

# Cedar Park-Leander Statesman

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## NEWS

### Understanding reached between BCRUA, Volente

Wednesday, November 7, 2012 | Rachel Rice

The Brushy Creek Regional Utility Authority has faced vehement opposition from the Village of Volente regarding its plans to build a water pump, deep-water intake and maintenance building within its borders in order to draw water from Lake Travis. But last week, both entities reached a compromise in the form of a memorandum of understanding.

“We made a call, and the mayor (of Volente) and I discussed some options,” said Leander mayor and BCRUA president Chris Fielder. “We used both of our collaborative ideas, and rather than suing each other this is the compromise we came to.”

The memorandum between Volente and the BCRUA has been approved by Cedar Park, Leander and Round Rock. It states that while the Village of Volente will support the building of the maintenance building and deep-water intake within its borders, the support comes on the condition that the water pump is built on a site located outside of Volente. A tunnel under Volente will connect the intake to the pump.

Initially, the BCRUA determined Site 4 at the end of Jackson Street located within the borders of Volente as the best location for the water pump. The site would be “12 acres up on a cliff on the deep side of Lake Travis,” Fielder said.

Volente advocated moving the pump to another site, according to a memo written by Volente Mayor Justine Blackmore-Hlista.

“The Village of Volente has consistently opposed the construction of this facility within a residentially zoned neighborhood due to the potential impacts of a project of this scope,” Blackmore-Hlista wrote.

Fielder said he and Blackmore-Hlista met on multiple occasions over the course of a month to see what could be worked out to benefit both parties, with input from the cities of Cedar Park, Leander and Round Rock.

“We’d much rather work with another city than fight with them,” Fielder said. “We’re all in this together, we’re all looking out for our individual cities, and we have the ability to work with the village versus taking legal action.”

Blackmore-Hlista said in her memo that “it is clear the BCRUA will not pursue an option that bypasses Volente altogether without lengthy and expensive litigation, the outcome of which is uncertain for both sides.”

The agreed upon solution to move the pump to Site 8 outside the village’s borders would increase the cost by approximately \$6 million, Fielder said. However, Leander director of engineering Wayne Watts said there are advantages and disadvantages to the change in the location of the pump.

“(The new plan) reduces the amount of power lines dramatically,” Watts said. “There are some cost increases and there are some cost offsets. In general it’s considered somewhat more expensive, but not unduly so.”

Fielder emphasized that the building of the pump and intake system is a long way off and that the earliest the BCRUA anticipates breaking ground on the projects is 2018.

“We don’t even own any land on Site 4 or 8,” Fielder said. “This is just the second phase.