

DRAFT  
RECYCLING AD HOC COMMITTEE  
OCTOBER 27, 2020

10/27/2020 - Minutes

1. Declaration Of A Quorum And Call Meeting To Order

**Chair Joanie Steinhaus declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.**

2. Roll Call

**Present (via videoconference): Board Members Joanie Steinhaus, Cody Wright, Matt Havard, Stephanie Vasut, Susan Syler, Dorothy Trevino, and Paul Sivon; Ex Officio Dr. Jackie Cole; Cindy DeWitt, Director of Administration and Sanitation; Scott Van Slyke, Recycling Department; and Janelle Williams, City Secretary.**

3. Consider For Approval Minutes Of The August 11, 2020 Meeting.

**Susan Syler made a motion to approve Minutes of the August 11, 2020 meeting, seconded by Cody Wright. Unanimously approved.**

**For clarification, it is noted that the acceptance of motor oil has restarted, and the acceptance of cooking oil never stopped.**

4. Public Comments (Limited To Three Minutes Each)

**Rene Alegria, owner of Keeping It Green curbside service on the Island introduced himself to the committee.**

5. Brief Introduction Of Each Committee Member, Background And Why You Wanted To Serve

**Committee members Stephanie Vasut, Susan Syler, Dorothy Trevino, Cody Wright, Matt Havard, Paul Sivon, and Joanie Steinhaus introduced themselves and described why they want to serve on the committee. Council Member Dr. Jackie Cole thanked each of the members for wanting to serve on this committee. Scott Van Slyke, the City's new Recycling Coordinator, introduced himself to the committee. He reported that new processes are being put in place, new signage is being installed, and staff members are being trained so they understand the engagement and also the expectation involved. He reported that changes are being made daily. He is hoping to share his experience and also share the improvements being made at the recycling center. He reported that the City will be improving quality, processes, and operations.**

6. A Clear Statement Of What The City Would Like From Our Committee In Writing

**The committee would like a clear set of expectations that would provide clarity on what the City needs help with and that could be referred back to later. Scott Van Slyke will be working on six to eight guiding goals for the next meeting.**

7. Re-Examine Customer Education Efforts. Determine More Effective Ways To Communicate Changes To The Recycling Program

**Dr. Cole discussed with the board education efforts that the committee could work on. Scott discussed with the board current communications with customers. Temporary signage has been placed at the center, two self-sorting centers have been set up with seven different items, and two sets of signs for each commodity for the self-sorting and storage centers have been printed which will benefit communications with customers at the center. Discussion was held regarding education efforts at schools on the Island, social media efforts that could be implemented, signage at the recycling center with a single source phone number for questions, and a larger scale understanding of the impact of recycling and decreasing waste. It was clarified by staff that recycling from businesses is accepted at the center. Multiple levels of education need to be put in place onsite and prior to arriving onsite. This item will be placed on a future agenda for**

**further discussion.**

8. Review The Goals And Expectations Of The Citizens Of Galveston That Were Associated With The Approval Of Fees For Recycling
  - Evaluate how the goals of recycling were defined and how they are stewarded
  - Assess if the expectations and goals that underpinned funding are being met
  - Develop a plan to educate city residents about the costs of the program and what we believe it does for our city, and to think through possible ways to help recycling improve worst environmental problems in Galveston such as plastics getting into the Gulf

**The committee would like information on whether goals were defined when the budget for recycling was approved, and would also like history on the \$1.97 on the water bill when the fee was established. Staff will provide documentation supporting this information at the next meeting. The committee would also like to look into solutions for yard waste.**

9. If The Mission And Expectations For Recycling Today Should Be Different Than In The Past; Define That Mission  
**Discussed in a previous agenda item. No additional comments were added.**
10. Define Success For Recycling. How Should Success Be Defined And The Metrics That Can Be Measured And Stewarded  
**The meeting today is helping the committee to understanding priorities and goals. The next meeting will likely be an informational meeting as well. The committee missed four meeting during hurricane season. If needed, the committee could ask the City Council to extend the committee's term.**
11. Evaluate If The Value (Not Just Dollars) Of Recycling Is Reasonably Balanced With Cost  
**Scott Van Slyke reported that staff is refining processes and standard operating procedures that will bring in revenue. The committee would like to understand the value of recycling to the city, other than the dollar aspect of it, with the goal of recycling being to reduce the amount of waste tonnage.**
12. Review The Stewardship Process (Should A Board Be Formed?) (Additional Clarification From Paul)  
**Paul Sivan suggested forming a board that could possibly meet quarterly to steward the recycling program. The committee is interested in knowing how much tonnage is being saved from the landfills with recycling.**
13. Understand And Communicate Safety Issues; Especially Those Associated With Hazardous Materials Handling  
**Scott Van Slyke is working towards a job site visit and risk assessment that goes along with standard operating procedures. Scott has a hazard materials certification and handling of these materials will be tied into the standard operating procedures. Information on handling hazardous materials will also be provided to the public. The committee would like to discuss how hazardous materials are handled, the added risks when the center is unattended, dumping of materials and theft during non-attended hours, and appropriate hours for the center to be open to the public. City staff can make immediate decisions about changing hours and locking the center down. Dr. Cole suggested setting times that match daylight hours during the week and on the weekends. Scott would like to have a self-sorting center on the outside of the gate to deter dumping issues once the new hours are implemented.**
14. Define Possible Opportunities For Enhancement And/Or Cost Reduction; Work Through Each Material Class, Including Those Not Currently Accepted At The Recycling Center  
**This item was touched on indirectly in a previous agenda item.**
15. Identify Trends In Recycling And Possible Responses To Those Trends. This Includes An Explanation Of A

General Decrease In Tonnage Year To Year.

**The committee will be able to discuss this item in detail once the requested information is received from Cindy DeWitt.**

16. Develop An Integrated Set Of Recommendations In A Report To The City Council  
**The ultimate end goal of the committee would be to develop an integrated set of recommendations in a report to City Council.**

17. Work Toward Galveston Becoming A Zero Waste Community  
**The committee would like to work toward becoming a zero waste community.**

18. Questions For Staff

1. How much garbage is collected from the beaches? Does it all go to the landfill? the city pays? Improve the recycling bins on the beaches? Perhaps, if we could redirect those cans and bottles, we might save more on landfill costs.
2. What is the city's vision on recycling, the city's sense of potential?
3. City is understandable focused on process and finances, but why is it important to provide this service to Galvestonians?
4. Communicate and discuss the impact of constraints; such as limitations on using contractors, and if beneficial, how to remove those constraints.
5. Have more detailed discussion regarding the recycling process, including the role and issues with a transfer station and vendor capabilities.

**City staff will work on answering the committee's questions over the next month. The committee would like some guiding principles to work with from today's conversation, including communications with staff and the public, and working with city staff to determine the best path for recycling in Galveston.**

19. Request Agenda Items For Future Meetings

**On the next agenda, items should be prioritized according to what the committee needs to understand first. Once goals are in place, items could be filtered in a workable flow.**

**The committee requested the following information: (1) six to eight goals for the committee, (2) background information on the \$1.97 recycling charge and defined goals when the recycling budget was approved, (3) a flowchart that shows how the recycling center works, (4) a copy of recycling center expenditures (a copy of the income portion of the budget was already provided), (5) information from the Park Board related to garbage collected from the beaches, (6) a metrix in terms of tonnage - how much goes through the recycling and out of that tonnage, how much gets recycled (numbers and percentages).**

20. Schedule Future Meetings  
**The next meeting will be held on November 10, 2020.**

21. Adjournment  
**The meeting was adjourned at 2:41 p.m.**