

Irrigation Advisory Council (IAC Minutes)

Date: Thursday, May 4, 2017

Time: 9:00 am

Location: Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, 12100 Park 35 Circle, Building A, 2nd Floor, Conference Room 202, Austin, Texas 78753

Call to Order (John DeCell) at 9:05 am. Roll Call: John DeCell, Justin Lewis, Brooke Furrh, Philip Hathaway, Robert Evans, Paul Ward, Mark Warden and Valerie Miller were present. Micah Reed was absent.

Introductions of the IAC and audience were made.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes. February 9, 2017 minutes were approved with no changes. Motion to approve was made by Philip Hathaway, motion seconded by Justin Lewis.

TCEQ Reports

- 1. TCEQ Office of Waste, Permitting and Registration Support, Occupational Licensing**
 - a. Linda Saladino explained Spanish exam progress. Tracking of pass rates may change due to the new exam.
 - b. John DeCell asked about pass rate for irrigator inspector exam. No applicants have passed this FY (see handout on exams).
- 2. TCEQ Office of Water Supply Division – Update from Backflow and Cross-Connection Control**
 - a. Al Fuentes-Cross Connection moved teams to the Response and Capacity Team and TOPs. New DAM for Cross Connection Control Programs, 8 hours long, is free to water systems. They've done one so far for City of Brenham, which the TCEQ Houston Regional Office attended.
 - b. RTCR level 2 assessment update given.
 - c. RG-478 update was given.
 - d. Introduction of Shannon Frazier as a member of Response and Capacity Team doing Cross-Connection and Backflow.
 - e. Concern about a training provider sharing incorrect information about double-checks not being allowed any longer statewide. (Melissa Keller clarified the actual calls). Linda Saladino stated that a written clarification for irrigators about this topic and

several others will be emailed to training providers in the near future.

3. **Office of Compliance and Enforcement, Enforcement Updates**
Michael De La Cruz gave an Enforcement update (see handout).
4. **Office of Legal Services, Litigation and Legal Updates**
 - a. Jess Robinson was asked a question about repeat violators. PSS and Enforcement see more repeat violators than Litigation.
 - b. Summary of the litigation cases given.
 - c. Possibilities of revocation was discussed with the IAC, Jess Robinson, and Jaya Zyman.
5. **Office of Compliance and Enforcement, Program Support Section**
 - a. Melissa Keller gave an update on PSS staffing and organization.
 - b. A brief legislative update was given on bills that impact irrigation or licenses.
 - c. Motion made by Brooke Furrh to support TCEQ regional office investigators citing irrigation violation rules in the field. Motion seconded by Philip Hathaway. IAC members will detail their support of this idea in writing (an email). Unanimous decision by IAC to support.
 - d. Micah Reed will be attending Building Official Conference with Melissa on May 23 in Arlington.

IAC Discussion and Action on Chapter 344 Rule Petition

1. Update on recommended changes to 344.30. License Required per legal staff
 - a. Paul Ward stated that plumbing inspectors are trained up to the standard. There is a full chapter in the plumbing and plumbing inspectors manual that addresses irrigation. He encouraged the council to adjust their attitude and expectations of the plumbers.
 - b. Add change to 344.63. Completion of Irrigation System Installation to remove the text “and include:” Follow up on section §344.80. Irrigator Advisory Council suggested changes Strike this portion.
 - i. Definitions
 - ii. Audit New proposed definition:
Irrigation Audit: A practice where an irrigation system is visually evaluated, analyzed for its potential to conserve water and performance in applying water; and site specific information is collected to determine the seasonal ET (evapotranspiration) based watering schedule of the landscape.
Motion to include: Philip, 2nd Valerie.
 - iii. Scheduling Irrigation scheduling: the process used to determine the correct frequency and duration of

watering. Factors used in calculating an efficient schedule include but are not limited to, the evapotranspiration rate, the precipitation rate, system performance, the plant root depth, the plant landscape coefficient factor, the soil type, soil infiltration rate, soil moisture holding capacity, allowable depletion, and local requirements, ordinances or regulations.

Motion: Bobby. Seconded: Valerie.

- iv. Permanent and Temporary Irrigation Systems No action.

Working Lunch Session

1. Continuation of discussion on who can review a plan John will check with Alicia on closeout of this item.
2. Update from ABPA conference in San Antonio. John attended in April.
3. Several IAC members attended Texas Water Day at the capitol.

IAC Committee Reports

1. Education, Training and Licensing Committee (Philip Hathaway) Philip.
Comments and adjustments made to the plan before the June 2017 subcommittee call.
 - a. Approved trainer meeting to be rescheduled.
 - b. Irrigation Journeyman program discussion.
 - c. Homeowner education videos continue to research
2. Enforcement, Planning and Legislative Committee (John DeCell)
 - a. John gave update. Irrigation is complaint driven.
 - b. Inspection of local programs, resulting in a new 2017 survey. Melissa to help create the online survey.
 - c. Irrigation checklist and sample design
 - d. Checklist and sample design to go on IAC and Irrigation pages.
3. Rules and IAC Administrative Committee (Justin Lewis)
Justin gave update.

Individuals Wishing to Address the Council that have signed-up

1. James Brakebill asked for a copy of the rule petition Texas Panhandle Irrigation Association. The council decided the petition should be finalized and only be shared through the TCEQ formal process.
2. Paul Ward addressed the council about the previous conversations regarding making irrigation systems high health hazard. He also asked that the council follow Robert's Rules of Order. Suggested that the council ask Alicia Ramirez if

the IAC can meet privately with the attorneys in a closed session. Also suggested an Ethics training for the IAC.

3. Brooke Furrh asked for case studies on double-checks failing.

Adjournment. Philip Hathaway moved to adjourn, Mark Warden seconded the motion. The next IAC meeting is Thursday August 10, 2017 at TCEQ Central Office.