



**Zero Waste Advisory Commission  
Construction & Demolition Recycling Committee**

**Meeting Minutes  
February 28, 2017**

The Construction & Demolition Recycling Committee of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC) convened on February 28, 2017, at City Hall, Bull Pen Room 1029, Austin, Texas.

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Attending: Joshua Blaine, Chair      Kendra Bones      Shana Joyce

**City Staff in Attendance:**

Austin Resource Recovery: Woody Raine, Richard McHale, Amy Slagle

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Committee Chair Blaine called the Committee Meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

- a. Committee Members, staff, and stakeholders introduced themselves.

**2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION GENERAL**

No one spoke.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On a motion by Bones and second by Joyce, the Committee unanimously (3-0) approved the minutes for their December 13, 2016 meeting.

**4. NEW BUSINESS**

**a. Disaster debris management**

Amy Slagle, ARR Interim Litter Abatement Division Director, presented information about ARR's Storm Debris Management Plan – what activates the plan, the operations, and the types of debris managed. Illustrating the plan in action, as a result of the 2015 Halloween Flood, ARR diverted 112 tons of brush, 4 tons of household hazardous waste, and 4 tons of electronics and tires. Another 1,859 tons of bulky debris were disposed. Blaine requested more information on the contents of landfilled debris and diversion rates for other disasters.

**b. Deconstruction – municipal programs and policies**

On behalf of The Reuse People of Austin, Adriana Vann presented her findings on municipal programs and policies that support deconstruction. Briefly, in order of impact, they included:

- Raise Awareness

1. Post deconstruction information on the City website
  2. Inform City Permitting Office staff and Historic Landmark Commission
  3. Inform public on the value and how to get a Deconstruction Survey
- Permit Incentives for Deconstruction
    1. Establish separate Deconstruction Permit
    2. Waive or reduce fees for Deconstruction Permits
    3. Expedite review for new building permits if existing structure is deconstructed
    4. Advertise incentives
  - Deconstruction Grant Program – fund deconstruction projects as a pilot, to collect information, and raise awareness
  - Deconstruction Ordinance examples: Seattle WA, Portland OR, Cook County IL, Palo Alto CA, and others

Committee members and other meeting participants discussed challenges for deconstruction: matching generators and users and the value of reclaimed items. Raine noted that the ARR director told Council as they reviewed the C&D ordinance that ARR would use programmatic initiatives for portions of the C&D stream not affected by the ordinance. In addition, he would look for funding for a pilot program to answer questions about markets, costs, and demand.

**c. C&D-derived scrap wood**

Woody Raine, ARR Planner, presented information on various municipal policies and programs that do or don't credit as diversion fuel use of scrap wood. Although Austin's Zero Waste goal does not credit wood fuel use as diversion, the C&D Recycling Ordinance does for Qualified Processors. That credit aligns with green building local requirement and national credits.

Both large and small jurisdictions across the country are represented on each side of this issue. San Francisco and Palo Alto CA conditionally count wood fuel as diversion. Paraphrasing, their policies state that "recovery rate can include biomass conversion if the facility can demonstrate it is the highest and best use and that recycling, mulch, or compost markets for the biomass are not adequate or feasible."

Eight of the eleven mixed C&D debris processors certified by Recycling Certification Institute (RCI-certified) divert most, if not all, of their scrap wood to fuel uses, whether they serve communities that count fuel as diversion or not.

Life cycle analysis conducted by Dr. Jeffrey Morris that shows substituting scrap wood for coal has less climate impact than using it for other wood or paper products if biogenic carbon dioxide is not included. If it is included, then the climate benefit of substituting scrap wood for coal follows the two material uses.

Bill Turley, Executive Director of the Construction and Demolition Recycling Association (CDRA), said that CDRA disagrees with some of the Dr. Morris' analysis. He also noted that scrap wood comprised more than 40% of most C&D streams. C&D processors need a steady market for their materials but compost and mulch are uneven and seasonal. Income from wood biofuel supports the sorting process and recycling of the other C&D-derived materials.

The US EPA has approved scrap wood as a non-hazardous fuel because contamination is low and controlled, while the BTU value is sufficiently high. C&D processors would prefer to sell scrap wood to non-fuel markets because it would have higher value but demand is low. He said that the next version of LEED could require use of RCI-certified facilities to earn credits for diversion.

Committee Chair Joshua Blaine asked about use of scrap wood as a bulking agent for composting biosolids. Recon owner Walter Biel replied that Austin Water liked his product but could only accept it at no cost. Turley added that controlling contamination is especially critical for compost products.

**d. Mandatory concrete recycling**

Raine reported that many municipalities require 100% diversion of concrete and 50% or more of the remainder. Some also require 100% diversion of other inert materials, such as asphalt and masonry.

Meeting participants pointed out that clean fill is legal and would comply with a landfill ban. They also noted that, although clean fill is not the highest and best use of concrete, it is financially better for haulers than landfilling. Consequently, the group concluded that mandated concrete recycling was a low priority.

**e. C&D Recycling Ordinance metrics**

Raine reported that since 10/1/16, nearly 250 affected projects received permits. Most were Commercial Finish Out or Commercial Remodeling projects. Of the fourteen requesting Final Inspections, several had begun to report, four had submitted reports, two of which requested and received waivers. In addition, ARR determined that the ordinance does not affect non-structural reroofing projects.

**5. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Without objection, Blaine extended the meeting past 8:00 pm.

Independent haulers present at the meeting said few, if any, of the mixed C&D processors would process loads from independent haulers. Blaine asked how this and related topics could be discussed in a working group.

Adam Gregory with Texas Disposal Systems said that leftover lumber from banded loads cannot be used on other projects. Blaine noted that may be good information to share with the CodeNEXT panel where he represents Zero Waste issues.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

Blaine called the meeting to a close at 8:15 pm without objection.