

AGENDA AND MINUTES
IRRIGATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL (IAC)
March 18, 2004
12100 Park 35 Circle
Bldg. A, Room 172
Austin, Texas
9:30 a.m.

Attendees:

*Council members - Gene Barnes, Willie Gossett, Dave Coleman, Carole Baker, Don Weiss, Jerry Lewis.
TCEQ staff - Gene Reagan, Sandra Hernandez, Bob Mann, Linda Saladino.
Visitors - Brock Lawson, John Shideler, Gary Salas, Joe H. Key, Doug Goodwin, Glenda Single, David Brannan, Mark Witt, John Morton.*

1. The Chairman of the Council will call the meeting to order.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Barnes at approximately 09:30 and introductions of attendees proceeded.

2. The Council will approve the minutes from the November 6, 2003 meeting.

Mr. Gossett made a motion to approve the minutes and the motion was seconded by Mr. Weiss. The council unanimously voted to approve the minutes as read.

3. The Council will hear a report from Mr. Rich Ali, Director of State Relations, The Irrigation Association.

Mr. Ali provided an in depth report of the purpose and activities of The Irrigation Association (IA). The report included their activities in the efforts to promote water conservation in landscape irrigation, and state and national legislative efforts. He described the association's contributions to education of the landscape irrigation industry.

4. Carole Baker will report on the work of the Water Conservation Implementation Task Force, primarily relating to outdoor water conservation.

Ms. Baker reported that the Task Force is moving forward by developing 31 BMP's that will be open for public comment June 1, 2004. The Task Force continues to address outdoor water conservation issues. The group is working toward developing a statewide advertising campaign to promote water conservation that will be similar to the "Don't Mess With Texas" campaign. Mr. David Brannon, a representative of the Texas Turf Irrigation Association (TTIA), asked if there will be legislation that will ensure the BMP's are followed. Ms. Baker stated there will be some accountability required. Possibly, a Water Conservation Advisory Council will be formed by the Texas Water Development Board.

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- 5. The TCEQ staff will discuss the use of teleconferencing for Council members during council meetings.**

Mr. Reagan reported teleconferencing can be used by members unable to personally attend the meetings. However, the council should attempt to maintain a quorum present at the meetings. Members who teleconference may vote on all issues.

- 6. The TCEQ staff will discuss replacement of the vacant public member position on the Council, and state rules relating to advisory councils.**

The TCEQ staff requested recommendations for this position. Mr. Barnes gave a brief overview of 30 TAC Chapter 5, relating to Advisory Committees and Groups. Mr. Gossett made a motion to add Mr. Lewis to the council's Education Committee. The nomination was seconded by Ms. Baker, and unanimously approved by the council.

- 7. The Council will discuss with staff the progress of the issuance of pocket cards to Backflow Prevention Assembly Testers.**

Mr. Reagan reported the issuance of the cards had been delayed due to some administrative problems. The goal is to send the cards along with other continuing education information to be mailed soon.

- 8. The Council will discuss with TCEQ staff, industry interest in changes in irrigation rules.**

Mr. Barnes stated that the council is actively gathering feedback from industry and other water related groups. Mr. Coleman encouraged industry to lead in these efforts, instead of reacting after the fact. Mr. Reagan stated industry is to be commended in their interest in rules changes. Ms. Baker stated there is an urgency to change the rules now rather than attempt to make these changes legislatively.

- 9. TCEQ staff will discuss enforcement activities.**

Staff provided an overview of the Program's enforcement activities. Mr. Coleman noted that some of the council had received a survey from the TCEQ regarding enforcement. He asked if they would know the results of the survey, and would it be possible for the Irrigation Program to have a similar survey. Staff advised Mr. Coleman his questions would be forwarded to an appropriate resource in the agency.

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10. Council, guests, and staff will discuss items of interest.

Mr. Morton, visitor and TTIA Board Member, reported on efforts within the irrigation industry to change the Public Drinking Water Rules, 30 TAC Chapter 290, to require more frequent testing of double check valves.

Mr. Barnes recommended a rule requirement for 8 hours continuing education in water conservation for each renewal period for licensed irrigators. He stated there are educational resources already available such as those provided by the IA. Mr. Salas, a Texas Turf Irrigation Association Board Member and industry representative from Austin, expressed his concern that his organization was not aware that this was being considered. He expressed that any training should be specific to Texas needs, and provided by providers from Texas. Mr. Barnes stated that water conservation in irrigation is basically the same everywhere, and there is no intention to specifically promote IA training in Texas. Ms. Saladino, TCEQ staff member, suggested a curriculum would need to be developed for a water conservation course to determine the necessary content of the training. She encouraged the industry to work together to utilize the best resources. Mr. Reagan stated the council should submit in writing any recommendations for specialized training.

12. Council will adjourn.

Mr. Barnes made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Weiss seconded the motion. Council adjourned.