best for that property. So, property owners will have the opportunity to influence the placement of the service box.

The Mutual will assist its members by providing names of contractors that can install the lateral lines using trenching or horizontal drilling. Steve Brigman has already been in contact with

some of these contractors and shown them the area in order to get realistic price quotes. SVMWC encourages its members to work together, as neighbors, and share in the costs of bringing equipment to the area, etc.



Members at Neighborhood Meeting

## Chlorination

In 2007 the California Department of Public Health required SVMWC to chlorinate the water stored in the old redwood tank. Chlorinating water supplies is a generally accepted public health practice to prevent water borne diseases. CDPH has not specifically released SVMWC from the chlorination requirement because of the new tank. The main water source is groundwater from the wells in the valley, where there is only a small risk for bacterial contamination of the water supply to the John Chisholm water tank.

SVMWC's Operations Manager John Collins has continued chlorination for several reasons, including the possibility of contamination of the distribution system from leaks, backflow from irrigation systems, and improperly handled installation of new connections. Chlorination kills bacteria, viruses, and giardia that could emanate from these and other sources.

Some members have complained to the Board about the smell and taste of chlorine in their water, and in general are against chlorination because of the alleged health effects. The resulting issue is one of risk management, chlorination as protection against disease

balanced with chlorine's effects on water quality. SVMWC had only lightly chlorinated in the water supply prior to 2007 and the SVPSD chlorinates their water supply only during the annual flushing of the distribution system in April.

The Board is in the process of reviewing options moving forward now that the new tank is on-line. Member input on this important question is always welcome.

## An Analysis of Reusing Existing Easements for Water Main Replacement

At the Annual Meeting, several members argued that the Mutual should use existing easements for replacing the water mains, thereby saving the property owners the cost of moving the connection of their house lateral from the main behind the house to the main in the street. The Board asked Shaw Engineering to analyze this suggestion. Here is the report.

It was stated that the easement is open and easily accessible for trenchers and the equipment necessary to lay the new water line. Walking and photographing the easements, the engineers found that in fact there are many trees growing over the easement and probably some 200 trees, over 4 inches in diameter, would need to be cut. This is an additional expense. Also, some landowners have landscaped over the easement and that would be destroyed. Using the existing easements is not as simple as some would have us believe.

It was also the recommendation of two separate engineers that fire hydrants should be placed on main lines not smaller loop lines. If the mains were replaced in the back lot lines smaller loop lines would have to be run down property lines to service the new required hydrants in the streets. This would add the extra expense of

laying more pipe, but also an unknown, and possible very large, expense to acquire and record new easements from property owners to run these loop lines.

During the process of laying the new pipe in the existing easement, the water would need to be turned off in the old pipe and a temporary connection installed in order to provide continuous water service. This is an added complication and expense.

The existing AC pipe (asbestos cement) is very brittle after being in the ground for so many years. Running heavy equipment over the ground or trenching near/over it would likely cause it to crack and break, adding to the problems of installing new pipe. In the case of Sandy Way, running equipment uphill behind the houses is difficult, expensive, and destructive of the hillside. While some of the pipe is galvanized steel and not so brittle, the other issues noted above are still valid.

One final reason to move the main lines and service boxes to the street is one of operational efficiency. Placing the main water lines and service boxes in the street there is improved access and response times should problems arise in the winter. For example, if a remote read meter showed excessive water usage in an unoccupied home in the winter indicating a pipe break, the operations person could easily access the service shut off in the street quickly, limiting the amount of water damage. If the service box was in the back lot, the time to access the box for shut off would be much longer and the water damage greater.

For these reasons, the Board has agreed to continue with the plan to move the water mains into the street. SVMWC will assist its members by providing information and quotes for the cost of replacing house laterals. But ultimately it is the property owner's responsibility to do that.

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Comments and ideas for articles are always  
welcome.

**Board Meeting Coming Up**  
**November 13, 2010**  
**9:00 A.M.**  
**Community Room, PSD Building**

## Water Use

John Collins, operations manager reported on the last three months of water production/use (in million gallons).

Month	2010	2009
August	5.941	6.101
September	5.252	5.543
October	2.938	2.781

All samples taken in during the last three months were negative for Total Coliform and E. Coli.