SWEETWATER SPRINGS WATER DISTRICT

TO: Board of Directors **AGENDA NO. V-C**

FROM: Steve Mack, General Manager

MEETING DATE: September 5, 2013

Subject: DISCUSSION/ACTION RE USING DISTRICT PROPERTY FOR CELL TOWER SITES

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive a presentation from the General Manager re use of District property for cell tower sites.

FISCAL IMPACT: none.

DISCUSSION:

Recently the District considered leasing a portion of the parcel that contains the Highland Treatment Facility to AT&T for use as a cell tower site. Many nearby residents protested this use of the parcel and the Board directed that the negotiations with AT&T for use of that location as a cell tower site be dropped. During the discussion, Board members suggested that other District parcels may be good cell tower locations and be better located with respect to nearby residential land uses.

In the past, the cell tower site possibilities have come from the cell phone companies or from consultants working with cell phone companies. These requests have apparently come out of some kind of investigation by the cell phone companies that led them to certain parcels. In the five years I have been here, we have received inquiries about the Highland Treatment Plant site and the Mount Jackson site where we already have two cell or radio tower sites leased.

Some issues related to cell tower sites:

Location, location, location – of course, the first thing the cell phone companies are looking for is a site that adds to their coverage network. We have a number of parcels throughout our service area that may fit that.

Elevation – The Highland parcel is at 250 feet, the Mount Jackson top is approximately 1650 feet. I am assuming that an elevation similar to the Highland parcel, or higher, is what cell phone companies are looking for.

Our tanks sites fit the elevation requirement and we have some unoccupied parcels with higher elevations, but perhaps not adequate access.

Access – I believe cell phone companies want good access to these sites. We have many sites with good access and a few that may have other good attributes of a site but poor access.

Nearby residences – the Highland site is in the middle of a residential area. Most of our other tank sites are at the edge of residential areas – not in the middle of many homes but still within some reasonable distance to someone's home. We have very few parcels that are not near anyone and those parcels mostly have poor access or are already in use (Mount Jackson). They also may not be in a location that has any benefit to an existing cell phone network.

There may be other issues related to the potential for cell tower sites on District property. Staff would appreciate direction on how to respond to requests for use of District property for cell tower sites.