



Zero Waste Advisory Commission

February Meeting Minutes

February 07, 2024

The Meeting of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission (ZWAC) convened at AE Headquarters and through Video Conference on Wednesday, February 7th, 2024. The following are the meeting highlights. For detailed information please visit: <https://austintx.new.swagit.com/videos/297047>

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Gerry Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 6:00 pm

Board Members in Attendance: Gerry Acuna, Melissa Caudle, Craig Nazor, Madeline Jasper, Ian Steyaert & Melissa Rothrock.

Board Members not in Attendance: Amanda Masino, Caitlin Griffith, Cathy Gattuso, & Katrina Scheihing

Staff in attendance: Richard McHale, Gena McKinley, Ron Romero, Amy Slagle, Donald Hardee, Jason McCombs, Victoria Rieger, Marcus Gonzalez, Samuel Gilbert, Andy Dawson, Yahel Baranovicht and Gustavo Valle.

1. Approval of the November 8th, 2023, Meeting Minutes (00:32)

Chair Acuna entertained a motion for approval from Commissioner Nazor, seconded by Commissioner Caudle. Unanimous approval with a 6-0 vote.

2. Presentation and Discussion of Litter Abatement Programs – Sam Gilbert (03:06)

Acting Division Manager Sam Gilbert with Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) presented ongoing Litter Abatement Programs. These include the Violet Bag Program, Violet Keepsafe Storage Program, Homeless H.E.A.L. (Housing-focused Encampment Assistant Link) Sites, Clean Creeks Program, Litter Control Program, Keep Austin Beautiful Program & Encampment Cleanups. Such initiatives are carried out in collaboration with other city departments like Transportation & Public Works and Parks and Recreations Department.

- I. Commissioners, staff, and stakeholders reviewed and discussed current Litter Abatement Programs. Commissioner Nazor inquired whether the city would implement single use plastic ordinance since they are found in great numbers at creeks. There are no current plans to implement such ordinances. Commissioner Acuna asked whether it was possible to increase the number of employees working in the Litter Abatement programs, specifically Homeless Encampment Cleanups. Director Richard McHale commented that Austin Resource Recovery is having ongoing budget discussion and would visit the matter.
- II. Commissioner Caudle asked about the status of the Zero Waste Rebate program. Division Manager Jason McCombs of Strategic Initiatives said that he would need to locate the data since he did not have concrete numbers at the time. Further, McCombs explained that while the numbers of businesses participating in the program have been steadily increasing since the pandemic, Strategic Initiatives continues to advertise the program as much as possible.

3. Presentation and Discussion of Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Door-to-Door Pilot – Andy Dawson (27:09)

Assistant Division Manager Andy Dawson with Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) provided a presentation regarding the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Door to Door Pilot. The pilot was open to the residents of District 4 & 10. ADM Dawson pointed out that although there were initially high levels of service use, it quickly dropped. With the assistance of the Public Information Office (PIO), ARR was able to remind residents of the service. With renewed interest came relatively high demand of the service. However, interest faded as the need for service dropped again. There is no current consensus as to why this is the case. The pilot will be expanding to Districts 1, 6, & 7 in the next several months. The goal is to have all five northern districts participating in the program by FY25.

- I. Commissioners, staff, and stakeholders reviewed and discussed current HHW Door to Door Pilot. Commissioner Nazor asked who he could direct interested parties for more information about the pilot program. ADM Dawson said they are free to reach out to him or PIO.
- II. Commissioner Caudle asked what the most common materials collected were and the difference in item collection between District 4 and 10. ADM Dawson said that the most common items collected were batteries, oil, paint, and antifreeze. As for differences with collection between both districts, there were minimal differences.

4. Review and Discussion of Director's Report (37:28)

Director Richard McHale presented the Director's Report that provided updates on the following:

- Multifamily Composting
- Brownie Drive
- Recognitions
- Historic Preservation Plan
- TXSWANA Conference
- Compensation Update
- Solicitations Update
- Performance Reports
- Statistical Reports

5. Review and Approval Supplemental Brush and Bulk Contract – Sam Gilbert (47:43)

Acting Division Manager Sam Gilbert provided a brief description of the Supplemental Brush and Bulk Contract. This contract allows for ARR to call on contractors to provide supplemental brush and bulk collection for the City of Austin. Further, this contract may improve collection efficiency during peak season. Commissioner Rothrock inquired where brush was dropped off. Acting DM Gilbert explained that larger brush is taken to Hornsby Bend on FM 973 while smaller tree limbs go to the compost bender. Commissioner Nazor motioned for the RCA to be approved, with Commissioner Rothrock seconding the motion. There was a unanimous approval by the commission.

6. Review and Approval of Digital Solutions for Waster Management Contract – Keri Greenwalt (52:27)

PIO Program Manager Keri Greenwalt of Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) explained that ARR is requesting a favorable recommendation to the amendment to contract NC 20000022 for digital solutions for waste management. This contract provides ARR's customer facing mobile application and website widget. Such widgets and apps that are included are customer collection calendars, service alert messaging, campaign messaging, what do i do with tool, waste sorting game, scheduling for the recycle and reuse drop off center and special collection scheduling for our on-call programs (on-call bulk, on-call brush, and on-call household hazardous waste). The requested amendment will afford ARR the ability to expand the on-call services and scheduling tools. PM Greenwalt stressed that if a contract amendment is not secured, the on-call bulk brush and household hazardous waste collection programs cannot be expanded and offered citywide to all ARR customers.

- I. Commissioner Acuna asked when the contract was set to expire. PM Greenwalt stated that the contract was set to expire on December 4th, 2024. Commissioner Nazor motioned for the RCA to be approved, with Commissioner Jasper seconding the motion. There was a unanimous approval by the commission.

Future Agenda Items (56:09)

- Review ARR's FY2025 Budget.