



Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

October 14th, 2020

The Monthly Meeting of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission convened through Video Conference on Wednesday, October 14th, 2020, due to COVID-19 Disaster Declaration for all Texas Counties. The following are the meeting highlights. For detailed information please visit: <https://austintx.new.swagit.com/videos/87209>

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 6:17 pm

Board Members in Attendance: Gerry Acuna, Lisa Barden, Jonathan Barona, Cathy Gattuso, Amanda Masino, Melissa Rothrock, Ian Steyaert, Kaiba White

Board Members not in Attendance: Janis Bookout (Membership pending)

Staff in attendance via WebEx: Ken Snipes, Richard McHale, Gena McKinley, Donald Hardee, Andy Dawson, Ron Romero, Amy Slagle, Raymond Benavidez, Jaime Germany Terry, Dwight Scales,

Chair Acuna opened with comments,

1. APPROVAL OF August 12th MEETING MINUTES

Chair Acuna entertained a motion to approve the August 12th, Meeting minutes. Commissioner Lisa Barden made the first motion for approval of the minutes. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Amanda Masino

Item passed Unanimously

2. NEW BUSINESS

2a Discussion and Action – Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) FY19 Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey Presentation by Claudia Nava and Liz Jambor

Liz Jambor and Claudia Nava with Austin Energy's Data Analytics team presented the Annual ARR Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Data Analytics and Business Intelligence group within Austin Energy serves as the third party for ARR. The idea is to take the data, do the analytics and give the big picture insights so that teams can then turn that information into action items to better serve their customers. We collect research data and customer survey data. We also combine that with a lot of other data from other platforms We are able to pull ARR customers and tie that information to Census data or economic data to make sure that we are getting a representative sample every time we do a survey. We're going to talk specifically about ARR today. We are gathering awareness and satisfaction insights, but also supporting strategic outcomes that the group might have. We build on existing data and we also communicate the impact of those results. We started back in 2015 by conducting a phone survey, since then we've moved the survey to on-line. In FY19 we had over 1000 responses. That's a very good sample for any statistical analysis. As we've seen in the past, we don't have a lot of Spanish completions. We are always investigating ways to get more feedback from customers that are non speaking, non English speaking customers. Claudia Nava will provide more details in her portion of the presentation.

Let's dive into the results for this year's survey. ARR saw scores increase for all measured fields:

- *Satisfaction with Employees*
- *Satisfaction with ARR Value*
- *Satisfaction of Service*

We saw significant increase in satisfaction with employees and value of services. These scores continue to increase over the past three years. To highlight a few areas before we get into specific details, we would recommend to:

- *In Recycling, increase frequency of recycling collection—customers desire more pick-ups or additional bins*
- *In Composting, developing more customer awareness of the service and how to properly maintain bins*
- *Providing customers with notifications of the service to increase awareness and their ability to move their cars out of the street to properly clean the streets.*

We continue to see favorable results for all ARR Employee groups and the majority scored at a 90 per cent or above. Trash collections fell slightly lower. This year we added satisfaction with the Street Sweeping employee group which wasn't previously captured. We also saw an increase in satisfaction with the Bulk Collection group. The majority of customer comments were overwhelmingly positive. Customers described employees as polite, helpful, courteous. They described them doing a wonderful job and being very appreciative of the work they do. The services most used by customers scored 80% or above. Annually, customers are asked to score ARR between one and ten. Customers that scored between one and seven were asked to provide comments on what ARR could do to increase their satisfaction. We saw 176 comments from this survey and we were able to group commentary into some categories. The most discussed topics were more recycling, customers want a weekly pick-up, over-filled, and broken bins.

The Recycling Services showed 81% of customers being very satisfied. Additional comments include customers wanting more recycling, additional services, and additional bins to accommodate. Total comments in Recycling included 334.

The Composting Service showed 82% of customers being very satisfied. Additional comments included expanding the service to additional areas, wanting education and information about the service, and providing information on keeping the bins clean. The total Composting comments included 166

The Street Sweeping Services scores remain pretty steady over the last four years. 48% of customers describe the service with satisfaction. We do know that awareness and service continues to remain low with customers. This could be the contributing factor to a low score. 48 comments were made on the frequency, schedule notifications, and not being aware of the services. We also saw customers discuss the cost of the services.

The Recycle Reuse Drop Off Center scores stated that 76% of customers described being satisfied with the services. 53 comments were made. The most discussed topics were customers requesting additional locations for the drop off facility and comments on the inconvenience of the current location. We received positive general commentary regarding the center, and a few comments discussing the types of materials that are being accepted at the facility.

Additional areas to note included the My Schedule Tool and the ARR Re-Blend Program. Customers who rated this service as a higher satisfaction also contributed to having overall high satisfaction with ARR and valuing the services provided.

We asked some engagement questions on recycling habits, this year we saw a decrease. Customers stated not having enough information about the services or being able to recycle all of their materials properly. We also inquired about the importance of the 2040 Landfill Reduction goals and: d of those individuals that did respond stated it was an important goal. We also asked a follow-up question to gain some insight on how to achieve the goal reducing landfill waste. The majority of the comments indicated that customers believe community engagement, and community education of the ARR goal could assist with achieving this goal. On the last slide of the presentation, we have a summary which includes all of our satisfaction scores from the previous years. That concludes the presentation. I would like to provide time for questions.

Chair Acuna: Do Commissioners have any questions?

Commissioner Amanda Masino: I'm concerned about the Spanish Speaking response. It seems like we talk about this every year, and every year we sort of state we're going to try something different, and we don't see improvement. What other changes are going to be made because it's just been consistently notably low and that's very disappointing. We really can't assume that they're having the same experience as our English speaking customers.

Claudia Nava responds: We've discussed this with ARR management and we're contemplating possibly adding a phone survey to be able to properly address this community. We do offer the survey online in Spanish, but not everyone is included to take it in Spanish. The phone survey would be a great opportunity to better reach this customer segment and we will be exploring trying to make that happen next year.

Commissioner Kaiba White: Does anybody know what the percentage of residents that only speak Spanish only is?

Liz Jambor responds: I believe that information is available but I don't have it in hand right at the moment. We're currently working on a survey with the Equity Office and we'll be doing it in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese and working with the community leaders in those areas to do a better outreach in those languages. So that's one way we're attempting to get better outreach in different languages.

Commissioner Kaiba White: Another question in terms of what customers wanted seems to be more frequent recycling pick-up. Has there been any discussion about potential changes in response to this feedback on the frequency of recycling pickup?

Ken Snipes, ARR Director responds: This question has come up before and it's my understanding that when it was raised in the past, there was a study that determined it wasn't cost effective. I wouldn't say that there's not a reason that we could look at it going forward.

2b. Discussion and Action – ARR’s role in the Community Climate Plan

Commissioner Kaiba White reviews goals: A resolution came from the Joint Sustainability Committee which was involved in setting up the planning process and a number of commission members serve on the Joint Sustainability Committed on either the steering committee or on the advisory groups.

- *A recommendation for the City Council to adopt the plan including a new goal that moves our net zero by 2040 restating a goal that already was adopted with the last Climate Plan trying to limit carbon offsets.*
- *A recommendation asking the City Manager to come up with funding options*
- *A recommendation asking City Council to create a committee that is focused on environmental issues*
 - *Currently no council committee handles environmental issues*
- *A recommendation asking to add members to the Joint Sustainability Committee*
 - *As we try to implement this new plan having some additional capacity on that committee would be helpful because by nature everyone serving on the committee is already serving on another commission (with the exception of one seat currently). Having additional membership at large would be helpful.*

Commissioner Kaiba White: Opens the discussion for questions

Commissioner Amanda Masino : Could you talk a little about the new council committee and how they interface with JSC? I love that is called Environmental Justice, why have separate committee for this and who would be providing advice to ur open site?

Commissioner Kaiba White responds: This would be a committee of council members not an advisory committee. Council had a committee that was done away with a year or so ago. They went through a process to reduce their number of committees. They left out climate change which was a big issue with no home. When JSC makes recommendations there’s no obvious committee for them to go to for consideration.

Commissioner Amanda Masino: Thank you

Commissioner Kaiba White asks if there are any other questions.

Commissioner Kaiba White speaks to makes a motion to adopt, the identical resolution (as part of the back-up documents). We regenerate it to say there was an advisory commission. Motion 2nd by Commissioner Jonathan Barona.

Chair Acuna states: We have a motion and we have a second any other discussion, all in favor say yay. Motion passed unanimously by all member on the WebEx call

2c. Discussion and Action: ARR’s Role in the Homeless Encampment Clean-up

Amy Slagle, Litter Abatement Division Manager with Austin Resource Recovery provides a quick update on the public space cleaning plan for the new fiscal year.

The ARR Violet Page Program began in July, 2019.

We started with four sites around the city receiving twice a week service. At the time when the pilot started, we were only using bags at the site for people to place litter in.

The private program has evolved and we’ve moved to service 28 sites. Carts are placed at all the sites receiving daily service.

Since the pilot began, we’ve removed over 77 tons of litter.

The Violet Bag program is just one component of the city strategy. Public Works is also a partner and will continue to provide their monthly cleaning at approximately 60 sites.

Public Works and ARR will work together to develop a self-cleaning pilot at encampments around the city.

Plans to expand the Violet Bag program to closely match the Public Works sites the idea is to have those in place by the end of this year.

We also have the Violet Keepsake Program that's for residents to be able to temporarily store personal items and a self-cleaning pilot. This is a collaborative approach between ARR and Public Works. We've selected two sites:

- 183 and Cameron Road
- 71 South

A 3 month pilot that starts this month, encouraging residents to self-clean their areas. ARR has provided dumpsters for disposal. We will remove the dumpsters after a 24 hour period. We tall at the information from the pilot (data and feedback from Public Works) and w'll provide that to council in early 2021 to consider if it's something to expand.

Amy Slagle opens for questions.

Commissioner Lisa Barden asks: Can you elaborate on the new program, the dumpsters will go out for 24 hours and then be taken up is that correct?

Amy Slagle responds: That's correct, the idea is that we go in and ask residents to self- clean their areas. The day before Public Works would come through with their regularly scheduled cleaning. And provide them with information.

Commissioner Melissa Rothrock asks: A lot of the camps use single use plastics. I didn't see any means of recycling. Is everything going into those purple bins going to the landfill?

Amy Slagle responds: Yes, everything is landfilled. Adding recycling to the encampment sites creates additional space requirements We would need separate carts as well as separate equipment and likely more resources to be able to accommodate that.

Chair Acuna asks: So currently, everything is being landfilled. So how are we encouraging the to participate in this? What methods are we using when methodology is being employed?

Amy Slagle responds: We worked with Corporate Public Information Office to develop some postings that are on the group that shows the residents how to use the self-cleaning pilot. We also worked with internal care to publicize the Violet Bag program as well as the additional pilot to make them aware of the regularly scheduled Public Works Cleaning so they can remove any personal effects before crews arrive.

Ken Snipes, ARR Director responds: We are going through sensitivity training to understand how to work around people who are homeless so that people are mindfull that we are dealing with a sensitive area. One of the basic foundational tenants of society is trash removal. We don't want to create any more hardship for people who are trying to survive.

2d. Discussion and Action: ARR's role in the Waterway Watershed Protection Program

Amy Slagle responds: We don't have a presentation about that tonight. The program development is in the Director's Report. ARR and Watershed are in the process of developing the program, the Clean Creek's program and it will focus generally on Litter Abatement in the Creeks. Ideally Watershed would provide ARR with some high-priority sites based on customer complaints, as well as some highlighted areas. We would program those places for regular cleaning.

We are hiring dedicated staff for the program those postings are being worked on now. We're hoping to have folks on board in early 2021 to get that going.

Chair Acuna asks: This is predominately creeks, not deep waterways? Not Lady Bird Lake, Waller Creek Are would still be handled by Watershed Protection? A while back you were part of a joint effort with Watershed folks in purchasing or employing an amphibious type vehicle to collect any garbage in waterways.

Ken Snipes, ARR Director responds: I think you're speaking of a waterwheel. There are several waterwheels placed in waterways in certain cities. I'm not firm on where Watershed has landed on that. I think the discussion was there's an opportunity to jointly fund for trash removal from Lady Bird Lake, We haven't had any recent conversations about the best type of structure. That's something that we can follow-up on just to see what they are thinking?

2e. Discussion and Action: 2020-2021 ZWAC Meeting Schedule.

Chair Acuna opens the floor for a motion.

Commission Lisa Barden moves to approve 2020-2021 ZWAC meeting schedule

Point of Clarification the schedule includes November 10th as Veterans day is on November 11th

Motion 2nd by Ian Steyaert

Motion passed unanimously (no one speaking)

3. Director's Report Staff Briefings

Chair Acuna speaks for Commissioner Gattuso: I don't see her with us ,she had a question about increasing the Organic collection in the Multi-Family communities based on the pilot program.

Gena McKinley Strategic Initiatives Division Manager responds: Any updates on this were to increase recycling or recycling required at Multi-Familys. On October st the Recycling Requirmenet Multi-Family properties increased.They started reporting and the first reports are due by February of next year. Some of the ways we are advertising include print and digital ads in targeted publications. We're working very closely with the Austin Apartment Association to get information out through their newsletters. We've seet notification letters to all Multi-Family Property Owners. We've been conducting webinars, presentations, and trainings for properties, and including toolkits with materials for tenants. We have signs, emapl templates and a pretty large plan. We are in implementation mode to make sure that the Multi-Family Properdies do know what is required of them as of this ocotoeber.

Chair Acuna asks: We have folks who were willing to participate in the program, correct/ The pilot program?

Gena McKinley responds: We also were working on a pilot program for Organic diversion at Multi-Family properties and we've started to re-engage those properties. We had 12 Multi-Family properties who were interested in participating and then we hit a global pandemic, which put a wrench in things. We are currently working with them to see what the appetite is. The question is timing.

4.Future Agenda Items

1.Update on the rollout of the Multi-Family pilot program

a. What is the increase to add Recycling?

b. What is the increase to add Composting?

Chair Acuna: I'll entertain a motion for Adjuourment

Commissioner Kaiba White moves to adjourn the meeting

2nd by Commissioner Amanda Mason

Meeting adjourned at 7:20