

Citizens Water Conservation Implementation Task Force

Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 16, 2009
625 E 10th Street, Room 105
Approved 4/6 as revised

Chair 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, Nora Mullarkey, and Jennifer Walker.

1. Citizen Communication
 - a. Bill Bunch of the Save Our Springs Alliance expressed concerns over spending the full amount budgeted for conservation and that AWU should pay more attention to leaks and water loss.
2. Approval of minutes from the January 12th meeting – Susan Butler, Chair
 - a. Norman Johns requested changes to section IV. 1.
 - b. Susan moved to approve the minutes with revisions; they were unanimously approved by all.
3. Cost of Service Presentation – Rusty Cobern, Division Manager, Financial Management Division
 - a. Rusty Cobern provided a Power Point presentation to the group on proposed cost of service changes.
 - b. The Utility will be focusing on increasing public involvement with surveys, a public committee and a public hearing.
 - c. City Council will receive a presentation in the Spring but due to the public process, the economic downturn, and the complexity of the billing process the new rates will not be ready for Council action until November. Margot Clarke pointed out this would be after watering season.
 - d. Implementation of the Cost of Service structure will be phased, with commercial and industrial customers phased- in first. Rate setting will be the final part of the process, after cost-side rates are fully evaluated.
 - e. Nora Mullarkey supported focusing on enforcement of the ordinance rather than the increased rates because there is a delay between water use and when a customer receives the bill. Jennifer Walker and Margot Clarke supported a conservation rate similar to the raised rates for larger trash containers.
 - f. Susan Butler supported delaying the implementation of Cost of Service until the billing issues have been worked out. She cited that it is important to ensure that customers understand their bills so that they can understand how they are using water.
4. Drought Contingency and 5-Year Water Conservation Plan Presentations – Rachel Clampffer, Conservation Program Coordinator
 - a. Rachel Clampffer explained that the Plans are due to the TCEQ by May 1st and it will go to the Resource Management Commission, Water and Wastewater Commission and City Council before they are submitted.

Rachel indicated that the data in these documents are based on conservative estimates.

- b. Susan Butler expressed that “Stage I” was misleading because we are always in a Stage I condition. Daryl Slusher agreed to look at changing this section of the document based on what TCEQ has requested.
- c. Jennifer Walker requested additional information as to how 25 MGD equates to acre feet. She also pointed out that AWU should set an ultimate conservation goal and that she would like the Task Force to set one. Daryl Slusher agreed to set these as a future agenda items.
- d. Nora Mullarkey suggested that an opportunity for public comment be given through a survey or through the website. Rachel Clampffer responded saying that the 2005 drafting of the document underwent an extensive public process and that the current public process is taking it through the Boards and Commissions. Jennifer Walker stated that the information needs to be provided more freely to make a better public process. Daryl Slusher agreed that AWU will look into posting the plans on the City of Austin website.
- e. Susan Butler pointed out to the group that this is a formal document required by the TCEQ and that, although the document might state “x”, it doesn’t mean that AWU cannot stretch to meet stricter goals.
- f. The CWCITF agreed to come back together to take a formal vote on the Plans on April 6th, 2009 at 5:30 in the Waller Creek Center, rm. 105. Written comments will be provided by members of the Task Force to Chairperson Susan Butler by March 30th.

5. Irrigation Standards Presentation – Rachel Clampffer, Conservation Program Coordinator

- a. Rachel Clampffer provided an update on proposed changes to irrigation standards based on HB 1656.
- b. Rachel explained that City of Austin is prepared to enforce the irrigation standards as they are but changes may be coming with the introduction of HB2339 which conflicts with the proposed plumbing code changes.

6. Education and training Efforts Presentation – Geneva Guerrero, Training Instructor

- a. Geneva Guerrero provided a presentation on Water Conservation’s education and training efforts.
- b. Geneva outlined the Division’s recent and upcoming events.
- c. Geneva explained the Division’s plan for outreach to high school youth, explaining that the plan is to target older students that have not previously received water conservation messaging.
- d. Nora Mullarkey requested that AWU work with the LCRA on these new efforts.

Norman Johns moved to adjourn the meeting. Rusty Osborne seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 6 at 5:30 pm in the Waller Creek Center, Room 105.