

IRRIGATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL (IAC)

MEETING MINUTES

June 21, 2012
12100 Park 35 Circle, Building A, Room 202
9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

1. [Mr. Bell] Call to order.

Chairman Bell called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Attendees:

Council Members: David Bell, Karen Guz, Emilio Escobar (via telephone), Mark Froehlich, Deville Hubbard, David Kania, Nora Mullarkey, Rusty Tucker

TCEQ Staff: Russell Bond, Russ Gardner, Candy Garrett, Melissa Keller, Joseph Hildenbrand, June Ella Martinez, Ivan Messer, Linda Saladino, Jen Sembera, Sal Tahiri, Ericka Valladares, Meagan Warnacke

Visitors: Frank Chaloupka, Doug Goodwin, Amanda Griffin, John Griffin, Jerry Lewis, Gene Reagan, Andy Sherbondy, Jeff Walls, Paul Ward

Introduction of new Water Team Leader effective July 1, 2012, June Ella Martinez by Candy Garrett.

2. [Mr. Bell] Consider approval of minutes from the February 16, 2012 meeting.

Mr. Froehlich moved and Mr. Hubbard seconded a motion that the minutes be approved. The motion passed.

3. [Mr. Tucker] Enforcement and Legislative Committees Reports and Updates

Field Operations Support Division -

- a. Outreach

Ms. Guz was able to provide a booth for the Landscape Irrigation Program (LIP) at the Municipal League Conference. Ms. Keller handed out information about the program. A statement was made that the TCEQ LIP will have a booth at the Texas Nursery Landscape Association conference in August 2012. Mr. Froehlich expressed a desire to coordinate a booth for the TCEQ LIP potentially on July 18-20, 2012, at the Association of Water Board Directors.

Ms. Mullarkey stated that better written best management practices for irrigators be implemented; perhaps Ms. Keller could be enlisted to help.

Mr. Bell handed out RG-470 (Landscape Irrigator's Rule Compilation)) to Plumbing Inspectors at the Texas State Association of Plumbing Inspectors.

Ms. Garrett introduced Ms. Valladares and her work on the Craigslist Initiative to deter false advertising of Landscape Irrigation services. Ms. Keller then spoke more about the initiative. Mrs. Garrett also introduced Mr. Bond a summer intern working on the Water Team.

b. Enforcement Activities

Ms. Keller discussed a landscape irrigation investigation in the Austin area that resulted in at least sixteen (16) violations. Ms. Guz stressed a wish to stop home builders from contracting out to random/various Landscape Irrigators. Ms. Mullarkey concluded that more efficient outreach to builders was needed. Mr. Goodwin expressed his opinion that the reality is that the bid process must be repeated until desired results are achieved.

c. Update on where violators are getting their Continuing Education Credits (CEU) – Ms. Keller

Ms. Keller is still analyzing the results of her query and will provide the members a copy of the chart showing where Irrigators are receiving their CEU's prior to the next IAC meeting in November 2012.

4. [Mr. Hubbard] Education, Training and Licensing Committee Reports and Updates
Permitting and Registration Support Division

a. Licensing, Training, Testing, and Renewals - Ms. Saladino and Mr. Hubbard discussed reciprocity of licenses.

Ms. Warnacke stated the procedures are being enforced concerning breaks and cell phone usage in license testing rooms.

There was discussion amongst members and attendees concerning break down of classes so that certain CEU credits could be more representative of critical irrigation job tasks. [Note: There currently is no job analysis-curriculum based on consensus with program subject matter experts and the TCEQ Landscape Irrigation Program staff regarding rule compliance.]

Mr. Hubbard and Ms. Saladino considered Confined Spaces irrigation-specific renewal training.

Ms. Guz expressed concern about enforcement against a Master Gardener if a Master Gardner voluntarily helped a homeowner set or reset their controller.

Mr. Gardner stated that TCEQ would begin performing criminal background checks on current license holders and new license applicants. Mr. Gardner estimated this would be enacted within two weeks from June 21, 2012.

Statistics were requested from Ms. Warnacke for the November 2012 meeting regarding the English versus Spanish and English Technician exams.

While working with Ms. Saladino to review a water schedule created by a potential instructor, Mr. Hubbard discussed the use of Distribution Uniformity (DU). Based on IAC comments, Ms. Saladino stated that guidance could be given to training providers to discuss the concept of DU, but do not have students use DU to create watering schedules. Irrigators should use actual system and plant/turf performance to adjust the watering schedule.

b. Follow-up discussion concerning CEU credits for water conservation

Mr. Hubbard: What is the health of the CEU system? Mr. Lewis responded by stating that Sundance Training courses are adapted with every class because the audience changes.

Ms. Saladino has the draft of the curriculum guidance document listing the acceptable CEU topics as updated and detailed by the IAC members. Ms. Saladino stated the document would be made available when it was approved and final editing was completed. The IAC Education subcommittee included water conservation topics related to landscape irrigation. Mr. Hubbard "encouraged" that it be completed or be available in the 2012 calendar year. Mr. Hubbard moved and Ms. Guz seconded a motion that an updated CEU guidance document be completed in the 2012 calendar year and be made available by the internet and publications. The motion passed.

Lunch - Mr. Bell adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m. /called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

5. [Mr. Bell] Hear from individuals wishing to address the Council

Frank Chaplounka commented on the work of the Enforcement of Landscape Irrigation regulations.

6. [Ms. Guz] Rules and Administrative Committee Reports and Updates (15 minutes)

Ms. Guz stated that she wanted to know what the definition of microspray. Mr. Swanson then stated the definition of microspray.

Mr. Bell stated that clarification to all irrigators was needed after a discussion of the 48 inch rule concerning the minimum distance between hardscapes. The concern was that irrigators

and municipalities were misinterpreting the rule to mean that if the width was less than 48 inches then drip irrigation would have to be installed instead of potential non-traditional sprays or rotary heads.

7. [Mr. Bell] Receive, Discuss and Act on Other Items of Interest to IAC

Recognition of Mr. Phil Lack – Landscape Irrigator License #454. Mr. Lack was issued an honorary license earlier in the month.

Future IAC Meetings:

Upcoming meeting on Thursday, November 15, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. at:
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
12100 Park 35 Circle
Austin, Texas
Building B, Room 201A

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.