



Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes June 14, 2017

The Zero Waste Advisory Commission convened in a regular meeting on June 14, 2017, in Council Chambers in City Hall in Austin, Texas.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance: Gerry Acuna, Heather-Nicole Hoffman, Joshua Blaine, Cathy Gattuso, Blythe Christopher de Orive, Shana Joyce, Rick Rojo.

Staff in attendance: Richard McHale, Michael Sullivan, Erin Benoit, Amy Slagle, Donald Hardee, Emlea Chanslor, Woody Raine, Lori Scott, Ron Romero, Brent Paige.

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item.

2. APPROVAL OF MAY 2017 MEETING MINUTES

A motion to approve the May 10, 2017 meeting minutes was made by Commissioner Gattuso and seconded by Commissioner Hoffman. The motion to approve the minutes failed due to lack of quorum on 5-0-2-3 vote with Commissioners Joyce and Rojo abstained and Commissioners Masino, Bones and White absent.

3. OLD BUSINESS

- a. Council Working Group** - receive an update from ZWAC appointee to City Council's Waste Management Policy Working Group.

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item.

Commissioner Blaine provided updates from the working group. Richard McHale, ARR, noted that the June 22 Council agenda would contain the organics processing contract approved at the February ZWAC meeting, which was postponed while the working group reviewed policy related to it and other contracts.

Commissioner Blaine noted that the recommendation from the working group will be released and the ZWAC will go over it at future meeting when it is available.

Discussion ended and no action was taken on the item.

- b. Construction and Demolition Ordinance Working Group** - receive an update from working group regarding recent discussions about increasing the effectiveness of the C&D ordinance.

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item.

Commissioner Blaine provided background on the reason for forming the group and gave updates and noted the group will have another meeting to get some contractors and architects involved for their feedback.

The end result of the group may culminate in recommendations to revise the ordinance. Many processors expressed that the penalty for non-compliance was not stiff enough to encourage compliance.

Chair Acuna said there would be a hard thing for smaller haulers to participate in the market under the current structure of the ordinance, noting the high costs for independent haulers, and stated that stakeholder participation is important and valuable regarding this.

Woody Raine, ARR, discussed feedback from stakeholders, many of who saw that the meeting purpose seemed to impact haulers, and a new goal of the meeting might be needed.

Chair Acuna expressed that he would like to go back and review the ordinance in light of changes that have occurred, and discuss at a future ZWAC meeting, where the scope of the working group might be broadened.

Commissioner Hoffman asked if the city has considered being a processor for construction and demolition material.

Sam Angoori, ARR, responded that at this point, the answer is no, and that many comments have come from haulers that ARR is encroaching on their territory. Mr. Angoori stated that if the commission would like to recommend this they can develop a recommendation for council to review, as staff does not intend to steer policy.

Commissioner Blaine noted that the proposed Remanufacturing Hub could be used for C&D but noted that the city may feel some pain economically.

Chair Acuna stated that the city is good at telling us what we can and cannot recycle, and inspection challenges are there whether the processors are private or public. He added that the city has set a policy but has not made it workable, and should the city get into this they are capable of doing a good job, that people love buying good used wood and material. He noted that if we are going to ask everyone to do this, we need to give them the opportunity to do it successfully.

Mr. Angoori asked if perhaps they might invite processors to the working group and inquire if they can accept more material and look at the costs as well. Chair Acuna stated that until we get construction firms and builders to the table we don't know the goals, since they are paying the bill for required recycling.

Commissioner Blaine noted that some stakeholders felt that the ordinance would drive some to accept more material and the group is honing in on things to do policy wise to help the market. Commissioner Blaine noted if private industry won't do this, he thinks the City could, but there are ways to encourage private industry to step up, and a patchwork solution may improve the policy. Commissioner Joyce stated concerned about the city becoming a processor, and that the goal of the working group with stakeholders should be to create a positive influence for them to operate within the market now.

Discussion ended and no action was taken on the item.

- c. **CodeNEXT** - obtain and review questions from the Commission regarding proposed changes to the Land Development Code for future submission to the Code Advisory Group.

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item.

Chair Acuna noted that while Commissioner Masino was absent, that commissioners could email her suggestions for CodeNEXT for her to submit to the Code Advisory Group, and that at the next ZWAC meeting the CAG might present depending on the complexity of the questions presented. If the CAG doesn't present, then the ZWAC can use the time in July 12 meeting to review the information, and compile that into a formal document for the commission to then vote on at August 9 ZWAC.

Discussion ended and no action was taken on the item.

- d. **Department Audit** - next steps for a review of the department related to ARR Master Plan and Office of Performance Management Review.

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item.

Sam Angoori, ARR, discusses the Office of Performance Management (OPM) review pending for the department. Mr. Angoori noted that OPM does a self-evaluation of the department, which is not an audit, and described the process in brief. The process is that OPM send questions that the department answers. Then OPM create a cross departmental team to look at the information and come up with recommendations based on this. Staff is currently working on this, and hopefully by August 2 we will have the recommendations. August 2 is when budget is scheduled to be released to Council. It is hoped that staff can bring the recommendations to ZWAC at the August 9 meeting.

Chair Acuna noted that a true audit is an understanding of where we have been, and how we are going to get down road in more effective way, and that we need cost information of several areas of the department. Chair Acuna noted that this can show us if there's something out there we can do better and referenced that a year or a couple years ago we had a cost of service study.

Mr. Angoori noted cost is a factor in a formal audit. Recently staff found 90K on colors for carts, so spending 300K is somewhat counterproductive to goals of efficiency, but if the ZWAC can describe what they want, Mr. Angoori assured them staff can accommodate.

Chair Acuna referenced a review done nearly a decade ago, calling it the Bibby audit, noting that it was an internal function of one department sharing an auditor with another, and it got us a master plan and a zero waste goal, which is they type of thing Mr. Acuna is seeking today. Mr. Acuna agreed that is was a good idea for ZWAC members to come up with questions for staff. Vice Chair Gattuso asked how the department identifies efficiencies like color changes in carts. Mr. Angoori replied there are day to day functions within the department and staff is constantly seeking efficiencies. Referencing the cost of the proposed remanufacturing hub, Mr. Angoori noted that if the issue focus is diversion let's look at other things that cost less than several million dollars and have more realistic goals.

Mr. Angoori noted that staff will see what happens in August with OPM and check in with the ZWAC and proceed from there. The Chair agreed that was a fair start.

On the subject of the Master Plan, Mr. Angoori stated that he would request funding for this in budget for FY19. Mr. Angoori noted that it costs a lot of money first time, this will be an update and won't cost as much as before, and that we have 10 months or a year to review and come up with questions and comments for a consultant to focus on. For instance, what do your council members want to see? It will take time to do this, it may take 9 months or so and may cost approximately 500K.

Chair Acuna noted there were less expensive firms that were available the last master plan formation, but HDR was chosen and might not have been the best deal. Chair Acuna noted that the Master Plan aided in developing an efficient department.

Commissioner Blaine noted that the Master Plan is tied to the discussion of an audit, and if there is a willingness to spend a half million to update the Master Plan, isn't it good to look at programs that cost twice as much as cities with more diversion, and improve what we have. Mr. Angoori responded that approximately 7 million in expenditures are put forth in a city like San Francisco for education, whereas a recent contract here in Austin for outreach was questioned for its high cost. He suggested one approach is to look at the 2011 Master Plan resolution, which references residential diversion, whereas more types of properties are counted in other cities, and that perhaps we can approach more than residential for inclusion in discussions of diversion. Again, Mr. Angoori noted to wait for August to see what develops with the OPM review and then revisit next steps with a Master Plan update.

Chair Acuna referenced the Universal Recycling Ordinance, where information is gathered from commercial and multi-family entities and is part of calculating diversion, but the department focuses on residential diversion, and that we took concepts on zero waste from other cities and tried to make it work here, which is why a review will help immensely and the diversion numbers will make more sense. Mr. Angoori noted that he understands the collection of data is there in multiple forms, but the master plan resolution from 2011 references only residential entities for inclusion in the rate. Chair Acuna noted that the C&D ordinance has requirements for diversion and reporting figures from the actions of commercial entities participating in this can be relevant and possibly incorporated into our diversion rate.

Discussion ended and no action was taken on the item.

4. NEW BUSINESS

Committees - appoint a Commission member to serve on the Joint Sustainability Committee, to replace Commissioner Savage who has resigned from the Commission.

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item.

Commissioner Blaine nominated Commissioner Christopher de Orive. Commissioner Hoffman seconded and the nomination was unanimously approved.

5. STAFF BRIEFINGS

- a. ARR Budget Update** – receive an update on the current fiscal year ARR budget.

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item.

Brent Paige, ARR Budget Manager presented the item.

Commissioner Blaine noted there was confusion at the last meeting about what staff presented last year and he would like to see the current fiscal year budget to identify where the department is in terms of expenditures in certain areas compared to others. Chair Acuna noted he could provide a document from last year that he'd like to see replicated for the commission to review with current fiscal year information included.

Discussion ended and no action was taken on the item.

- b. Recycling Research:** briefing on findings from Design, Technology and Innovation Fellows research on recycling and composting behaviors and perspectives of Austin residents.

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item.

Emlea Chanslor, ARR, presented a slideshow to the commission and took questions. Chair Acuna noted that radio-frequency identification (RFID) data could be beneficial to collect. Commissioner Blaine asked if this research was transferable to organics, to which Ms. Chanslor noted that motivation is key and the point that kitchen carts were wanted, as specific instances of info learned that is applicable to organics. Commissioner Hoffman cautioned against investing too much in small carts as there will be a lot of variation in use, as some customers cook, some don't. Commissioner Blaine asked if the rebate is good for any type of composter, and Ms. Chanslor described the contracted relationships the city has with certain retailers that provide vouchers for composting. Commissioner Christopher de Orive discussed building gamification into the system.

Discussion ended and no action was taken on the item.

- c. Director's Report** – General Updates: ARR Master Plan, OPM Review, [re]Manufacturing Hub, City Council Actions, Statistical Reports and Performance Measures

No members of the public signed up to speak on this item. The ARR Interim Director read updates on the items and took questions from the Commission. Discussion ended and no action was taken on the item.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Staff and commission discussed the following items to address at future meetings: FY17 budget update; Annual Commission Report; PARD recycling update; C&D working group update; Departmental Audit/OPM update; Code Next input review; Council Waste Management Policy working group update; Youth Education Contract discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Gattuso, seconded by Commissioner Blaine, and the meeting was adjourned by Chair Acuna at 8:16 pm to no objection.