

Citizens Water Conservation Implementation Task Force

Regular Meeting

Minutes

Monday, January 12, 2009  
625 E 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Room 105

Susan Butler called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm. Members in attendance: Susan Butler, Margot Clarke, Norman Johns, Jody McDaniel, Rusty Osborne, Susan Roth and Jennifer Walker.

- I. Citizen Communication
  - a. No requests to speak were made.
- II. Approval of minutes from the November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting – Susan Butler, Chair
  - a. Jennifer Walker requested that the last name of “Rusty Coburne” be corrected to “Rusty Osborne.”
  - b. Jennifer Walker made a motion to approve the November 17<sup>th</sup> minutes. Jody McDaniel seconded the motion.
  - c. The minutes were unanimously approved by all attending Task Force members.
- III. Discuss possible action on toilet retrofit ordinance – Sonja Stefaniw, Division Manager
  - a. Daryl Slusher requested that the item be tabled until more information is available.
  - b. Task force agreed that this would be acceptable.
- IV. Presentation on Water Treatment Plant 4 (WTP4) – Daryl Slusher, Assistant Director
  - a. Susan Butler recused herself from the discussion.
  - b. Daryl Slusher invited Bill Stauber and Teresa Lutes to provide a presentation to the group. The presentation was provided by hardcopy at the meeting and an electronic version has been distributed to the Task Force.
  - c. Bill Stauber highlighted the history of the project, the schedule for 2009, annual pumpage statistics, demand projections and information on pressure planes and greenhouse gas emissions.
  - d. Margot Clarke requested an explanation of how altitude affects the pumping of water uphill. Bill Stauber responded explaining that it is easier and more energy efficient to move water from a higher elevation referencing page 11 of the presentation.
  - e. Margot Clarke pointed out that Lake Travis is not at a constant level. Bill Stauber agreed but said that if the lake stays elevated above 493 ft. it will

- provide enough elevated pressure. Bill went on to explain that pumping and lift stations would normally do this, referencing page 11 of the presentation.
- f. Margot Clarke noted that there was no information about the cost of WTP4. Bill Stauber explained that the estimated cost is \$500 million but the actual amount will not be available until further decisions are made on the design and actual plans are developed.
  - g. Margot Clarke pointed out that another number that has been discussed is the amount of money saved by postponing WTP4 and asked if there was any analysis for the cost / benefit of delaying the plant development. Daryl Slusher responded that the finance department could speak to that. He also pointed out that with the recent economic downturn bids are starting to come in lower than expected and may result in a lower than projected cost for the WTP4 project.
  - h. Rusty Osborne thanked the presenters and asked if there was any reasonable analysis of the savings on the higher elevation in contrast to the cost of the bonds. He pointed out that it may be better to invest in renewables to pump water to higher elevations and wanted to see more economic evaluation in the presentation.
  - i. Daryl Slusher offered to bring in someone from finance to provide a presentation and encouraged Rusty Osborne to send a request for the specific information that he would like to have.
  - j. Jody McDaniel asked what the projected life cycle for Davis and Ulrich is. Bill Stauber responded by saying that the intention at this point is to keep both plants running by updating them as needed.
  - k. Norman Johns noted that WTP4 is far from the city and favorable economics will depend on where the new population or development growth will be. Teresa Lutes explained the plans for WTP4 to connect into the existing infrastructure to meet projected growth demands. She said that the department is issuing an RFQ to evaluate the best connection options. She also shared that the original plans looked into energy recovery opportunities and they will be taking that information into account.
  - l. Norman Johns said that the City used to use an advanced algorithm developed by a UT professor (Mademan) and if demand is based on rainfall events, he wondered if the department has tried to make some weather-based analysis. Bill Stauber referenced page 7 of the presentation showing those considerations.

V. Review of TCEQ Irrigation Standards – Sonja Stefaniw, Division Manager

- a. Sonja Stefaniw provided a presentation which all present Task Force members received in hard-copy form. Electronic copies have also been distributed to the group.
- b. Margot Clarke asked what a “waterproof slice” is. Sonja apologized and corrected the presentation to read “waterproof splice.”
- c. Jennifer Walker asked if what the Task Force previously approved was the same as the TCEQ standards. Sonja Stefaniw responded saying that the Division was ahead of the curve on some items and that we needed to approve some additional items.

- d. Rusty Osborne asked if the plumbing code will need to be amended. Sonja Stefaniw responded saying that the division is working with inspectors to increase those additional remaining requirements and gave a target date of February to bring to council.
- e. Susan Roth asked if the permitting department will be charging more with the new regulations. Sonja Stefaniw responded saying that she hadn't heard of any changes. Susan Roth offered to forward plans from other cities who wanted their city and surrounding area cities to have uniform costs. Sonja Stefaniw thanked Susan and requested that she forward that information to her.

VI. Review of Task Force recommendations schedule – Leigh Byford, Conservation Associate

- a. Leigh Byford provided a presentation which all present Task Force members received in hard-copy form. Electronic copies have also been distributed to the group.
- b. Although the Task Force is only scheduled to meet quarterly Leigh Byford explained that a meeting for February 9<sup>th</sup> is being planned to share the Cost of Service information that will not be ready until then.
- c. Jody McDaniel asked if there were plans to take the reclaimed water pipes further north. Daryl Slusher responded no, that there were no plans at this time and the next tank will be the Montopolis tank.
- d. Susan Butler requested a review at the February 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the overall policies, schedule and implementation of the 2006 Water Conservation Task Force.
- e. Jennifer Walker asked if there will still be marketing and education updates. Leigh responded saying that the standard update items have not gone away and that the items being presented will be in addition to those standard items.

VII. Water Conservation Division Updates – Sonja Stefaniw, Division Manager

- a. Sonja Stefaniw provided a presentation which all present Task Force members received in hard-copy form. Electronic copies have also been distributed to the group.
- b. Sonja Stefaniw highlighted an upcoming spring schedule for the Division, including the HELP Program, a Direct Install Program and changes to the education program. She also reported on recent staffing changes.
- c. Jennifer Walker asked if the division was still conducting inspections. Sonja Stefaniw responded saying that inspections are no longer done on site to save time and money.
- d. Norman Johns asked if the Home Efficiency Leak repair Program is like the SAWS Plumbers to People Program. Sonja Stefaniw responded yes, the programs are very similar.
- e. Jennifer Walker pointed out that last year the utility hired a marketing company but the contract did not go through and wondered if the Utility will try to issue the contract again. Sonja Stefaniw responded saying that the Division had extended the MOU with LCRA to continue the Enviromedia marketing efforts and participation in the Water IQ campaign.

- f. Jennifer Walker said that she has not seen the marketing materials other than a billboard but also noted that she does not watch TV or listen to the radio. Sonja Stefaniw explained the massive marketing campaign utilized the approach that statistically reaches the highest target audience, namely via television and radio. She reported that the water conservation division spent \$750,000 on the last year's ad campaign and is authorized to spend \$71,000 through the end of June, an additional \$225,000 in the next fiscal year and \$250,000 in the third year on the current MOU with LCRA which provides marketing through Enviromedia.
- g. Jennifer Walker asked if the Enviromedia campaign will target Austin specifically. Sonja Stefaniw responded saying that the current emphasis is a cohesive regional message, citing that this will be a good way to reach a moving population and ensure that other surrounding areas are getting the same message. For instance, LCRA, Cedar Park, and others municipalities are on the same watering schedule.
- h. Rusty Osborne asked what the most cost effective message was. Sonja Stefaniw responded saying that marketing cost-effectiveness is dependent upon both the intended outcome of the marketing as well as the marketing medium used.. Sonja explained that television, radio, billboards, pump toppers, bus wraps, and so on are all successful for general awareness campaigns as well as for specific calls for action, depending on the specific messages. She pointed out that the local t.v. station Channel 8, the Enviromedia press releases and flyers combined this past Saturday for the successful toilet event in central Austin which accomplished in one day what it would normally take staff a month to accomplish.
- i. Rusty Osborne said that he has not seen bus advertisements or wraps. Sonja Stefaniw said that the marketing package included bus wraps on Queen buses, radio, TV, print, online marketing, pumptoppers, newsletters, and billboard efforts. She also stated that the Utility also conducted more advertising in Spanish newspapers than ever before.
- j. Norman Johns suggested a note to the public thanking them for conserving water in light of the recent water main break that was on the front page of the paper. He said that his neighbors feel their individual conservation efforts like following the watering schedule are dwarfed when the Utility experiences such large leaks. Daryl Slusher responded that the Division is gathering more information out about aging cast iron pipes and that letting the public know more about leak detection and response issues would be helpful. Sonja followed up by stating that she had met with PIO and pipeline management today to begin a more proactive education effort so the public understands all the measures the Utility is taking to address water leaks.

#### VIII. Water use and pumping update – Sonja Stefaniw, Division Manager

- a. Sonja Stefaniw provided a presentation which all present Task Force members received in hard-copy form. Electronic copies have also been distributed to the group.
- b. Rusty Osborne suggested that the utility consider the added cost of replacement when they would be excavating an area anyway.

- c. Susan Roth provided information on the American Society of Engineers who can provide an infrastructure report card for municipalities. She said that Georgetown did some marketing to the public about their rating. Susan Roth agreed to send information to Sonja Stefaniw.

Norman Johns moved to adjourn the meeting. Rusty Osborne seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:51 pm.

**The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 9<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm in the Waller Creek Center, Room 105.**