

## Citizen's Water Conservation Implementation Task Force

### Regular Meeting

#### Minutes

Monday, December 10, 2007

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

Jennifer Walker called the meeting to order at 5:43 pm. Members in attendance: Susan Butler, Margot Clarke, Richard Hatfield, Norman Johns, Terry Mitchell, Nora Mullarkey, Rusty Osborne, Gene Reagan, Susan Roth, and Jennifer Walker.

- I. Approval of minutes from the October 8<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup> meetings.
  - a. Norman Johns made a motion to approve the October 8th minutes, with one change to section IV (a) to read One Stop Shop Permitting area. Nora Mullarkey seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved, with Richard Hatfield abstaining.
  - b. Margot Clarke made a motion to approve the October 15<sup>th</sup> minutes. Nora Mullarkey seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved, with Richard Hatfield abstaining.
  
- II. Discussion on the training requirements for the new irrigation inspectors
  - a. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, all new irrigation system installations, regardless of the type of property, will be required to be permitted and inspected. The licensed irrigator will have to pull a permit initially and then receive an inspection upon completion of the system by one of the City's plumbing inspectors.
  - b. On Friday, December 14 there will be a 4 hour additional training for the plumbing inspectors who will be in charge of doing the residential irrigation system inspections by licensed irrigator, Jeffrey Knight. Karen Stewart, City of Austin Water Conservation Specialist and licensed irrigator, has met with the inspectors 4 times over the last few weeks for introductory training sessions. Gene Reagan has also met with the inspectors. Training will likely continue at various increments after the 1<sup>st</sup> of January.
  - c. In order to become a licensed irrigator in the state of Texas, you are required to have 40 hours of training in addition to a certification test. The City's plumbing inspectors are not licensed irrigators, but will be inspecting the installation of irrigation systems.
  - d. Concerns were voiced about the amount of training the City of Austin's plumbing inspectors are receiving, the type of training, and how much actual enforcement of the new installation standards will take place. Gene Reagan suggested the Task Force create a subcommittee to study this issue further.
    - i. Motion was made by Richard Hatfield to form a subcommittee with members appointed by the chair to study the performance measures needed and requirements of the training for all of the plumbing

inspectors. Norman Johns seconded the motion. Approved unanimously by the Task Force.

- ii. Members include Gene Reagan, Nora Mullarkey, Margot Clarke, Richard Hatfield, and Jennifer Walker.
- iii. Report by the subcommittee will be made at the February meeting.

III. Discussion of the approval process for weather based controllers

- a. Karen Stewart presented information on the selection process for weather based controllers. The City of Austin is working on developing a list of approved controllers to meet the new recommendation by the Water Conservation Task Force that mandates new commercial irrigation systems to install a weather based controller. The weather based controllers automatically adjust watering schedules and amounts to accommodate for changes in temperature and other conditions such as wind, rain, and humidity. Karen discussed the various design features associated with weather based controllers currently found on the market. Karen will be presenting this information and gathering feedback from manufacturer representatives as well as licensed irrigators on Thursday, December 13.

IV. Update on the upcoming water conservation marketing contract

- a. The bid specifications for the new conservation marketing contract were provided to members of the Task Force. The City of Austin received 2 bids. Both bids provided very satisfactory products, with the main difference in the two bids being the cost. The low bidder is being recommended and the approval will be going to the RMC, WWC and then on to Council January 10<sup>th</sup>. The media contract will build an identity for water conservation, put together television and radio ads, as well as provide a cohesive look to all of the Conservation Division's handouts and other information. The timeline for the finished deliverables is relatively short, with an expected date for completion for many of the ads and information by May 1<sup>st</sup> of 2008. The contract is designed to drive people to the City's specific programs and will work in combination with the Water IQ campaign which informs people about the importance of water resources and conservation. The contactors will meet with the Task Force once they are further along with the contract.

V. Discussion of potential meeting topics for the following meetings(s)

- a. Now that the Task Force is an officially recognized organization, the group falls under the Boards and Commissions Ordinance and will be required to follow by the lobbying and ethics provisions of the ordinance. To help out with that, the January meeting should host an ethics briefing by the City's integrity officer, John Steiner.
- b. For January, City staff should provide an update on the water conservation elements of the Green Building Standards. The indoor conservation requirements of green building are fairly substantial; however, the outdoor requirements are still somewhat lacking in some areas. While they assign

points for rainwater harvesting, there is nothing much for irrigation. Austin Green Building Program updates its criteria every 3 years, and is now in the process of finalizing its criteria by January 1<sup>st</sup>. A conference call is scheduled between Karen Guz of SAWS, Dan Strub, Dick Peterson of Green Building, Bill Hoffman, and Nora to discuss this topic.

The City has also come into an agreement with Austin Energy's Key Account Reps—the people who sell AE's Green Choice and Green Building Programs. The representatives will be proactively promoting the City of Austin's commercial water conservation programs.

- c. For January, provide a report on recent Council items: free toilet approval, as well as an update on the media contract.
- d. For February, have someone come from the AWU Financial Department in order to discuss the cost of service study that is currently underway. Staff will work on getting David Anders or another representative to come to talk to the Task Force on the subject of rate changes.
- e. Update on community response to new ordinance. For January, a discussion item on the feedback, both positive and negative, that City staff has received on the new watering restrictions.
- f. For February, City of Austin staff should bring the media consultants to the meeting for an update/presentation on the progress made.
- g. For the March meeting, long term water conservation strategies should be added as a discussion item.

VI. Set time and date of next meeting

- a. January 14, 2007 at 5:30 in the Waller Creek Center, Room 104

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.