

CITY OF ROCKPORT

MEETING MINUTES

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR WATER ISSUES

9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 20, 2014

Rockport City Hall, 622 E. Market Street

On this the 20th day of March 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

Kendra Baird, Environmental Specialist

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Mayor Wax
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 V. Hallinan at 9:35 a.m. on Thursday, March 20, 2014, in the Council Chambers of the Rockport City Hall, 622 E. Market Street, Rockport, Texas. Chairman Callan arrived shortly thereafter and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

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.

Aransas County Commissioner, Betty Stiles, addressed the committee to bring attention to a biodegradable bag which she felt was reasonably priced and could prove useful for multiple endeavors. Examples of proposed uses included gathering trash from the beach and carrying commodities.

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

MOTION: Committee Member Larry Hellums moved to approve the minutes as presented. Committee Member Ron Helmke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Deliberate on possible changes in preparation and publication of meeting minutes.

Chairman Callan proposed that V. Hallinan assist in drafting meeting minutes to allow for an earlier distribution to committee members. Minutes could then serve as a reminder of assigned tasks and encourage review of information relevant to upcoming agenda items.

5. Hear and deliberate on a report regarding ongoing activities of the Mission-Aransas NERR.

Ron Helmke, committee representative to MANERR, reminded the committee of the upcoming Texas Bays and Estuaries Meeting scheduled for April 23-24.

Ron reported that the UT/NERR blue crab larvae monitoring program which involved several sites within the MANERR boundary showed a paucity of blue crab larvae at the Rockport monitoring site and large numbers of larvae at the Horace Caldwell Pier site. Final analysis of the data is pending. In a separate study, people at various bay/estuary sites were asked to participate in a survey designed to explore what activities drew people to the coast, their expectations, actual experiences, and satisfaction level. Results of the survey were pending.

6. Hear and deliberate on a report concerning the ongoing activities of the Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries.

Jace Tunnell, Director of Research and Planning at CBBEP, briefly discussed 8 projects which had been submitted for possible funding and implementation through the CBBEP Water and Sediment Quality Implementation team. Projects were varied, including such topics as water quality studies, seagrass monitoring, evaluations of benthic fauna, and long term monitoring of salinity in coastal bay systems. In the next phase, the projects will be ranked by the 25 participating organizations in order of perceived value/importance as water/sediment quality monitors. In the final phase, projects will be accepted/eliminated and funding will be allocated.

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

Larry Hellums, committee representative to the ACND, attended the most recent Nav District meeting. Larry reported that discussions at the meeting revolved around the extension of the sewer system to Cove Harbor and public expressions of safety concerns related to boats running aground in the Little Bay ski basin and in the channel near Key Allegro yacht club.

8. Deliberate on possible involvement in the Texas Water Development Board Region N activities.

Chairman Callan reported that the Texas Water Board Region N is responsible for ensuring that our area receives the fresh water it needs. At present, Billy Dick, is one of our local representatives to the Board.

Tom Callan handed out a packet downloaded from their website for committee members to peruse and encouraged members to visit the website.

There was a brief discussion of desalination plants in the state. The possibility of visiting a desalination plant and receiving a tour was raised.

9. Deliberate on potential public outreach activities.

Chairman Callan asked for potential topics for outreach articles. Commissioner Stiles mentioned the biodegradable bags and Councilman Rios suggested desalination as an additional topic. V.Hallinan was tasked with resurrecting articles previously submitted to the Rockport Pilot for review, modification, and possible resubmission.

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

Lab results were reviewed. Nitrate measurements at the weir continue to hover around 20+. Final modifications of the wastewater treatment plant are expected to be completed later this Spring. Continued monitoring of nitrate levels is planned as a further reduction in nitrate levels at the weir is anticipated following completion of wastewater facility upgrades.

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

Item passed

13. Adjournment.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Regular Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
FOR WATER ISSUES**



Tom Callan, Chairman

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kendra Baird". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Kendra Baird, Environmental Specialist
Public Works Department