

CITY OF ROCKPORT

MEETING MINUTES

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR WATER ISSUES

9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 15, 2014

Rockport City Hall, 622 E. Market Street

On this the 15th day of May 2014, the Environmental Committee For Water Issues of the City of Rockport, Aransas County, Texas convened at 9:30 a.m. at the regular meeting place in City Hall, and notice of meeting giving time, place, date and subject having been posted as described in V.T.C.A., Government Code § 551.041.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Chairman Tom Callan
Committee Member Ron Helmke
Committee Member Larry Hellums
Committee Member Virginia Hallinan

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) ABSENT

Committee Member Shawn Johnston

STAFF MEMBER(S) PRESENT

Art Smith, Public Works

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Commissioner Malcolm Diekow
Councilman Patrick Rios
Commissioner Betty Stiles

Opening Agenda

1. Call to order.

With a quorum of the Committee Members present, the Regular Meeting of the Environmental Committee For Water Issues was called to order by Tom Callan at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2014, in the Council Chambers of the Rockport City Hall, 622 E. Market Street, Rockport, Texas.

2. Citizens to be Heard.

At this time, comments will be taken from the audience on any subject matter that is not on the agenda. In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the Environmental Committee For Water Issues may not discuss or take action on any item which has not been posted on the agenda.

There were no citizens to be heard.

3. Deliberate and act on the March 20, 2014, meeting minutes.

Under the agenda item "Citizens to be Heard", it was requested that after the word biodegradable, "on further investigation bags were found to be composed of polypropylene" be added.

MOTION: Committee Member Hallinan moved to approve the March 20, 2014 meeting minutes with that modification. Committee Member Helmke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Deliberate on proposal for continued testing of Tule Creek.

The current city contract with the company that tests our water samples from Tule Creek for nitrates is up for renewal. Recommendations for continuing or abandoning this program were sought.

A discussion was had regarding nitrate levels along Tule Creek. Levels have been persistently elevated at a single site (site #5, outflow). The reason for this elevation is undetermined. Nitrate levels in the bay have remained markedly lower than at site #5, suggesting that this lone outlier (site #5) is not significant to the overall health of the system. In addition, it was noted that the personnel at the city wastewater treatment facility test their effluent for nitrate at the weir where the water leaves the plant and enters Tule Creek. This testing is done on a regular basis and there are no plans to discontinue the process. Testing of the waters of the bay for nitrate is also done on a scheduled basis by the NERR and will continue.

MOTION: Committee Member Helmke made a motion to cease testing at this time and reconsider the need for additional testing if prompted by concerning results from either the wastewater treatment plant or the NERR. Committee Member Hellums seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Hear and deliberate on a report regarding the Region N meeting of the Texas Water Development Board .

Commissioner Betty Stiles attended the Region N meeting with Committee Member, Larry Hellums and summarized the meeting content. Per Commissioner Stiles, the main focus of the meeting was a discussion of amending the 2011 Regional Water Plan to revise desalination from an alternative water management strategy to a recommended water management strategy. Water conservation was also discussed at the meeting. It was noted that water consumption was reduced 16% when the area was placed on a once weekly outdoor watering restriction.

A subsequent brief discussion was had on the importance of Region L in our area and the potential value of having a public voice at Region L meetings.

6. Hear and deliberate on a report concerning the ongoing activities of the Mission Aransas NERR.

Kristen Hicks was unavailable. Item was passed.

7. Hear and deliberate on a report regarding ongoing activities of the Aransas County Navigation District.

Aransas County Navigation District (ACND) Commissioner Malcolm Diekow reported that the Navigation District had signed a letter of intent with the Harbor Front Limited Partnership group

which would result in a property swap/realignment. The northern portion of the currently undeveloped harbor front would be ceded to the Harbor front Limited Partnership group and the southern end to the ACND. The ACND would then lease their portion to the Harbor Front Limited partnership. The General Land Office (GLO) is reviewing the planned land swap and will have to rule on the plan before it can be finalized. As part of the agreement, an esplanade of at least 20 ft in width would be built and extend from Market St to the Rockport Harbor ensuring public access to the waterfront. Some preliminary conceptual drawings have been made with a mixed use development anticipated.

8. Deliberate and act on selection of public outreach articles.

Public outreach articles which had been previously posted were handed out to the committee members. Committee members were asked to review the articles before the next meeting to consider reposting, amending the articles, or suggesting new topics of benefit to the community. Committee Member Virginia Hallinan was asked to investigate the possibility of posting articles of interest on the city website.

9. Deliberate on enhancements of the certification program for yard care companies.

Ginger Easton-Smith, Texas Agrilife Extension Agent, recommended altering the current program with addition of new topics such as ‘identifying common invasives’. She also recommended that consideration be given to repeating the certification program this Fall.

10. Deliberate lab results from the accelerated testing program of the Tule Creek and the Texas Beach Watch program.

No lab results were available for review.

11. Deliberate on possible agenda items for the June meeting.

Committee Member Virginia Hallinan asked whether the status of the impervious surface regulations which had been considered in the past might be a topic of merit. Chairman Callan said he would discuss this with the appropriate city personnel before the next meeting.

13. Adjournment.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Regular Meeting was adjourned at 10:55a.m.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
FOR WATER ISSUES



Tom Callan, Chairman

ATTEST:



Kendra Baird, Environmental Specialist
Public Works Department