

Summary of Minutes

Water Conservation Advisory Council Meeting

Date: Wednesday August 13, 2008
Time: 10:30 am – 2:25 pm
Location: Wells Branch Community Center
2106 Klattenhoff
Austin, TX 78728

Meeting called by: C.E. Williams, Presiding Officer
Meeting Facilitators: TWDB support staff

Council Members in attendance are listed below:

Scott Swanson	Comer Tuck	Greg Carter	Vivien Allen	Gene Montgomery	Jim Parks
C. E. Williams	Kelly Hall	H. W. Bill Hoffman	Steven Bednarz	Richard Egg	Luana Buckner
Carole Baker	Karl Fennessey	Cindy Loeffler	Karen Guz	Gary Walker	Janet Adams
Donna Howe	Wilson Scaling	Wayne Halbert			

Alternates in place of Council Members:

Jennifer Walker sitting in for Ken Kramer	Dan Strub sitting in for Bill Hoffman
Dan Opdyke sitting in for Cindy Loeffler	Linda Christie sitting in for Jim Oliver

At 10:30 am the Council meeting was called to order by the Presiding Officer C.E. Williams (Appendix A). The presiding officer welcomed the Water Conservation Advisory Council (Council), the alternates, and the audience. The first item in the agenda was the approval of the previous council meeting minutes (Appendix B). The previous minutes were approved. The floor was opened for public comment for which there was none. The presiding officer turned the floor over to Karen Guz to introduce a guest speaker, Doug Evanson.

Doug Evanson, Chief Financial Officer at San Antonio Water System (SAWS), gave a presentation entitled Financing Public Water Supplies August 18, 2008. (Appendix C). The presentation discussed a financial perspective on how a supplier or utility can transition into conservation while maintaining financial stability. With a background in the electric and power generation industry, Doug pointed out that transitioning to conservation really required a non traditional financial perspective in the case of SAWS. Doug spoke about SAWS ability to reduce billable usage while customer population base increased, as well as the importance of the tiered rate structure they implemented. He also described some of the financial benefits and the effects of conservation initiatives. After the presentation concluded, the Council asked a few questions and held brief discussions relating to water operational costs for water suppliers, fixed charge components of a rate structure, segregation of “excess” revenues, and conservative budgeting practices.

The floor was turned over to Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) staff for an update on the current status of Water IQ public awareness program. It was reported that the TWDB' Water IQ web pages are being updated and strategically located in visible areas of the agency website. EnviroMedia and TWDB are working on the physical transfer of www.wateriq.org files over to TWDB with some source code language challenges. Additionally, after many revisions, staff has developed a simplified User Agreement for entities who want to have their web links on the TWDB' site.

There was a break in the meeting for a 40 minute lunch.

The chairs for each workgroup gave updates on each of the workgroup's activities and reviewed the status of their draft legislative reports (Appendix D). There was discussion for each draft and suggestions for word revisions or content arrangement were noted. Overall the chairs mentioned that they are working on refining the wording of their legislative recommendations and in particular the funding aspects. Most of the workgroups are continuing to finalize and compile supporting material or documents they will use as appendices. The Council spent some time discussing the prioritization of findings, and the incorporation of additional recommendations. The Council also discussed the recent RWPG Region C response letter and their draft scope of work (Appendix E). The Council will plan on trying to incorporate some range of funding estimates for Regional Water Planning Groups to accomplish the reporting task. It was suggested that the top priorities should be awareness and quantifying data. One new specific suggestion the Council wanted to include in the report was a data reporting pilot project effort to be able to test a reporting process on a limited scale before adopting a final statewide recommendation.

The next item on the agenda was a review of the draft introduction and background portions of the report. The Council provided some feedback on formatting and word usage (Appendix F).

The Council discussed the scheduling of conference calls and the next steps for finalizing the legislative report (Appendix G). TWDB staff will plan on providing a draft executive summary, introduction, background, and compiled workgroup reports by 8/29/08. At that time comments and suggestions can be provided to TWDB staff through 9/16/08 (Appendix F).

Council meeting was adjourned at 2:25 pm.