



# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Richard Miranda  
Interim City Manager

**DATE:** September 30, 2011

**FROM:** Paul Cunningham  
Councilmember, Ward 2

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karin Uhlich".

Karin Uhlich  
Vice Mayor, Ward 3

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Kozachik".

Steve Kozachik  
Councilmember, Ward 6

**SUBJECT: Clarification on Water Harvesting Rebate**

Mayor and Council have repeatedly affirmed their support of water conservation and water conservation programs through the creation of the Commercial Water Harvesting and Residential Gray Water ordinances, the adoption of water service area boundaries and in 2008 the creation of a dedicated funding source for conservation programs along with countless other programs and studies.

At the Mayor and Council meeting on September 27, 2011, Interim Water Director Andrew Quigley stated that \$100,000 would be allocated as "start up costs" associated with a water harvesting rebate program. Although this was stated in the background material provided to Mayor and Council, at no time was this previously discussed with any of the Council offices or their staff. After the Mayor and Council meeting, City Council staff spoke with Amy McCoy, the Chair of the Conservation and Education sub committee of CWAC. Ms. McCoy also expressed surprise at the \$100,000 start up cost.

This is wholly unacceptable.

Of further concern is the article in the Arizona Daily Star on September 28, 2011. In the article, Interim Director Andrew Quigley is referenced as saying that some of the start up costs could include the creation of a handbook or water-harvesting manual. In addition to there being a wealth of information currently available on the subject of rainwater harvesting, in 2006, the City of Tucson paid for and published it's own Water Harvesting Manual <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/files/transportation/2006WaterHarvesting.pdf>. Also included in the September 27th material is a \$107,000 line item for marketing this new program. Certainly any creation of handbooks and manuals falls under that umbrella. Duplication of these efforts would be an obvious waste of funds.

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Additionally, Mr. Quigley is referenced stating that rebates could be in the range of \$850. This comment is of particular concern due to the fact that Mayor and Council included specific direction for TW staff to work with an advisory committee regarding the details of the rebate, which includes the **amount** of the rebate. We hope that the advisory committee will not be treated as a rubber stamp for pre determined conclusions from staff.

Mayor and Council direction is for staff to return in 30 days with recommendations for the 7 member committee made up of the following members:

2 members of CWAC  
Rainwater installer  
Homebuilder  
Green infrastructure representative  
Educator landscape professional

This committee will help develop the residential water harvesting rebate program including, but not limited to, input on the amount of the rebate, the annual amount of the conservation fee to be allocated to the program, new and/or existing homes, passive and/or active systems, how to apply for the rebate etc. Please note that the make up of the committee reflects the expertise already found in our community. They serve as volunteers. With their knowledge and hands on experience, the committee will assist staff in creating and implementing a user friendly rebate with minimal to no overhead costs associated. In any event, certainly nothing close to \$100,000.

We would like to point out that some of the on going conservation programs such as the Commercial Rainwater Demonstration Program funds are not being fully utilized due to a perception that there is too much red tape, time and bureaucratic paper work required to make the program attractive to those who want to participate.

We are hoping that the residential water-harvesting rebate can be modeled after the rebate that the State of Arizona offered. That rebate required nothing more than a certified installer to fill out a one-page paper with a receipt for purchase. The rebate was mailed to the homeowner. If the State of Arizona can make water-harvesting rebates simple and accessible, there is no reason why the City of Tucson can't do the same.

In closing, although the water conservation budget is a fraction of the overall Tucson Water budget, it is funded by taxpayers and deserves the same scrutiny as any public program. We do not want to see the same mis-steps that plagued Rio Nuevo or Parkwise repeat themselves with this very important fund. Please make every effort to ensure that all funds generated in the name of water conservation are used for water conservation and not the production of expensive videos, glossy pamphlets or excessive staff time.

cc: Mayor and Council  
Mike Rankin  
Roger Randolph  
Andrew Quigley