



Golden Triangle Small Business Advisory Committee

Small Business and Local Government Assistance Section

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Tuesday, May 6, 2008, 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM
Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission
Swan Room
www.sblga.info

Draft Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Candace Broucher	Jeff Rogers
Brian Christian	Joy Schultz
John Fears	Donna Swain
Zeke Hill	Karin Warren
Lori Palmer	

Open Forum

Candace Broucher asked John Fears about his issue with environmental fees, which was first brought up at the November 6, 2007 SBAC meeting. (The Comptroller sent out a letter to drycleaners stating that environmental fees collected from customers are taxable.) Mr. Fears said that his question had been answered to his satisfaction. Brian Christian appreciated that Mr. Fears brought up the issue, because it was then elevated to the entire Advocate readership when the article on environmental fees was published. Ms. Broucher then asked Jeff Rogers if his issue with TERP audits was resolved. (During the last SBAC meeting on February 5, 2008, Mr. Rogers informed the SBAC that he had to travel to the Houston regional office for a TERP audit.) Brian Christian stated that TERP audits are conducted from the chief auditor's office and not from the TERP program area. Mr. Rogers got a phone call from the chief auditor's office asking about his concerns with the program. He should not have to travel to Houston for any future TERP audits.

Brian Christian, Section Manager, Small Business and Local Government Assistance

Mr. Christian provided an update from Austin, beginning with air issues. The Beaumont area had been in nonattainment for the EPA 8-hour ozone standard until this past March, when it met the 85 ppb standard. Two weeks later, the EPA lowered the standard from 0.08 (2 decimal places; up to 0.084 met attainment) to 0.075 (3 decimal places.) Areas that do not meet the standard must put a State Implementation Plan (SIP) into effect. (Currently, Jefferson County does not meet this new standard; Beaumont is currently monitoring at 0.083 ppm ozone.) Now that the EPA has lowered the ozone standard, the next step is TCEQ's recommendation of nonattainment areas to the EPA, due in March of 2009. The EPA announces the new non-attainment areas in March 2010, and then TCEQ develops the SIPs and submits these in 2013. When the TCEQ develops a plan for an

area, air modeling is done to determine how to attain the new standard; the results are used to develop the SIP. The TCEQ can't regulate mobile sources of air pollutants; TERP is in place to encourage voluntary reductions in pollutants. Jeff Rogers asked how the new industry expansions would be affected by new air requirements; Mr. Christian replied that depending on what is necessary for attainment, many sources may be required to comply. Currently Beaumont is still in attainment and waiting on TCEQ recommendations. Ms. Broucher asked if there would be an air quality campaign with local governments; Mr. Christian will check to see what TCEQ is doing with local governments to reduce ozone [ACTION.] On June 11, the Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission (SETREP) will host a meeting on air redesignation and a maintenance plan for the air quality; TCEQ staff will be there for assistance. Mr. Christian encouraged everyone to sign up for SIP updates through Gov Delivery.

Mr. Christian then discussed agency news, including the retirement of the current executive director, Glenn Shankle, and the selection process for the new executive director. He also reminded the committee about the Compliance History and Penalty Policy work session to be held on May 9, which can be viewed live on the web cast.

Zeke Hill from the City of Beaumont asked if all air permits are reviewed every 5 years; Lori Palmer will check on this [ACTION].

Tap Water Quality Issues

Rob Rowell from the City of Groves wastewater treatment plant discussed issues affecting the quality of tap water. The positive aspects included the exceptional training available in the state of Texas for operators of public water systems and the annual water quality report that includes analyses for 12-18 parameters in the water supply. The negative aspects included downstream sources of water that could potentially contain pollutants from others, and the "primitive" water treatment methods (coagulation and filtration.) Activated carbon filters can be used by consumers to remove tastes and odors. Karin Warren pointed out that bottled water is not required to be tested. Someone brought up the issue of trace amounts of pharmaceuticals being found in many water supplies. Ms. Warren stated that at the levels the drugs are being detected, a person would need to consume 60,000 gallons of water per day to get the active ingredients of one pill. She also advised against disposing of pharmaceuticals in the sink or toilet since there currently aren't effective ways to treat these substances in wastewater. She also noted that hospitals are working on programs to accept unwanted prescription drugs from the public to prevent them from being disposed of in the wastewater collection system. A speaker from the drinking water program will be invited to the next meeting [ACTION].

NELAC Standards and Upcoming Events – Lori Palmer, SBAC Coordinator

Ms. Palmer told the committee about the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program standards. Beginning July 1, 2008 all laboratory data submitted to the TCEQ must come from an accredited lab. A list of accredited laboratories was provided. Ms. Palmer also informed the committee of upcoming events that may be of interest. These included a construction stormwater workshop hosted by the City of Beaumont on May 15; a Household Hazardous Waste collection event in Lumberton on

June 14; and a sales-tax holiday for certain Energy Star products in Texas from May 24-26 (Memorial Day Weekend.)

Candace thanked everyone for attending the meeting and adjourned.

Commissioners' Work Session and Agenda Schedule

May 7, 2008	9:30am	Agenda
May 9, 2008	9:30am	Work Session (Compliance History and Penalty Policy)
May 21, 2008	9:30am	Agenda
June 4, 2008	9:30am	Agenda
June 18, 2008	9:30am	Agenda
June 20, 2008	9:30am	Work Session
July 9, 2008	9:30am	Agenda
August 6, 2008	9:30am	Agenda
August 20, 2008	9:30am	Agenda