

**ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 15, 2012**



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The Environmental Board convened in a public hearing meeting on Wednesday, February 15, 2012 at City Hall Council Chambers. 301 W. Second Street, Austin, Texas 78701

Board Members in Attendance:

Bob Anderson, Robin Gary, Mary Ann Neely, Marisa Perales, James Schissler and Jennifer Walker

Staff in Attendance:

Marilla Shepherd, Olga Jimenez, Angela Gallardo, Victoria Li, Joe Pantalion Chuck Lesniak, Thais Perkins, Mike Personett, Mike Ihnat, Diane Gonzales, Jason Bible, Mapi Vigil, Erin Wood, Roxanne Jackson, Jean Drew, Bob Gedert, David Johns, Leann Ishcomer, James Grabbs, Kelly Gagnon, Kath Buchanan

Others in attendance:

**Ronnie Volkening signed up to speak about item 5.5b
Mike Mehoney signed up to speak about item 5.5b
Rick Hilton signed up to speak about item 5.5b
Scott Johnson signed up to donate his time to Andrew Dobbs
Andrew Dobbs signed up to speak about item 5.5b
Dr. Craig Nazor signed up to speak about item 5.5b**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Robin Gary called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS: GENERAL

Speaker should sign up to speak prior to the meeting called to order; you will receive a three-minute allotment for concerns not posted

On the agenda.

There were no citizens signed up to speak under this item.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND ACTION ITEMS

- a. Approve the minutes of the Environment Board regular meeting on February 1, 2012.

The minutes of the February 1, 2012 meeting was approved on Board member James Schissler's motion and Board member Marisa Perales' second [Vote 6-0] Board member Mary Gay Maxwell was absent.

3. SPECIAL STAFF REPORT POSSIBLE ACTION

- a. Watershed Protection Department Annual Report FY 10-11 – Victoria Li, Director Watershed Protection Department
This item was conducted as posted. The Environmental Board Budget Committee will convene in April 2012.
- b. Watershed Protection Master Plan, Jean Drew, Watershed Protection Department
This item was conducted as posted.

4. STAFF BRIEFINGS AND POSSIBLE ACTION

- a. Briefing on Wastewater Service Extension Request #3077
Charlotte Cranberg, Kelly Gagnon, Watershed Protection Department
Recommendation approved. See attached motion.
- b. Briefing on Water Service Extension Request # 2998 Austin Seventy One,
Kelly Gagnon, Watershed Protection Department
Recommendation approved. See attached motion.
- c. Monthly Report on Environmental Commissioning for the Water Treatment Plant No. 4 Jollyville Transmission Main – Thais Perkins and David Johns, Watershed Protection Department
This item was conducted as posted.
- d. Briefing on changes to Chapter 10-5-21 of the City Code regarding mowing of weeds and grass mowing in wildlife habitat and riparian areas.
- Leann Ishcomer, Parks & Recreation Department. (Postponed from 2/1/2012)
Recommendation approved. See attached motion.

5. OLD BUSINESS REPORTS, AND ACTION

- 1) Update on the Joint Environmental/Parks Board Subcommittee – Mary Gay Maxwell, Mary Ann Neely, and Jennifer Walker.
No report this week.
- 2) Urban Growth Policy Committee – Mary Gay Maxwell, James Schissler, P. E., and Marisa Perales
No report this week.
- 3) Water Treatment Plant #4 Committee – Mary Gay Maxwell, Chair, Bob Anderson, & Mary Ann Neely.
Staff reported on this item at tonight's meeting.
- 4) Development Committee – Bob Anderson, Chair, Mary Gay Maxwell, Marisa Perales, & James Schissler.
Staff will schedule another HTO stakeholders meeting within 2 weeks.
- 5) Water Quality Regulations Committee – Mary Ann Neely, Chair, Robin Gary & Jennifer Walker

- Subcommittee report on Single Use Bags Ordinance. - Mary Ann Neely, Environmental Board.
Board member Mary Ann Neely reported on this item.
 - Discuss and consider a recommendation to Council for the Single Use Bags Ordinance – Mary Ann Neely, Environmental Board.
Recommendation approved. See attached motion.
- 6) Watershed Protection Budget Committee – Mary Gay Maxwell, & Bob Anderson.
Environmental Board received report from staff at tonight’s meeting.
- 7) Reports from Board representative to other committees.
No report this week.
6. NEW BUSINESS - Future agenda items
1. **Board member Bob Anderson requests a report on assessing the effectiveness of water quality controls in Austin by focusing on water quality results for the Colorado River upstream and downstream of Austin.**
7. ADJOURNMENT
- The Environmental Board motioned to convene 15 minutes in overtime two time’s total of 30 minutes overtime. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.**



ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD MOTION 021512 4d

Date: February 15, 2012

Subject: Changes to Chapter 10-5-21 of City Code regarding mowing of weeds and grass mowing in wildlife habitat and riparian areas.

Motioned By: Jennifer Walker

Seconded by: Marisa Perales

Recommendation

The Environmental Board recommends with conditions the Changes to Chapter 10-5-21 of City Code regarding mowing of weeds and grass mowing in wildlife habitat and riparian areas.

Board Conditions:

Substitutue the word "exception" for "affirmative defense."

Rationale

The change will do more to encourage wildlife habitats, and take the burden of proof off of citizens in possible legal proceedings.

Vote 6-0-0-1

For: Anderson, Gary, Neely, Perales, Schissler and Walker

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Mary Gay Maxwell

Approved By:

Robin Gary
Acting Environmental Board Chair



ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD MOTION 021512 4b

Date: February 15, 2012

Subject: Wastewater Service Request #2998

Motioned By: James Schissler

Seconded by: Mary Ann Neely

Recommendation

The Environmental Board recommends **approval** to Wastewater Service Extension Request #2998 Austin Seventy-One.

Board Conditions:

None

Rationale

None

Vote 6-0-0-1

For: Anderson, Gary, Neely, Perales, Schissler and Walker

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Maxwell

Approved By:

Robin Gary
Acting Environmental Board Chair



ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD MOTION 021512 4a

Date: February 15, 2012

Subject: Wastewater Service Request #3077

Motioned By: Mary Ann Neely

Seconded by: Robert Anderson

Recommendation

The Environmental Board recommends **approval** to Wastewater Service Extension Request #3077 Charlotte Cranberg.

Board Conditions:

None

Rationale

None

Vote 6-0-0-1

For: Anderson, Gary, Neely, Perales, Schissler and Walker

Against:

Abstain:

Absent: Maxwell

Approved By:

Robin Gary
Acting Environmental Board Chair



ENVIRONMENTAL BOARD MOTION 021512 5-5b

Date: February 15, 2012

Subject: Discuss and consider a recommendation to Council for the Single Use Bags Ordinance

Motioned By: Mary Ann Neely

Seconded By: Marisa Perales

Recommendation:

The Environmental Board recommends that Council adopt ordinance to phase in the regulation of carryout bags within city limits with the following modifications;

The Environmental Board strongly recommends that the definition for "reusable carryout bags" be retained in the ordinance approved by Council. Recyclable paper bags should have a minimum basis weight of 65 lbs and be FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified.

15-6-121 (3) (a) -- it is advisable but not necessary that reusable carryout bags display the phrase "reusable and recyclable"

15-6-122 — eliminate March 1, 2013 — February 28, 2014 period in draft ordinance where single use bags are available for a .10 fee (section C) and move directly into prohibiting single-use bags *12 months* from the ordinance being passed. Retailers may charge a fee for the reusable bags if they wish.

Section (E): Include information about how to recycle reusable bags on signage required to be displayed in stores.

15-6-124 — Eliminate the section on surcharges due to the fact that the year-long period where single-use bags will be provided for a surcharge will no longer be part of the ordinance.

15-6-125 — Exemptions — Eliminate exemptions for retailers of beer, wine and spirits.

Add requirement that states — Retailers that have an exemption should provide signage educating customers on how and where to recycle single-use bags and/or provide recycling facilities onsite.

Recommendations:

The Environmental Board recommends that Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) establish metrics to track success of their educational program and program to eliminate/reduce single-use bags into the waste stream. This could include but is not limited to requiring retailers to submit to the City number (or lbs) of bags distributed to consumers by type, and number (or lbs) of bags collected and recycled. Austin Resource Recovery should report findings to Environmental Board on an annual basis.

The Environmental Board recommends that Austin Resource Recovery investigate providing "pillows" or special sacks to the public to facilitate single-use plastic bag recycling as part of the single-stream recycling program. This should be implemented as soon as possible and preferably concurrent with the start of the program banning single-use bags. ARR should provide regular updates the Environmental Board on progress towards meeting this goal. The Environmental Board recommends that ARR dedicate sufficient fund to support a public education campaign.

Rationale

The rationale for this recommendation is that eliminating single-use bags in the city of Austin has many positive benefits for the community and the environment. According to Watershed Protection, single-use plastic bags are often carried into the city's storm water drainage system during storm events where they block the flow of storm water through inlets, pipelines, management facilities and open waterways. The bags diminish aesthetic value of natural areas and pose a direct hazard to wildlife that may become entangled in the bags or ingest them. Plastic bags persist in the environment and can be problematic for many years.

Concurrently restricting the use of single-use bags while expanding recycling options use demonstrates the City's commitment to finding an effective solution to managing the waste steam. To reduce the distribution of single-use bags while facilitating recycling of those bags that are still in the waste stream is crucial and will benefit all stakeholders. Allowing for a reasonable timeframe for retailers to retool their processes and to retrain and educate their customers and staff shows a sensitivity to local businesses. Developing an effective educational campaign and set of metrics to judge the success of the program shows a commitment to adaptive management. The specific changes outlined in the recommendation are to improve the ordinance.

Vote 5-1-0-1

For: Anderson, Gary, Neely, Perales, and Walker

Against: James Schissler

Abstain: None

Absent: Mary Gay Maxwell

Approved By:



Robin Gary, Acting Environmental Board Chair