



## **Zero Waste Advisory Commission**

## **Regular Meeting Minutes November 14, 2018**

The Zero Waste Advisory Commission convened in a regular meeting on November 14, 2018, in Council Chambers in City Hall in Austin, Texas. The following are the meeting highlights. For detailed information, please visit [http://www.austintexas.gov/cityclerk/boards\\_commissions/meetings/97\\_1.htm](http://www.austintexas.gov/cityclerk/boards_commissions/meetings/97_1.htm).

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 6:41 pm.

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

Absent are: Phil Howry, Kendra Bones, Blythe Christopher de Orive, Jonathan Barona, Melissa Rothrock.

**Staff in attendance:** Sam Angoori, Tammie Williamson, Richard McHale, Gabriel Gonzalez, Armelle Ouedraogo, Brent Paige, Victoria Rieger, Ron Romero, Chad Presley, Donald Hardee, Amy Slagle, Andy Dawson, Dana Blindert, Memi Cardenas, Natalie Betts.

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

#### **Item 1**

Andrew Dobbs, TCE, chose to speak.

Mr. Dobbs wants agenda items to be available for discussion at meetings and encourages ZWAC to have a robust democratic engagement and let people maintain their rights to speak.

Mr. Dobbs spoke about community protesting the extra dumping in the landfill. Mr. Dobbs mentioned people are not happy about policies implemented by Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) concerning the landfill expansion. Mr. Dobbs also stated that City Staff have decided to move forward with the Landfill Criteria Matrix without Council approval.

Commissioner Gattuso wanted clarification about where the information was collected from and which staff is pursuing this landfill expansion. Mr. Dobbs advised that City Manager issued a memo the previous week about activating the matrix and removing the information from the November Council agenda for approval.

## **2. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 10, 2018 MEETING MINUTES**

### **Item 2**

Commissioner Masino voiced her concerns about the minutes and believes that it did not reflect the discussions on the Landfill Criteria Matrix. She voiced some of the inputs from Commissioner Barona who had concerns about the matrix process being used and how they need to be kept separate for Council to discuss. She believes that the minutes need to be amended so all of the comments can be reflected and should be more comprehensive with nuanced discussions of Commission's concerns about the Landfill Criteria Matrix.

Chair Acuna entertained a motion for deferment of the item until the January 2019 meeting after ARR staff has updated the information. Commissioner Masino motioned to defer this item for a more comprehensive and nuanced discussion about Commission concerns. Seconded by Commissioner Blaine. Commissioners in favor of the motion voted 6-0; unanimous.

## **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

### **4. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

#### **4b. Affordability Study Presentation**

Presentation by Scott Pasternak, Burns & McDonnell.

Mr. Pasternak said the objective of the request is to do a comprehensive study of Solid Waste Services with a comparison to other metropolitan places in Texas and to evaluate Austin Resource Recovery Service fees charged to its customers. Mr. Pasternak stated that they were mandated to bring a comprehensive data-driven benchmarking study for public and private Solid Waste providers in Texas. After conducting the study, Burns & McDonnell would provide an evaluation of the affordability of the Austin Resource Recovery services using publicly available data and gathering information through surveys and interviews with staff of benchmark cities.

Based on the results, ARR's cost for 64 gallon cart is among the highest cost (\$24.30) when compared to other cities that were part of the study. This may be due to the fact that ARR provides a big array of non-solid waste services (such as composting, recycling, bulk pick-up, etc.), and funds most of its programs from its own budget.

Non-Solid Waste components that impact service rates: living wage requirement, parental leave policies, insurance availability, Green Choices policies, and City-wide policies.

The fees collected are composed of an ARR Service Fee and an Environmental Fee (Clean Community Fee) which are fees disbursed to other programs for the City of Austin.

The study concluded with a range of solutions including: reduce collection frequencies (every other week); conduct a program for call-in services for brush and bulky service; procure or develop local processing and disposal options; reduce support of non-solid waste services/programs; review City Council policies; and enter commercial collections operations.

Commissioner White wanted to know how the number for Houston was calculated. Mr. Pasternak replied that the City of Houston does not have a fee in place. They used the annual budget from the publicly available report to be able to pull that information.

Commissioner Masino wanted clarification on how the median household information was taken. Mr. Pasternak advised that the information was taken from the census data. She wanted to know if Austin has less of a gap when it comes to the entry-level versus executive-level. Mr. Pasternak advised that his team did not look at that option.

Commissioner Hoffman asked if Austin is executive or managerial heavy, or if the salaries are skewed to the higher pay section, and if it impacts the median salary. Mr. Pasternak replied that it is not the case since Austin is heavily involved in the Universal Recycling Ordinance (URO) and other zero waste programs which may be the cost drivers.

Commissioner Gattuso wanted to know if they looked at the educational approach, if that has an impact on the increase in recycling (38%). She said that San Francisco invested a lot into education and she wanted to know if he compared to that city. Mr. Pasternak voiced that he did not review the program that ARR is using as part of this study. He also added that San Francisco has a big gap in the rates and it may be part of their culture and program structures.

Commissioner Blaine wanted clarification on services that Austin provides that other cities do not provide. Three cities including Austin provide Commercial Business District (CBD) services. Mr. Pasternak added that Austin provides financial support to the CBD.

Chair Acuna wanted to know what percentage of the non-solid waste services is being supported by ARR. Mr. Pasternak did not go into those percentages and how those cost are being broken out.

Chair Acuna and Commissioner Gattuso wanted to know about the non-solid waste services that ARR supports. Mr. Pasternak clarifies that the intent is about the City of Austin providing services that are all funded by solid waste while other cities are being funded by different sources and not the fees collected by the department.

### **3. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **3a. 2019 ZWAC Meeting Schedule**

Chair Acuna entertained a motion for approval for the 2019 schedule. Commissioner Hoffman moved for approval and Commissioner Gattuso seconded. Vote to approve motion was 6-0; unanimous. Commissioners in favor of the motion: Acuna, Blaine, Gattuso, Masino, Hoffman, White. Commissioners absent: Howry, Rothrock, Barona, Orive, Bones.

#### **3b. Pump-Out, Hauling, Disposal, and Maintenance Services for Commercial Truck Wash Grit Traps, Septic Tanks, and Drain Fields RCA**

Chad Presley, ARR, was seeking a recommendation for services in the range of \$100K to \$250K. Chair Acuna entertained a motion for approval. Motion made by Commissioner White. Seconded by Commissioner Hoffman. Vote to approve motion was 6-0; unanimous.

### **3c. Youth Education RCA**

Tammie Williamson, ARR Assistant Director, sought recommendation for a five-year contract not to exceed \$1,000,000. Commissioner Masino wanted to know what programs are included. Mrs. Williamson advised that it includes Youth education programs from Kindergarten until 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Commissioner Blaine needed clarification if it is a continuation of the previous program which was confirmed by the Assistant Director.

Commissioner Hoffman commented that ARR should spend more on Youth Education than on Grit Trap. Commissioner Hoffman also wanted to know if other departments are assisting with financing the program. Mr. Angoori advised that there are three departments funding the Grit Trap contract, and ARR's portion is \$135,000. The education contract is \$1 million over five years, funded by ARR.

Commissioner Gattuso would like to know if the Office of Sustainability could assist with funding at this time.

Chair Acuna entertained a motion. Motion made by Commissioner Masino. Seconded by Commissioner White. Vote to approve motion was 6-0; unanimous. Commissioners in favor of the motion: Acuna, Blaine, Gattuso, Masino, Hoffman, White.

## **4. STAFF BRIEFINGS**

### **4a. Director's Report**

Sam Angoori, ARR, discussed the expansion of the Household Hazardous Waste Program and stated that 42,000 more pounds were gained in collections. Mr. Angoori said that the Travis Expo center has verbally agreed to participate in the household hazardous waste event. Mr. Angoori mentioned that Cedar Park did not want to collaborate in the Household Hazardous Waste event. Mr. Angoori stated that Travis County is being discussed as an alternative collection site which will cost \$90,000.

Mr. Angoori announced that the ARR fleet purchase for FY 2019 went to council with a highlight on the electric hybrid for the master agreement with total cost of \$8.9 million.

Animal collection is now operating 7 days a week from 6:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

37% of food thrown away is compostable and URO will be able to assist with that.

ARR is going to assist with reducing plastic packaging in hopes that it will reduce plastic packaging (?) by 2025; and the move to reuse model will be utilized.

Mr. Angoori said the Master Plan update is still in the works and has been issued, and the Request for Information (RFI) is still open until early December.

Commissioner Gattuso wanted to know how many hazardous sites will be put out for customers and how much people that do not live in Travis County pay. Andy Dawson, ARR, stated that it will be one event per year for customers and there is no fee for Travis County residents and that it does not include commercial

businesses. The people living outside of the County will pay based on the fee schedule. Mr. Angoori is hoping that ARR will have another option in the next 3 years when the North East Service Center is open.

Commissioner Masino wanted to confirm the \$80,000 dollars for the one-day collection event. Donald Hardee, ARR, advised that it was more than a couple of weeks' worth of material. Commissioner Masino wanted to know if ARR supports prescription drug collections. Mr. Hardee advised that ARR participates in the DEA pick-up, but has not found a way to incorporate that option into daily operations.

Commissioner White wanted to know the logistics of collections of hazardous waste and how people provide those products. Mr. Hardee said there has been a map developed that shows where hazardous waste comes from. Commissioner White asked to see the map. They are requesting for additional pick-ups and Mr. Hardee advised additional FTE's are needed in order to collect more.

Chair Acuna wanted to know how many fleets and vehicles ARR has. Amy Slagle, ARR Staff, confirmed that 380 units are in the fleet including 70 automated vehicles and 90 rear loaders. Chair Acuna wanted to know how many routes ARR has. Ms. Slagle said she would provide that information at a later date.

## **5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Affordability Study as discussion/action; Master plan update; Report on the Final Phase of the URO; Recycling Contract Comparison.

**ADJOURNMENT** A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Blaine seconded by Commissioner Hoff on a unanimous decision. The meeting was adjourned by Chair Acuna at 8:26 pm to no objection (Unanimous).