



Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes August

August 02, 2023

The Special Called Meeting of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC) convened at the Austin Energy Auditorium and through Video Conference on Wednesday, August 02, 2023. The following are the meeting highlights. For detailed information please visit:

<https://austintx.new.swagit.com/videos/268428>. For backup documentation, please visit:

[https://www.austintexas.gov/cityclerk/boards\\_commissions/meetings/2023\\_97\\_1.htm](https://www.austintexas.gov/cityclerk/boards_commissions/meetings/2023_97_1.htm)

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Gerry Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 6:29 pm

**Board Members in Attendance:** Gerry Acuna, Ian Steyaert, Melissa Caudle, Craig Nazor, Amanda Masino & Melissa Rothrock

**Board Members not in Attendance:** N/A

**Staff in attendance:** Richard McHale, Gena McKinley, Ron Romero, Donald Hardee, Jason McCombs, Brent Paige, Victoria Rieger, William Purcell, Marcus Gonzalez, Yahel Baranovicht and Gustavo Valle

#### **1. Approval of the May 10, 2023, Meeting Minutes (0:34)**

Chair Acuna entertained a motion for approval from Commissioner Nazor, seconded by Commissioner Caudle. Minutes were approved unanimously 6 – 0 by the Zero Waste Advisory Commission.

#### **2. Presentation of Waste Characterization Study (1:07)**

Mike Oden and Matt Loula from APTIM led a waste characterization presentation pertaining to Austin Resource Recovery's Comprehensive Plan. The following questions were asked:

- ***Study reviews Texas-wide per capita disposal and significant dip about 2010, why did this happen?*** This was due to a downtrend in economy and housing crash.

- Comment - Master plan and City ordinance asked that those in private sector submitted recycling updates on quarterly or semi-annual basis to assist with diversion/capture rates. It was confirmed License Hauler Ordinance does require data submission.
- ***For chart detailing tons per year collected and percentage conversion rate, what do lines represent?*** Solid line represents curbside collected quantities for trash, recycling, and yard trimmings and values reflected on left-hand side. The dash line represents with values right-hand side represents diversion.
- ***Is it correct that the number of tons collected have stayed steady despite increase in population?*** While it does look like that what was detailed later is that the rates have gone up, but the conversion rate has gone up more.
- ***Do we need to revise our diversion targets to realistic levels?*** Many municipalities are doing that.
- ***Regarding waste generation by sector, 'Other' 14% is generated from contamination in recycling?*** No, this was information gathered from generation received and answered questions. Additionally, reuse and reduction are part of diversion calculation.
- ***On capture rate information, while overall rate is consistent, did you see differences between trash, recycling, and organics geographically?*** All were within 5-7%.
- ***If reuse and reduction is as successful as noted in the study, is this something that can be done more?*** Yes, and this would be better discussed using the data within the Comprehensive Plan.
- ***Why are other cities such as Seattle or Ann Arbor are successful percentage wise?*** It is hard to pinpoint but it may be due to ordinances, and this also could be cultural.

### 3. Director's Report (46:11)

Interim Director Richard McHale presented the Director's Report that provided updates on CCU, C&D, Solicitations, Performance Reports, Statistical Reports, and ARR Award. The following questions were asked:

- ***Does ARR have City owned landfills that burns off methane?*** Yes, we do have a flare that burns off methane and it burns continuously. And we are beyond the peak methane production and at our landfill it is steadily decreasing.
- ***Is the Zero Waste Youth Education in development or posting soon?*** Solicitation recently received and still under review. Should move forward soon.
- ***Is the City looking into receiving money from the IRA to go towards the electric fleet vehicles?*** Yes, as ARR would be unable to move forward without additional funding as those types of trucks are very expensive. Most recent quote for electric truck was \$750,000.
- ***The estimated percent collected numbers are less this fiscal year than last year, except for year to date. Why is this number differ?*** This is due to the material pickup due to Winter Storm Mara.

### 4. ARR FY24 Proposed Budget (58:29)

Financial Division Manager Victoria Rieger presented ARR's proposed budget for FY 2024. The following questions were asked:

- ***Could you detail cost per cart size in the new budget?*** Small cart increasing by \$.25, mid-size by \$.35, large cart by \$.65, and the largest cart by \$3.85.
- ***How did ARR get the single-family projections?*** They come from the City's demographer's office.
- ***Is it possible to increase the Clean Community Fee?*** What can be allocated under to the Clean Community Fee is specific and is closely monitored to ensure City ordinances are followed. This was increased this year.
- ***Can you explain the reserve fund rules that we fall under?*** ARR has two financial policies. One is to make sure we have funding for landfill closure. The other is that 1/12 of operating budget is maintained for emergency situations.

## 5. **Resolution (1:29:21)**

Draft Resolution addressing 2023-2024 ARR Budget presented by Chair Gerry Acuna. Commissioner Nazor moved to accept resolution and Commissioner Masino seconds. Commissioner Caudle based on feedback, provided some edit suggestions. Edits amenable to Chair Acuna. Once additional edits are completed, Commissioner Masino, Commissioner Nazor, and Commissioner Steyaert will be listed as co-sponsors. Resolution was approved unanimously 6 – 0 by the Zero Waste Advisory Commission. The following questions were asked:

- ***Are additional sponsors requested?*** Yes, that would be ideal and for resolution to also be brought to each commissioners Councilmember.
- ***What is the precedent for three months versus two months reserve?*** Private sector operates on a 90-day reserve. Can be adjusted to reflect one month as had been discussed in the budget presentation.

## 6. **Action to approve new member to the Universal Recycling Ordinance Committee**

Deferred to the next ZWAC meeting.

## 7. **Action to approve alternate representative to the Joint Sustainability Committee**

Deferred to the next ZWAC meeting.

## **Future Agenda Items**

- Approval of new member for Universal Recycling Ordinance Committee
- Approval of alternative representative to Joint Sustainability Committee

The minutes were approved at the September 13, 2023 meeting on Commissioner Nazor's motion, Commissioner Jasper second on a 6-0 vote.