



Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes April 13, 2016

The Zero Waste Advisory Commission convened in a regular meeting on April 13, 2016, in Council Chambers in City Hall in Austin, Texas.

CALL TO ORDER

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

Board Members in Attendance: Gerry Acuna, Cathy Gattuso, Shana Joyce, Heather-Nicole Hoffman, Stacy Guidry, Amanda Masino, Kendra Bones, Joshua Blaine, Kaiba White, Jeff Jampietro

Staff in attendance: Bob Gedert, Michael Sullivan, Erin Benoit, Sam Angoori, Andy Dawson, Ron Romero, Jessica Frazier, Jessica King, Gena McKinley, Tony Davee, Teri Jeffries, Tom Fulmer, Ashley Fisher

CALL TO ORDER

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

Andrew Dobbs, Texas Campaign for the Environment spoke about how members of the public should be allowed to comment on staff briefings, as currently not allowed as per recently adopted bylaws, and that in future months public comment should be allowed.

Bob Gedert, ARR, noted that this rule was not initiated by the ZWAC or by ARR, but rather was part of a process that occurred after review by the Boards and Commissions Transition Taskforce formed to oversee the move to 10+1 representation and attendant updates to the City code.

Commissioner White noted that she serves on the Resource Management Commission, where it was noted that to work around this bylaw the staff briefings could be posted under discussion and possible action.

2. APPROVAL OF MARCH 2016 MEETING MINUTES

Vice Chair Gattuso noted her name was missing as a member in attendance, and the staff liaison noted the minutes would be revised. Commissioner Hoffman made a motion to approve minutes as amended for the special called meeting of March 9, 2016, Commissioner Blaine second. The minutes were approved 10-0-0, Commissioner Valera absent.

4. New Business

- b. Discussion and Action** – Appropriate \$1.2M in the ARR CIP Budget for repairs to the inactive FM812 Landfill facility caused by recent flooding; Amend FY16 ARR Operating Budget; Amend FY16 ARR CIP Budget – this item was taken up out of order.

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item.

Jessica Frazier, ARR, presented the item, provided background information, and requested a favorable recommendation from the Commission.

Tony Davee, ARR, presented further background on the current damage and future plans for addressing storm damage that might occur.

Commissioner Bones asked if we could reuse material on this project. Commissioner Joyce asked about the movement of funds and if it was related to the use of departmental reserve funds.

Ms. Frazier described the process around budget appropriations and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement.

Commissioner White asked if the department planned on refunding the amount spent from the reserve on this that would not be reimbursed by FEMA. Ms. Frazier noted that yes it is planned for but the department is still reviewing the budget forecast for the most amenable way to approach reserve issues and emergent expenses for flood recovery. Ms. Frazier discussed complexities of reimbursement with FEMA and Chair Acuna discussed design issues of the landfill.

Co-chair Gattuso moved to recommend the item, Commissioner White seconded, and the motion passed 10-0-0 with Commissioner Valera absent.

c. Discussion and Action – Agreement for the sale of scrap metal materials accumulated by multiple City departments - this item was taken up out of order.

Commissioner Jiampietro recused himself and was off the dais for the duration of all discussion and voting regarding this item.

Andy Dawson, ARR Assistant Division Manager, presented background on the item and asked for a favorable recommendation from the Commission.

Mr. Dawson answered questions on reuse and ways to advertise the scrap metal from the Commission. The commission discussed promotional efforts for reuse, Austin Materials Marketplace, transportation costs, pricing and market variables, and regulatory compliance scoring involved in the solicitation process.

Jessica King, ARR, discussed how scoring in the solicitation process works and what variables are considered within the process. Commissioner White asked that in the future when items come before the commission that the panel who reviews would perhaps notate what they consider regulatory issues, and Vice Chair Gattuso requested the same. Ms. King noted confidentiality issues may be a factor but that staff would look further into the matter and report back to the commission with more information on the matter. Ms. Frazier responded to the questions about regulatory compliance and noted that documentation required within the scope of the agreement is reviewed in the solicitation review meeting, but that the particular reason for numbering a vote 9 versus 10 was not precisely known to her, but perhaps a certificate was missing at the point of review and supplied at a later date. Commissioner Guidry asked if a missing document would void the proposal in question, and Ms. Frazier noted that it only would if it was a specifically required credential.

Commissioner Blaine asked how the agreement impacts the proposed [re] Manufacturing Hub. If the items involved could be used by a vendor at the Hub, could ARR write into the contract that that would be considered? Mr. Gedert noted a natural opportunity occurs at 36 months whether to extend the contract.

The commission discussed contract extension process and relevant daily pricing indexes.

Commissioner Guidry made a motion to approve recommendation of the item, Commissioner Blaine second. The motion passed on a 9-0-1 vote with Commissioner Jampietro recused and Commissioner Valera absent.

3. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **Discussion and Possible Action** - Update of the March 09, 2016, ZWAC recommendations regarding a proposed Austin Resource Recovery Departmental Audit.

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item.

Chair Acuna discussed the items that went to Audit and Finance Committee of the City Council.

Gedert discussed the Office of Performance Management and agreed to begin the question and answer process and initiate an inventory prior to being reviewed beginning Oct 1.

Commissioner Joyce asked when a request for a future third party audit would be possible. Mr. Gedert noted that outcome of the review would initiate that process if there were concerns identified.

Commissioner Masino asked how long the OPM review would take, and Chair Acuna said he recalled a mention of it being a 6-9 month process.

Mr. Gedert noted he was meeting with Public Works director as Public Works department is being reviewed by OPM currently and that it could inform how ARR can learn from them to expedite process.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- a. **Discussion and Action** – Election of Officers: chair and vice-chair elected annually at the first regular meeting after April 1 for a term of 1 year, beginning May 1, ending April 30.

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item.

Vice Chair Gattuso nominated Chair Acuna for a new term as Chair. Commissioner Guidry seconded.

A vote was held and the nomination passed on 8-0-1 vote with Commissioners Hoffman abstained, Commissioner Valera absent. Chair Acuna recused himself from the vote.

Commissioner Guidry made a motion to nominate Commissioner Gattuso for Vice Chair, Chair Acuna seconded, and the motion passed unanimously, Vice Chair Gattuso was recused.

5. STAFF BRIEFINGS

- a. **ARR Budget Process Overview** (taken out of order)

Jessica Frazier, ARR, presented a slideshow on the item.

The commission discussed citywide litter control, commercial vs. residential collection, the Central Business District and Zero Waste program development. Jessica King discussed Council fee waivers and SXSW and the spring festival fee waiver process.

Commissioner Blaine asked if it make sense for ratepayers to be subsidizing festivals like SXSW when in large part they don't attend. Commissioner White asked if the Commission can get a list of special events and Ms. King noted this would be provided to the commission.

Commissioner Masino asked about projections formation relevant to the 5 year forecast and the pattern of customers who keep the 96 gallon cart and for those who choose to downsize.

Ms. Frazier explained the process of formulating budget projections and agrees to get numbers regarding the carts to ZWAC, and Mr. Gedert noted this would be provided.

Chair Acuna suggested that the commission should start thinking about future agenda and budget related questions.

Vice Chair Gattuso asked if Mr. Gedert was willing to put future staff briefings under discussion and open for public comment. Mr. Gedert said in general yes but there might be a topic that he might not wish to keep under a briefing but he would be open and honest as to the reasoning when that occurred.

NEW BUSINESS

4d. Discussion and Action - Curbside Services Expansion Preferences: Staff will present two options and financial impacts regarding preferences for residential customer curbside services

Two citizens signed up to speak on this item.

Jessica King, ARR, introduced and began the presentation of a slideshow regarding the item. Gena McKinley, ARR, discussed the community engagement conducted around the item.

Commissioner Guidry gave praise to the staff for outreach on the item. Commissioner Blaine asked about set out rates under the organics pilot.

Ron Romero, ARR noted the rate was around 60%, which was a combination of carts and bags and agreed to provide exact statistics in the future. Commissioner Blaine asked if there was any data on what improved set out rates?

Mr. Romero answered that there were learned lessons in Phase 2 and noted staff needed to provide more public education and when the education (marketing and face to face discussions with customers) increased the rate went up.

Mr. Gedert noted that ARR spread the pilot out and although that wasn't operationally efficient it gave good data to use to concentrate education efforts. Mr. Gedert mentioned 62% set out rate and contrasted it with a recycling set out rate of 75% and noted that a goal is 75% for organics. The pilot demonstrated 40% rate in phase 1 and then 60's was phase 2. Mr. Romero noted that the rate in the 60's was a combined rate of yard trimmings and organics.

Commissioner Guidry asked if ARR has projections on meeting goals with recycling alone, and if there were projections on meeting climate goals? Mr. Gedert noted that we need to dramatically raise recycling rate and add organics and Net Zero goals need to be calculated and he will work with sustainability office on that.

Commissioners Guidry and White both sit on Joint Sustainability Committee and asked that ARR please provide them this info when it is available.

The Commission and staff discussed timing of carts set out, cost of the pilot, and survey questions.

Commissioner Joyce asked if participation by district and other demographics was known and Ms. McKinley agreed to send this to the commissioner and provided very recently received data to the commission compiled from the town hall.

Commissioner Blaine asked if he could really do a ride along with ARR staff. Mr. Romero noted that commissioners could contact Michael to organize this if they are interested.

Andrew Dobbs, Texas Campaign for the Environment spoke in favor of curbside composting and stated there were other, cheaper, solutions to too much recycling, and that reuse needs to be encouraged to reduce the amount of items generated. Mr. Dobbs noted learned lessons from the organics pilot need to be implemented, and noted that smaller carts have been requested and should be implemented. Mr. Dobbs asked for additions to the draft recommendation that accompanied this item and presents an idea that other cities are actually paying non-profits to go door to door, that is it effective and asks that his intern present to the commission on this concept.

Eric Goff, Compost Pedallers, spoke in support of expansion of curbside organics collection and endorsed the concept of using community organizers to educate on composting.

The commission and staff discussed opt-out concepts, contamination rates, lower set out rates in summer, very small containers, and use of paper bags

Mr. Gedert noted an interest in certifiable biodegradable bags.

Ms. King noted some bag challenges and that ARR promotes paper bags because it's hard to know what plastic bags are compostable.

Commissioner Masino appreciated the additional language on the recommendation from TCE.

Commissioner Jiampietro was off the dais at 9:16 pm.

Ms. King agreed with TCE on contracted staff and noted intent to go out for bid on outreach due to the constraints of what is possible with current staffing level.

Vice Chair Gattuso requested a link to compost information mentioned like how to clean composting carts, and Ms. King noted she would provide that to the commission.

Commissioner Blaine wants to make a potential recommendation about an opt-out for people who are already using their yard etc. for composting. Mr. Gedert said June and July is an appropriate time for that type of feedback and mentions an alternative service terminology for opt-out concept.

Commissioner Joyce expressed a preference for weekly recycling over expanded composting services and was concerned about some people not knowing about composting and all of the variables to consider. She noted that she appreciates the commission is very educated but feels they are not considering the more obvious option of weekly recycling as stated by the residents who have stated opposing concerns. Commissioner Joyce noted although the outreach has been good she cannot support an expansion of the organics program over weekly recycling.

Commissioner Blaine noted he appreciates that sentiment, but says what is the option, to never do it? Commissioner Joyce answered that the commission was progressive but she endorsed a more baby-step approach, noting that if customers don't know what to put in a recycling cart, how are they to be expected to know what to do with organics. Commissioner Joyce noted space issues with 3 carts and noted she felt compelled to express her opinion even though it seemed to be in the minority on the commission.

Chair Acuna noted he was curious about the organics RFP that is out now, cost issues, and believes there may be a way to pursue both options and figure out a rollout.

Vice Chair Gattuso asked about education and what staff felt it would take to educate the public on organics to overcome the barriers that exist.

Ms. King agreed it will take more to educate around organics but that staff won't ignore the recycling side of things and vice versa, as both are integral components of ARR goals. She noted it has been proven that it can take 90 days for someone to change a habit and integrate a new practice into their day, and that constant education is key and stated that outsourcing toward that end is very likely needed.

Commissioner Blaine made a motion to approve the draft recommendation and incorporate the additional items added from TCE. Commissioner White seconded the motion, added some clarifications and to the language and the motion passed 7-1-1-2 with Commissioner Joyce opposed, Chair Acuna abstaining, and Commissioners Jiampietro and Valera absent.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

5b. **Director's Report** – Diversion Rate Study update, SXSW Update, Recycling Processing Agreements, City Council Actions, Statistical Reports and Performance Measures

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioners discussed the following items for future agendas: Central business district diversion data; Carts trends/how to predict and forecast; List of festivals/special events and related fee waivers. Clean Community Fee; Organics RFP update. MRF contracts update; Potential operational cost savings; chargeable expenses for late set out calls.

Commissioner Guidry reminded the group of the upcoming US Zero Waste Business Conference June 1-4 and requested that the ZWAC staff liaison send out the invite to the commissioners.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Vice Chair Gattuso, seconded by Commissioner Blaine, and the meeting was adjourned by Chair Acuna at 9.59 pm, to no objection.