



Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes July 9, 2014

The Zero Waste Advisory Commission convened in a regular meeting on July 9, 2014, at 721 Barton Springs Road, Room 130, in Austin, Texas.

Chair Rick Cofer called the Commission Meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Rick Cofer, Cathy Gattuso, Rachel Hering, Dave Sullivan, Fayez Kazi, Jeffrey Paine

Staff in attendance:

Bob Gedert, Elizabeth Corey, Jessica Edwards, Donald Hardee, Natacha Delusca, Richard McHale, Phil Tindall, Michael Sullivan, Ben Morelli, Snigdha Garg, Tom Fulmer, Vidal Maldonado, Emlea Chanslor, Natalie Betts, Aiden Cohen.

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

One citizen signed up to speak during the opportunity for citizen communication.

Scott Johnson, Austin citizen, spoke about city updating their climate protection plan, Earth Day celebrations in Houston and Dallas, and mattress recycling.

2. APPROVAL OF JUNE MEETING MINUTES

Minutes for the regular meeting of June 11, 2014 were adopted unanimously with no objection.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion and Action - Heavy/Light Duty Vehicle and Equipment Purchase

No citizens signed up to speak on this agenda item.

Richard McHale, ARR, presented an overview of the vehicles involved in the agreement, requested a favorable execution of the agreement and explained the expenditures.

The recommendation to execute this agreement was approved on Commissioner Sullivan motion, Commissioner Gattuso second on a 4-2-0 vote, with Commissioners Kazi and Paine absent.

Bob Gedert expressed condolences to the family and friends of ARR Fleet Coordinator Jimmy Miller, who recently passed away.

b. Discussion and Action - Industrial Clothing, Supplies and Service Agreement

No citizens signed up to speak on this agenda item.

Elizabeth Corey, ARR, requested a favorable execution of the agreement and explained the expenditures are for uniforms, supplies and alterations to support Austin programs for recycling as well as for multiple other City of Austin departments.

Commissioner Paine arrived late and was seated on the dais at 6:42 p.m. Commissioner Kazi arrived late and was seated on the dais at 6:43 pm.

The recommendation to execute this agreement was approved on Commissioner Gattuso motion, Commissioner Haring second on a 5-0-1 vote, with Commissioner Paine abstaining.

c. Discussion and Action - Trash and Recycling Receptacles Agreement for Downtown

One citizen signed up to speak on this agenda item.

Elizabeth Corey, ARR, requested a favorable execution of the agreement and explained the expenditures are for outdoor trash and recycling containers for Austin's downtown business district.

Chair Cofer asked if these would replace old containers. Vidal Maldonado, ARR Division Manager, responded that they will replace all existing containers in the area, but will convert half of the current ones to recycling containers. Commissioner Sullivan commented that this was a very positive project and suggested that since transit lanes are moving we may consider that for next phase.

Andrew Dobbs, Texas Campaign for the Environment, Austin Zero Waste Alliance, had a concern that the expense per container was excessive and asked that ARR look at local manufacturers for a better price. Commissioner Paine agreed that the price was excessive but acknowledged the design standards. Commissioner Sullivan said these containers were focused on making downtown more pedestrian friendly.

The recommendation to execute this agreement was approved on Commissioner Sullivan motion, Commissioner Kazi second on a 6-0-0 vote, with all six commissioners on dais.

d. Discussion and Action - Storm Debris Removal Agreements

No citizens signed up to speak on this agenda item.

Elizabeth Corey, ARR, requested a favorable execution of the agreement and explained the expenditures are related to events such as the Onion Creek flood that occurred in October of 2013. She described the four firms involved in the bid and the terms and pre-qualifying measures of the agreement.

Commissioner Paine asked if this service was only used in the event of disaster. Ms. Corey replied that this agreement was only for backup. Kazi asked if there was a similar contract in the past. Ms. Corey was not aware of one. Commissioner Paine inquired about the unique nature of this service, since there were no local waste haulers involved. Phil Tindall, ARR, described that these RFP's were put out to take advantage of the competitive bidding process that was already established. Commissioner Kazi asked that local haulers be considered for these types of services in the future, and Ms. Corey noted that local haulers were not excluded from this bid.

The recommendation to execute this agreement was approved on Commissioner Kazi motion, Commissioner Hering second on a 6-0-0 vote. Commissioner Mariel was absent.

e. Discussion and Action - Medical Surveillance Agreement

No citizens signed up to speak on this agenda item.

Elizabeth Corey, ARR, requested a favorable execution of the agreement, explained the expenditures are for medical testing of employees and described the terms of the agreement.

Chair Cofer asked if the tests were drug tests. Ms. Corey replied that they were post-offer pre-employment tests, to determine, for instance, if one can lift a certain amount of weight, and baseline measurements of one's health for later comparison.

The recommendation to accept this award was approved unanimously, with all six present Commissioners on the dais.

f. Discussion and Action - EDA Grant Acceptance

No citizens signed up to speak on this agenda item.

Natalie Betts, ARR, presented information seeking a favorable recommendation of the acceptance of a grant for the Recycling Economic Development Program. Ms. Betts detailed the FM 812 Landfill site of the [re]Manufacturing Hub and its goals, targeted industries, and details of the award, which is intended to fund water and wastewater infrastructure to the site.

Commissioner Paine asked about the permitting process and how companies have not had good experiences in the past with it. Mr. Gedert answered that this site is actually zoned for the types of activity that has been denied permit in the past, and this is a private industry locale, not one for City of Austin entities.

The recommendation to accept this award was approved unanimously, with all six present Commissioners on the dais.

g. Discussion - Final Recommendation: Board/Commission Transition Task Force

No citizens signed up to speak on this agenda item.

Commissioner Sullivan described the objectives and aims of the task force in their review processes in shifting to a 10-1 Council. There were no objections to the current plan and all Commissioners were in support which will be noted as the message directed to the City Clerk.

4. STAFF BRIEFINGS

a. Keep Austin Beautiful Update

No citizens signed up to speak on this agenda item.

Rodney Ahart, Executive Director presented information and provided data that showed the results of the efforts put forth by a Keep Austin Beautiful partnership with Austin Resource Recovery, noting amount of sites and students reached. Initiatives focused on K-12 students to provide environmental education to raise awareness about conservation, recycling and composting at area schools. Mr. Ahart described the unique projects that they have worked on with various grades of students, such as creating bags out of old sign banners, design issues, and landfill education.

b. FY2014-15 ARR Budget Proposal

No citizens signed up to speak on this agenda item.

Bob Gedert, Austin Resource Recovery, presented a budget forecast for FY 2014-15 and data on past performance and metrics for FY 2013-13. Mr. Gedert discussed customer satisfaction rates and trends that have been identified via surveys, and introduced interns from Yale who are working on a project and report on diversion and enforcement to be presented at ZWAC meeting in the future.

Chair Cofer inquired about budgeted vs. actual expenditures. Jessica Edwards, ARR Finance Manager responded that unavoidable inflationary increases are the primary reason for differences, but that the current planning is more accurate and fine-tuned and therefore future expenditures should match very close to projections.

Mr. Gedert noted zero FTE additions, and no program growth in budget. Commissioner Paine asked how to address budget shortfalls. Mr. Gedert described a study in the works for January that will explore options to address this.

Chair Cofer inquired about making investment via staffing to get to Zero Waste faster and more economically, and advocated a nominal increase in rates to fund this effort. Chair Cofer suggests that Austin Code Department needs to actively enforce the Universal Recycling Ordinance to decrease outreach needs. Mr. Gedert noted that ACD has made a commitment to hiring more staff for code enforcement. Commissioner Gattuso asked if ARR needs to approach enforcement with more efficiency. Mr. Gedert stated that ARR can become more systematic in referrals to ACD sooner than the current status. Aiden Cohen, ARR, responded to site visit compliance questions. Commissioner Gattuso proposed that no business receive more than 2 site visits.

Chair Cofer asks if ARR will request a ZWAC recommendation on the budget. Mr. Gedert says that ZWAC recommendation is not required but the feedback from ZWAC will be considered. Chair Cofer requested an agenda item for the August ZWAC meeting regarding the budget.

- c. Director's Report** - Economic Impact/Job Growth, URO Enforcement Statistics and Single Use Bag Statistics, Waste Composition Study, Staff Hires and Promotions, Current and Upcoming Job Postings, Statistical Reports, and Performance Measures.

One citizen signed up to speak on this agenda item.

Andrew Dobbs, TCFE and AZWA, requested different metrics on the compliance efforts for URO enforcement.

Mr. Gedert explained efforts toward identifying the jobs impact and economic impact, stating that more thorough data will come in six months. Chair Cofer asks for top line numbers, and refers to San Francisco and other cities as models to develop numbers. Mr. Gedert replies that he will come back to ZWAC with more information regarding this.

Commissioner Gattuso asked how many visits businesses receive before being fined. Mr. Cohen explained the process. Mr. Gedert discussed how data driven enforcement could trigger manipulation of the system. Mr. Cohen described unique challenges in enforcement, and instances where education can work more realistically than enforcement.

Commissioner Gattuso requested templates of letters sent for non-compliance. Mr. Cohen described three letter templates used, and it was agreed these will go in the Directors Report for the next meeting.

5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Cofer inquired about a briefing on the ETC survey as has occurred in past years and asked to move future agenda items listed below for August back one month to September or future months meetings, to be decided at August meeting.

Special Events Ordinance Update - August

Composting Voucher Program Update - August

Landfill Closure Update – August

Recommendation on Styrofoam Containers – August/September

STAR Ratings Update - September

Recycling Economic Development Program Update - October

Food Waste Collection Update - October

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cofer adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m. without objection.