



## **Zero Waste Advisory Commission**

## **Regular Meeting Minutes June 8, 2016**

The Zero Waste Advisory Commission convened in a regular meeting on June 8, 2016, in Council Chambers in City Hall in Austin, Texas.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Gerry Acuna, Cathy Gattuso, Shana Joyce, Heather-Nicole Hoffman, Amanda Masino, Joshua Blaine, Kaiba White

Staff in attendance: Bob Gedert, Michael Sullivan, Erin Benoit, Jessica Frazier, Woody Raine

#### **1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL**

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

#### **2. APPROVAL OF MAY 2016 MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner Blaine noted a clarification to item 3a: he would like to see the Clean Community fee calculated as a tiered rate based on business size rather than as a flat rate. Co-Chair Gattuso made a motion to approve the minutes as amended for the meeting of June, 8 2016, Commissioner Joyce second. The minutes were approved as amended 7-0-0-4, with Commissioners Valera, Bones, Guidry and White absent. Commissioner White arrived after this item.

#### **3. OLD BUSINESS**

##### **Discussion and Possible Action: ARR Budget Process Update**

Bob Gedert, ARR, introduced a slide presentation on the process for forming the departmental budget for next fiscal year.

Commissioner Blaine noted that Council Member Houston has expressed concern about education prior to organics coming on residents' monthly utility bill and asked if we could target areas which could have more success out of the gate, for example, can areas of District 1 have more time with education efforts?

Mr. Gedert noted that there is a focus on the high success areas with recycling for an indication of areas to begin expansion in the first year of the program. Mr. Gedert added that City Hall will receive composting by end of year as desired by Council Member Houston, as staff are working on contract now to add organics collection for City Hall.

Commissioner Blaine noted a cultural shift taking place, mentioning the URO where all restaurants will be required to compost by 2019 as the back end of the change. Compliance efforts with businesses are possible, and more public visibility in multiple arenas, public spaces, like parks and schools were noted by Commissioner Blaine. Commissioner Blaine mentioned 88% of waste not coming from residences and that there needs to be a lot of effort put into other areas than residential because we are far behind our 2020 goals.

Mr. Gedert said he sees URO organics requirements on private sector side and single family home organics on public side working in tandem toward these goals.

Commissioner Blaine inquired as to whether there was still a chance to move that 2019 date up for organics collection by foodservice establishments as per the URO. Mr. Gedert noted that the short answer is that it could be revisited and accelerated but would need council approval.

Mr. Gedert noted Keep Austin Beautiful school education contract being paired with direct action at schools. He noted that although AISD has private vendor recycling contract, there are 6 other school districts within Austin City limits too that ARR has opportunity to work with.

Commissioner White mentioned that ZWAC didn't specifically recommend delaying weekly recycling as noted in the presentation, in that it was not in the resolution crafted by the ZWAC. Mr. Gedert said he would note accuracy to Council on the recommendation at his next opportunity with them. Commissioner Joyce requested the vote count be noted on presentations when referencing votes by the ZWAC.

Commissioner White asked where the City as a whole has trash receptacles - an accounting. Mr. Gedert noted that there has been progress and ARR has a good understanding of downtown and is working on a comprehensive view of all street containers and to develop a rule package too on where containers should be placed, looking primarily at walkable streets, shy of putting containers in small pocket parks. Commissioner White stated that parks would be a key target in her opinion. Mr. Gedert noted that ARR staff has worked with PARD on multiple issues, and the next step is for them to make a purchase plan. Commissioner White asked if there might be ways to share cost between City departments. Mr. Gedert said he'd research what could be done opportunity-wise within the current contract. Jessica Frazier, ARR, noted a City facilities trash and recycling contract is in place and in locations where dumpster service is provided there is recycling available. Chair Acuna asked if ZWAC could see a cost analysis on PARD efforts around recycling at a future meeting.

Commissioner White asked if ZWAC could see a 3 year vs 5 year rollout plans for organics collections expansion with budget and bill impacts? Staff liaison Michael Sullivan emailed the commission members a link to the item on the City of Austin Finance web site.

Co-Chair Gattuso asked, regarding the URO, when businesses would be asked to make recycling available in front of house operations. Mr. Gedert noted that stores are not required to have visible recycling containers available to customers but that he has seen communities benefit from this visibility. He noted that an ordinance could be developed to address this, with Council approval, as the URO matured, as stakeholders advised, but there is no reason why ZWAC can't take an action on this sooner.

Chair Acuna noted this might be a future agenda suggestion. Commissioner Blaine noted on this item that it might be appropriate to get report/presentation on status of URO compliance, showing how many businesses have submitted an annual diversion plan, which have been followed up on, who has

warnings, and general status updates. Chair Acuna mentioned a baseline today vs 3 or 4 years in the future would be something he would like to see included within a future discussion.

Jessica Frazier, ARR, presented the financial component of the presentation.

Commissioner Masino noted that starting expansion of organics collection in neighborhoods that are most likely to use it was recommended, as although the whole population is paying the bill the composters are also doing good work to reduce carbon footprint. Commissioner Masino noted that it was important to remind people of the how to do the good logistical work of composting and on the billing side of the fact that the ones who are composting are providing a service for all. Mr. Gedert noted that regarding the first phase of the rollout, a benefit of it will be that education to the first group will impact customers citywide as well.

Commissioners and staff discussed budget calculations and cart pricing trends, and Mr. Gedert noted that any price increases on a 96 gallon cart would be a policy decision that would need to come from Council as it exceeds costs. Commissioner Gattuso asked if customers are aware of price differences between carts. Mr. Gedert noted that staff are discussing a letter to each of the 96 gallon cart users is a targeted activity staff is planning and have communicated to Austin Energy that adding pricing to the web enrollment interface is desired since pricing isn't there right now. 311 is main way people enroll, and operators will tell rates on the phone. In the enrollment script for 311 operators extra free recycling carts are noted.

Commissioner Joyce questioned whether ARR is informing customers of the 96 gallon cart phase out, mentioning families and the need to make an effort so thousands of users aren't shocked when it begins to occur. Mr. Gedert pointed to the map in his director's report showing the amount of 96 gallon carts in each council district and noted a big opportunity there to save money by downsizing. Commissioner Joyce noted that District 8 has the most 96 gallon carts and education on downsizing is important, and a postcard mailing might be best way to reach customers.

Commissioner White asked if customers can have more than one trash cart. Ms. Frazier said yes there is no limit but you must have a 96 gallon cart to get any more, and the most she has seen is three.

Commissioner White asked how many people have more than one cart, and Ms. Frazier said she would find out. The Commission and staff discussed cart sizing behaviors. Mr. Gedert mentioned that many customers have over capacity. Commissioner White noted that we are assuming many won't right size and her concern is people will catch on quicker than predicted which will impact revenue. Mr. Gedert noted staff is looking at past trends and forecasting slower downsizing in estimates. Commissioner White noted that it may be wise to take in to account that downsizing may increase as there may be more awareness of the actual options for downsizing when it happens.

Chair Acuna noted that revenue is important, conservation is important, and sometimes they don't mix, therefore it was vital to stay on top of revenue projections and cost, as cost will go up with more material being diverted, noting the education components are important.

The discussion ended and no action was taken on the item.

#### **4. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

**Discussion and Possible Action - Director's Report** – City Budget Simulator; Personalized Schedule Website App; Brownfields EPA Grant; City Council Actions, Statistical Reports and Performance Measures. Mr. Gedert presented the items above and discussed with the Commission.

## **5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

The following items were discussed as future agenda items: projected route implementation of organics program; projections used to come up with \$5.40 total for organics expansion (Mr. Gedert noted he would see if more info on the expenses for processing could be disclosed at July ZWAC meeting if possible); markets for recyclables; district specific education for organics; staff briefing on recycling in parks. Organics committee update; staff briefing of URO phase 2; ZWAC annual report

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Co-Chair Gattuso, seconded by Commissioner Joyce, and the meeting was adjourned by Chair Acuna at 8:27 pm, to no objection.

DRAFT