



## **Zero Waste Advisory Commission**

## **Meeting Minutes**

**November 18th, 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/107399>

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 6:21 pm

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

**Board Members not in Attendance:** Jonathan Barona, and Janis Bookout (Membership pending)

**Staff in attendance via WebEx:** Ken Snipes, Richard McHale, Gena McKinley, Andy Dawson, Marcus Gonzalez, Amy Slagle, Raymond Benavidez, Jaime Germany Terry, Dwight Scales,

Chair Acuna opened with comments,

#### **1. APPROVAL of October 12th MEETING MINUTES**

*Chair Acuna entertained a motion to approve the October 14th, Meeting minutes. Commissioner Lisa Barden made the first motion for approval of the minutes. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Cathy Gattuso*

*Item passed Unanimously*

## 2. NEW BUSINESS

### 2a Discussion and Action – Truck Rental Ratification

*The ZWAC Commission chose to defer item 2a. due to lack of time to review before the meeting.*

### 2b. Discussion and Action—Non-Curbside Recycling Contract

*Andy Dawson Diversion Facilities Assistant Division manager mentions this new contract would replace the contract for recycling services at the recycle and reuse drop-off center and combine in the in-house recycling services for city facilities (two separate contracts would be combined into one).*

*The ZWAC Commission chose to defer Discussion and Action on item 2b. due to lack of time to review before the meeting.*

### 2c. Discussion and Action- Safely Reducing Barriers to Charitable Feeding: APH Response to Resolution 20200729-087 CIUR 2290 Presentation—Don Hastings Austin Public Health

*Don Hastings, Assistant Director of Environmental Health Services with Austin Public Health presents noting this information was presented on October 14<sup>th</sup> to the Health and Human Services commissioners. This is initial staff response to a city council commission resolution on how can we as a city further assist charitable feeding organizations to accomplish their mission of providing healthy and affordable food, expanding access to healthy and affordable food. We have to be careful not to conflict with other city goals such as ensuring food safety and ensuring the goals of the Universal Recycling, Organics, and Diversion, etc. It's always important to expand healthy, affordable food access, but especially during a pandemic, when so many families and individuals have been economically disrupted and are experiencing financial hardships, and that has been added impetus to this goal.*

*Whereas charitable feeding organizations are required to comply with the same permit and site compliance standards that are applied to full-service for-profit restaurants and must comply with a Universal Recycling and Organics and Diversion requirements in chapter 15-6 of the code. There are physical requirements of the Texas Food Establishment Rules, which is what our division here implements. Most CFO's are classified as a food establishment, except the very simplest of them. Some of those physical requirements include self-closing doors, smooth ceiling tiles, three compartment sinks that are separate from the handwashing station, separate from the mop sink, kitchen vent hoods, grease traps. The benefits of streamlining the CFO's operations is that it's going to lower operating costs and that's going to free up money for expanding resources for charitable feeding. It will also lower the cost of entry, likely for new food pantries and CFO's to serve the community. There are also risks of streamlining. Some of the obvious are foodborne pathogens, your basic viruses and bacteria, and protozoa.*

*We've conferred with the Office of Sustainability and they are the spearhead of this project, this goal of expanding safe and affordable food access. Austin Public Health is also a partner in that because, in addition to making sure that food is safe, we have our own healthy affordable food programs that we administer so those are twin goals. In addition to working with the Office of Sustainability, we've worked with other departments Water, Fire, DSD, and ARR to ask the question and discuss what can safely be reduced barrier-*

*wise to help CFOs? We've made two discussions with the city's food policy board, which is staffed by the Office of Sustainability. We've identified requirements that could be waived or reduced to help CFOs. That would include requirements that are in the cities of food and food handlers ordinance which is chapter 10.3. It's important to not try to apply a one size fits all solution to this. The Office of Sustainability developed a scheme of four categories:*

- 1. CFO's that distribute only shelf-stable uncut produce (currently not regulated due to low risk)*
- 2. Limited service, charitable feeding organizations that distribute and portion out mostly prepared and packaged time temperature control for safety foods (requires permits). We're proposing to exempt that type of CFO from the permitting process.*
- 3. Limited service, charitable feeding organizations, both heat, cool, and portion commercially prepared foods that are also time and temperature controlled for safety. We propose continuing to require permits for these but we would amend our chapter 10.3 to relax certain requirements.*
- 4. Community kitchens, soup kitchens place equivalent to restaurants. There's nothing we can do to relax permitting requirements. Because of the risks we are going to propose to the council a potential fee waiver.*

*We've held a council work session and provided the same information. We are scheduled to go before the council with firm-specific recommendations toward the end of January. The policy question that we hope that you will consider is what requirements if any of the Universal Recycling Ordinance and the Organics and Diversion program might be amended or reduced to further assist this goal of helping charitable feeding organizations expand access to affordable and healthy food.*

*Commissioner Amanda Masino asks the question: What is a proposal on the table, that we wave URO for all or that we waive URO for CFOS two and three? What's the ask of the commission?*

*Gena McKinley, ARR Strategic Initiatives Division Manager Responds: Our staff has been in contact with Don and the Sustainability Office and others that have been involved. The nature of the charitable food organizations, they're meeting the requirements of the organics diversion component of the Universal Recycling Ordinance. So the staff had not proposed amending the URO. If there were a need to change anything they're meeting requirements. It's just reporting annually. There is an existing waiver process that's built into the ordinance. So that's an option, should there need to be waiving of requirements so that wouldn't require an amendment of the ordinance. There is a provision that on a case-by-case basis, the director could approve in writing a waiver. That is something that's a process that's on the table. If there were something that needed to be waived, we could utilize the existing process.*

## **2d. Discussion and Action: Update on the rollout of Organic Collection at Multi-family Properties.**

*Gena McKinley ARR Strategic Initiatives states: We did provide an update in the Director's report, but it's my understanding that there was a desire to create it as a discussion item to have some conversation. I will review where we are and then I'm here to answer any questions you might have. The Multi-family properties currently are not required to divert organic material. There was an interest in gathering more data, understanding what that might look like for our multi-family community. The department in collaboration with this commission and the commissioners on the URO committed planned a pilot program for the multi-family population. That was originally planned for this spring. We'd actively started recruiting multifamily properties. We're feeling really good about where we were and then a global pandemic hit and that put us on hold. We also planned for the spring and summer of 2020 which was also placed on hold. We are still very committed to the project with an intent to launch a new pilot in 2021 (under our FY21 Budget). We've been reaching out to the properties that we originally talked to earlier and 9 out of the 10 original participants are still interested in participating. We*

are also reaching out to additional properties to add them as participants in this pilot. The source of funding for this pilot and the FY21 Budget had come to our attention. We were planning to use part of the Clean Community Fee. The law department has recently been looking into the use of the fee and is wanting to evaluate the use of those funds and work together on some details. We're still anticipating moving forward with a pilot. Given the delays, we're planning to launch in early 2021. We've been increasing our engagement with the Austin Apartment Association and other multifamily groups, providing a lot of education about the new multifamily recycling increase. We've had great engagement and partnership there. The bridges that we're building with the community through the URO requirements we're working on now is setting us up for success and getting more participation in this pilot in the future.

Commissioner Cathy Gattuso asks: This is a question for the URO and ARR in general, we're not doing much outreach now because we want to keep everyone safe. I'm wondering if eventually, we could talk about it in stages. At what state could we be in to start outreach?

Gena responds: we are currently in stage 3 and we're hoping to reduce down to stage two that we would be ready to do this at the beginning of the year. I think stage three or lower we could consider moving forward. My team has been working on community engagement and public engagement. We are still conducting business despite us being in a pandemic. We've created some guidelines and worked in conjunction with Austin Public Health to outline ways that we can engage with the community at all levels of the pandemic. We're getting creative (similar to what AISD is doing with food distribution). We're working internally on our engagement efforts to make sure that we're equipped and ready to provide resources to the community despite the level of the pandemic that we are in.

### **3. Director's Report Staff Briefings**

#### **4. Future Agenda Items**

1. Resolution for the Austin Public Health for the CFO
2. ARR Stage 2 Pandemic Outreach to the Community
3. Roles and Responsibilities of ZWAC—what can ZWAC do to help the department
4. Citywide Diversion Rate
  1. How does Austin start to incorporate 80% of the community that we do not collect into the rate?

*Chair Acuna: I'll entertain a motion for Adjournment*

*Commissioner Cathy Gattuso moves to adjourn the meeting*

*2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Ian Steyaert*

*Meeting adjourned at 7:38*

