

Houston Small Business Advisory Committee

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Draft Minutes for March 19, 2008

Fiscal Year 2008 Priorities

Provide input on TCEQ rules and policies to represent small businesses **and** strengthen partnerships with local elected officials.

Welcome and Introductions

Co-chair J. Kelly Mowry welcomed members and guest and presided over the meeting. The meeting was called to order at 10:25 AM., and thanked all participants for their attendance. Each of the participant introduced themselves and business/organization they represented.

Review Actions Items from December 20, 2007 Meeting

Action items (Review/report on SB 1265) assigned to Co-Chair Holmes was not discussed due to his absence. He is expected to report at the June meeting.

Subcommittee Report-Compliance History (CH)

This item was discussed by the entire group. Several members asked whether their CH ratings were “positively” affected by their participation in enhancement program i.e. C2, ISO, EMS, etc.

Christine Bergren, SBLGA Team Leader commented use of site visit (C2) program in compliance history rating determination would jeopardize the confidentiality of the site visit (C2) program. Region 12 Director Donna Phillips commented that poor performers can receive unannounced inspections of their facility. Ms Bergren mentioned that members will have an opportunity to comment at the Commissioners’ work session scheduled for April 11, 2008.

ACTION ITEM: Determine the Point/percentage value of Enhancement programs (EMS, ISO 14000)

ACTION ITEM: Email Commissioner work session date/times to members

Local Program Update

Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services (HCPHES) was represented by Ms Jennifer Wheeler. Harris County major workload is complaint driven totaling approx 5,000 complaints/year. In conjunction, the County collects approx 1,000 samples and issues about 2,000 violation notices per year. Though air complaints/violations are not major issues, the County employs an air toxics expert and hopes to provide outreach to local businesses with the goal of reducing toxic emissions. Ms Bergren mentioned that the Region 12 Small Business staff

can partner with them. Lastly, Ms Wheeler mentioned the public ability to view previous restaurant inspection on the Harris County webpage: www.hphes.org.

The City of Houston Stormwater manager Ms Dorene Hancock reported that the City Stormwater program conducts approx. 1500 inspections per year. Though no specific industry initiative is in place, the City is looking closely at natural stone cutters, rock crushers, and auto repair shops. The City of Pasadena will provide an update to the group at the June 18, 2008 meeting.

SPECIAL GUEST: Ms Roberta Skebo, Metropolitan Center University of Houston Small Business Development Center Network

Ms Skebo made a brief PowerPoint presentation focusing on economic development and some of the challenges facing small businesses. She mentioned the major challenge for small businesses is under capitalization. Co-chair Mowry inquired about innovations that will reduce electric power for his industry (metal finishing). Ms Skebo responded that a possible small business research grant may be obtained to explore this possibility.

ACTION ITEM: Produce an article for the Small Business Advocate explaining the programs and benefits offered by the Small Business Development Centers.

Austin Update

Christine Bergren, Team Leader, SBLGA.

Ms Bergren provides a brief overview of current and planned activities of the Small Business and Local Government Assistance staff. The leadership of the division met with the Compliance Assistance Panel (CAP) in Austin on February 28, 2008. Issues discussed included Air (SIP), AirCheck Texas, Texas Emission Reduction Program (TERP) and Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP). One innovative project that has gain attention is a “tax free” day to purchase recycled items. Projects that impact the Regions include: Petroleum Storage Tank workshop, Wastewater Recordkeeping and Reporting workshops, Drycleaner workshops, and Surface Coating workshops.

Question and Answer Session

Donna Phillips, Director, TCEQ Region 12 mentioned that Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) projects are now moving into the implementation phase of the program. While no details were given, some changes are possible. The group honored Member Gilbert Alfaro, High Tech Finishing, for receiving the City of Houston Pretreatment Program “Gold Award”. This prestigious award has been given to only four businesses in the City of Houston. This marks the third straight time High Tech has received this award.

Recap Action Items And Closing Remarks

Given by Co-Chair J Kelly Mowry.

See www.sblga.info to find a full list of compliance tools, or www.tceq.state.tx.us/assistance/sblga/sbac.html for membership lists, meeting dates and directions.

Next SBAC Meeting

June 18, 2008