

CITY OF ROCKPORT

MEETING MINUTES

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR WATER ISSUES

2:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 9, 2015

Rockport City Hall, 622 E. Market Street

On this the 9th day of December 2015, the Environmental Committee For Water Issues of the City of Rockport, Aransas County, Texas convened at 2:00 p.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 Virginia Hallinan
Committee Member Ron Helmke
Committee Member Ginger Easton-Smith

COMMITTEE MEMBER(S) ABSENT

Committee Member Shawn Johnston

STAFF MEMBER(S) PRESENT

ELECTED OFFICIALS

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 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 9, 2015 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 October 15, 2015, meeting minutes.

MOTION: Committee Member Ron Helmke moved to approve the meeting minutes for October 15, 2015 as presented. Committee Member Ginger Easton-Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Deliberate on a status report regarding the Aransas County Groundwater Conservation District.

Chairman Tom Callan provided the committee with an update on the plans for an Aransas County Groundwater District approved by the Texas legislature. The function of the District would be to manage groundwater withdrawals over the long term (50 years) and prevent groundwater contamination. Identifying existing wells, setting limits for spacing between wells, and regulating withdrawals from larger wells would fall under the purview of the District. A formal vote by citizens on the issue is anticipated for May of this year. Citizens will also need to vote on funding of the entity with a penny tax being proposed, as permit fees alone would be insufficient to support the endeavor.

5. Deliberate and act on the next Lawn Care Workshop for the general public.

Dana Sjostrom, Mission Aransas NERR, discussed arrangements for the upcoming Lawn Care Workshop. The event will be held on February 10th at the Agrilife Extension Building from 8:30a.m.-11:00 a.m. Mark from the Nueces River Authority will talk on issues related to water quality. He will also bring a large model of our watershed area and demonstrate the effects of various human interventions on downstream areas. Kits will be made available to create rain barrels from pre-drilled barrels. Kendra Baird and Dana Sjostrom are investigating sources of the barrels which they hope to obtain by donation. The Environmental Committee for Water Issues will help offset the cost of the conversion kits, presently estimate at \$26.95 per kit. An attendance fee of \$5.00 paid in advance will be required of each family signing up for the Workshop. Dana will prepare a flyer announcing the planned Workshop and ensure school groups are aware of it. Chairman Callan suggested that the title of the workshop be changed to reflect the emphasis on Rain Barrels creation.

6. Deliberate on publication in *The Rockport Pilot* of the Committee's articles regarding water issues.

Committee Member Virginia Hallinan reported that the four articles the committee had prepared had been published. A fifth article submitted by Mary Van Zant, Research Associate, University of Texas had been forwarded to *The Rockport Pilot* without further involvement of the Committee.

7. Deliberate on a status report regarding the activities of the Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve (MANERR).

An Advisory Committee of local stake holders who would meet on an annual or semi-annual basis to discuss environmental issues of local concern is being planned. Dana Sjostrom will head the Committee for MANERR. Dana envisions a collaboration which will bring MANERR resources to the support of community needs for the advancement of all.

An organization called 'Smart Growth' offers grants to towns and communities to support the planning of various environmentally friendly projects. Dana suggested that we keep this organization in mind as a potential source for funding future projects.

8. Deliberate on the activities and partnership opportunities with the Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve's Citizen Science program.

Committee Member Virginia Hallinan reported that the equipment for the salinity and turbidity monitoring program had arrived and she had forwarded to Nicole Pringle, MANERR, background information on the project for review. A site to house the equipment for the project is still needed. The Bay Education Center had been considered but Tom Staley felt it wouldn't meet our needs as the site is locked if he and his associate are not in the building. Committee Member Virginia Hallinan will contact the Aransas County Navigation District and see if it would be feasible to store the equipment in the Kiosk or some other location within the beach park.

Chairman Callan expressed concern that the final design of the project meets scientific scrutiny so the data would be considered robust for future analysis. Committee member Virginia Hallinan informed the Committee that Dr. Ken Dunton has been involved in the drafting of the project and before the project is finalized someone from MANERR/University of Texas Marine Science Institute will have reviewed it. Salinity and turbidity results will be posted on-line on the MANERR website.

9. Deliberate on possible agenda items for the next meeting.

No new topics were suggested.

11. Adjournment.

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Regular Meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.

**ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
FOR WATER ISSUES**



Tom Callan, Chairman

ATTEST:



Kendra Baird, Environmental Specialist
Public Works Department