

Citizens Water Conservation Implementation Task Force

Regular Meeting

Minutes

Monday, February 25, 2008

625 E 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 104

Jennifer Walker called the meeting to order at 5:42 pm. Members in attendance: Susan Butler, Margot Clarke, Norman Johns, Jody McDaniel, Nora Mullarkey, Rusty Osborne, Gene Reagan, Susan Roth, and Jennifer Walker.

- I. Approval of minutes from the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.
  - a. Norman Johns made a motion to approve the January 14<sup>th</sup> minutes. Gene Reagan seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.
- II. TKO Advertising, Inc. media contract update
  - a. Conservation staff member Drema Gross presented on the marketing services contract with local company, TKO Advertising, Inc.
  - b. The media contract is set up in a way so that the City of Austin will own all the materials produced by TKO: print ads, fact sheets, radio, and television advertisements and be able to edit them if needed. Everything should have an overall look and feel to all the information to make it more recognizable. To accomplish this, there has been a significant increase in the conservation budget for the marketing campaign and the placements of advertisements.
  - c. The big focus of the marketing contract will be on the upcoming watering restrictions with the additional goal of reducing overall outdoor watering through the correct application of watering amounts. The campaign hopes to stay away from a “big brother” message, instead sending out more of a community message and response. The campaign will hopefully appeal to many individuals, but particularly the highest outdoor water users.
  - d. TKO has presented 4 different concepts to City of Austin staff to date. Staff members have had a positive reaction to the idea of a campaign that will focus on “How Austin Waters,” which some staff members feel can play off of Austin pride, with a clean and simple look that deemphasizes the newness of the watering schedule and makes it sound more acceptable and practical.
  - e. Drema presented a few of the preliminary prototypes including fact sheets, print ads and the watering calendar magnets. Once finalized, the fact sheets will likely be made available at point of purchase locations similar to the Grow Green flyers available at local garden centers.
  - f. Timeframe for the contract
    - i. Hope is to get a lot of the information ready in time for the summer watering season beginning May 1<sup>st</sup>
    - ii. Watering calendar is scheduled to be finalized by the end of February

- iii. TV spots in early April
    - iv. Bill inserts and priority program fact sheet templates by early May
    - v. Print ads by late April
    - vi. Plus direct mail pieces and lower priority fact sheets
  - g. Gene Reagan asked about a possible tie in with the EPA's WaterSense program. Staff responded that the WaterSense program has put together a marketing toolkit for smaller conservation programs that don't have resources to devote to developing their own marketing campaign. WaterSense is also starting to promote specific toilets and other products through labeling.
- III. Cost-of-service study briefing from Austin Water Utility Finance Division
  - a. Postponed until March meeting.
- IV. Discussion and possible recommendation concerning the Citizens Water Conservation Implementation Task Force bylaws
  - a. Jennifer Walker compiled the draft of the Citizens Task Force bylaws using two templates—the draft bylaws template and the new rules for the Boards and Commissions.
  - b. Jennifer Walker will send out an updated draft of the bylaws once all the comments are incorporated into the document and a few remaining issues for the legal department have been clarified.
- V. Update on the City of Austin's mandatory fixture retrofit ordinance
  - a. Staff member, Dan Strub, gave an update on the status of the mandatory retrofit ordinance. Staff is currently in the process of working with the legal department on the ordinance language. The Task Force recommendation includes a retrofit requirement on showerheads and aerators, although there were no projected water savings numbers associated with the replacement of these two fixtures.
  - b. According to Dan Strub showerheads have a limited life span, they clog with calcium over time, and everything sold on the national market since 1992 has a flow rate of 2.5 gallons per minute. A couple of reasons why requiring a showerhead retrofit would not be effective is that the population of old, high flow showerheads installed in Austin is small and getting smaller and showerhead flow restrictors can be easily tampered with in order to increase the flow after an inspection.
  - c. The other complicating issue has to do with the faucet retrofit. According to Dan Strub, it is very difficult to be able to tell the flow rating of a particular faucet. An inspector can do a flow test using a flow bag, but that is indicative of the current flow rate, rather than the design flow rate. Also, they can be altered after an inspection and the replacement of faucets is much more costly and involved when you have to deal with pipe fittings as well as the conditions of the pipes. Unfortunately, it is not just as simple as putting an aerator on the end of the faucet to restrict the flow.

- d. Gene Reagan made a motion to the Citizens Task Force supports the City of Austin's direction on not pursuing the mandatory retrofit of showerheads and aerators, with the caveat that it may be looked at in the future. Rusty Osborne seconded the motion. The recommendation was unanimously approved by the Citizens Task Force.
- VI. Update from the Citizen's Water Conservation Implementation Task Force's Irrigation Subcommittee
- a. A draft of the recommendations that have been put together so far will be presented at the March meeting.
- VII. Other announcements
- a. ASLA, with the cooperation of the LCRA and City of Austin, is hosting a training on Drip Irrigation Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup>.
  - b. TCEQ is proposing to modify rules (Chapter 344 rules) for landscape irrigation as well as occupational licensing. The public can access the information through the TCEQ website—the preamble provides much of the information about what is being proposed.
- VIII. Set time and date of next meeting
- a. March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at 5:30 in the Waller Creek Center, Room 104.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 pm.