

Houston Small Business Advisory Committee

Small Business and Local Government Assistance Section

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Wednesday September 16, 2009, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC) bldg, Conference Room C, 3555 Timmons Ln, Houston, Tx

www.sblga.info

Minutes

Priorities

- Provide input on TCEQ rules and policies to represent small businesses
- Strengthen partnerships with local elected officials

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 AM by Co-Chair J Kelly Mowry and Co-Chair Jack Holmes. Each of the 20 participants introduced themselves and the business/organization they represented.

Action Items

- Clarence Gray discussed results received from the Hurricane Ike survey. The survey sample was small but representative of small businesses in the area. According to survey respondents, the most harmful effect of the storm was the inability to conduct business due to lack of electrical power. An information sheet complete with local, state and federal contacts was passed out to meeting participants.
- SBLGA will research and provide a response to Leslie Magaha regarding if there is any water quality concern/discussion about an increase in Zebra Mussels now primarily located in north Texas waters.

Special Guest – Marsha Hill, Director, TCEQ Region 12

Ms Hill was promoted this year from her previous role as Assistant Region 12 Director. Her comments related to the challenges the Region faces this fiscal year

Water

Water availability on the Brazos River; effects of this year's drought; lack of an established water rights program

Air

Air pollutant watch list; Particulate matter in the Clinton Drive area.

Waste

Underground Storage Tank construction activities; Regulatory standards for release detection.

Ms Hill stated that she is willing to work with the Small Business and Local Government Assistance (SBLGA) Section and the Houston SBAC on any initiatives the Region may develop. She believes that outreach ahead of regulatory enforcement is a valuable tool to achieve compliance for small businesses.

Local Program Update

Local program partners provided brief comments regarding their current and future initiatives.

City of Pasadena - Sarah Metzger

Beginning October 1, 2009 the City is taking issues with storage yards for trucks engaging in transportation to and from the Port of Houston. These yards operate on dirt/grass surfaces which cause runoff issues during and subsequent to rain events. The City has opened its first recycle center (Preston at Pasadena Blvd).

City of Houston Storm water Management - Maverick Thigpen

The City has passed an ordinance requiring selected businesses to submit monitoring data annually basis even if the business is not required (by SIC code) to have a Texas Multi-Sector General Permit (MSGP); Their inspections reveal problems with businesses not properly managing (monitoring, report...) their storm water pollution prevention plans.

Harris County Public Health Environmental Services (HCPHES) - Marilyn Christian

Harris County recently established a permit and fees schedule (\$500) for salvage yards effective January 1, 2010.

Austin/Central Update - Will Wyman, Team Leader, Small Business and Local Government Assistance Section

Leadership changes in Austin include the selection of Dr. Bryan Shaw as the Chairman of the Commission and the selection of Mr Carlos Rubinstein as the new commissioner replacing Commissioner Larry Soward. Other areas of interest mentioned are: Sunset review of the Agency (18 month process); Air pollution watch list of 15 sites throughout Texas.; Annual border summit of some 400 El Paso Region stakeholders (soon to be replicated in the Harlingen and Laredo Regions); Nine Petroleum Storage Tank (PST) outreach events planned for this FY to promote PST Superguide; Troubled water intervention through various programs (FMY, Enviromentor, SEP, ORCA); Funding challenge for out of service UST's.

Open Session

SBAC member Leslie Magaha asked if there is any water quality concern/discussion about an increase in Zebra Mussels. Now primarily located in north Texas waters, she believes these mussels, which attach themselves to boat hulls, will spread to other parts of the state. SBLGA will research and provide her a response.

TCEQ Pollution Prevention Specialist Tom Collin announced the November 2009 Pollution Prevention Workshop will be held in Houston. Registration information can be found on the TCEQ website at www.tceq.state.tx.us

Co-Chair Jack Holmes raised some concerns about the length of time to obtain permits. A permit for one of his clients took over a year to get approved due to what he feels is a lack of internal TCEQ coordination.

Recap and Closing Comments

No action items were introduced and the meeting was adjourned by Co-chair Jack Holmes at 12:15 PM

Next Meeting

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