

IRRIGATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL (IAC)

November 14, 2008

Meeting Minutes

12100 Park 35 Circle, Building F, Room 2210

Austin, Texas

9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The meeting of the Council began at 9:30 a.m.

Attendees:

Council Members: Carole Baker, Doug Goodwin, Deville Hubbard, Emilio Escobar, Chairman Jerry Lewis, Michael Murr, Don Weiss and Suzy Santo (by telephone). Absent: David Bell

TCEQ Staff: Tony Franco, Allan Vargas, Andy Gardner, Candy Garrett, Richard Allen and Tiffany Shelly.

Visitors: Clyda Loys Haney, Nelson Haney, Larry Dee Walls, Jr., Mrs. Larry Dee Walls, Gene Reagan, Doug Christensen, Jeff Walls, Warren Gorowitz, Kendall Chilek, Todd Magatagan and Austin Smith.

1. Call to order.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Lewis.

2. Consider approval of minutes from the August 15, 2008 meeting.

The Council suggested changes to the minutes. Chairman Lewis wanted clarity on the section that talked about the Installer license not being grandfathered.

Mr. Goodwin noted that the sentence "Mr. Goodwin asked if a licensed irrigator could test once for a Technician license without taking the courses" should replace the word irrigator with installer.

Chairman Lewis made changes to item 7, "Conduct of IAC Committees".

3. Special Recognitions.

Chairman Lewis noted the importance of the Honorary Irrigator title and explained its meaning. Mr. Weiss presented Ms. Haney with an Honorary Irrigator certificate. Mr. Goodwin presented Mr. Walls, Jr. with an Honorary

Irrigator certificate. Chairman Lewis presented Mrs. Walls with an Honorary Irrigator certificate for her deceased husband.

4. Hear from individuals wishing to address the Council.

Mr. Weiss announced the nomination of his son as President of the San Antonio Irrigation Association and confirmed that this would not cause a conflict of interest because his son will not take office until the 2nd week of January.

Chairman Lewis suggested that visitors and staff introduce themselves.

Mr. Franco reported on the progress of the Landscape Irrigation Program and future goals for the program. Mr. Murr noted that the Council should discuss ways to share knowledge of the new rules to the public.

5. Receive, Discuss and Act on Staff Reports.

Mr. Gardner announced that Ms. Garrett is now the official Team Leader of the Landscape Irrigation Program. Mr. Gardner reported on TCEQ staff vacancies.

Ms. Garrett reported on outreach activities, including past meetings and future meetings. Mr. Escobar, who attended the meeting in Pharr, spoke about the success of the presentation and the lack of attendance. Mr. Franco spoke to Mr. Escobar about working together to educate irrigator's in the area on water conservation, stating that the Valley is one area that we really need to work on. Mr. Murr asked if rule publications are including facts about the condition of water in the state. Mr. Hubbard noted a web site called U.S. Drought Monitor that shows central Texas' water situation.

Ms. Garrett explained the letter that TCEQ received asking for clarification on several issues. The letter asked about licensing requirements for pump installers, and expanded that to include the public raw water issue, then asked for clarification on standards on domestic wells. Ms. Garrett concluded that after speaking with several sources, the response was that individuals installing pumps in a raw water body do not have to hold an irrigator's license.

Ms. Garrett spoke about an issue concerning private raw water.

Ms. Garrett spoke about House Bill 1656 exemptions on domestic wells. Ms. Garrett confirmed that there are no requirements for domestic wells; however Chapter 290 rules on backflow prevention still apply.

Mr. Gardner discussed IAC travel budget.

Ms. Garrett discussed the possibility of doing a test run on the Irrigation Inspector exam, using individuals who are interested in holding the license to look for any questions that appear to be unclear. Mr. Goodwin reported on an article from the

Austin Lawn Sprinkler Association about the Irrigation Inspector exam being placed on hold. TCEQ staff members dispelled this information. Mr. Magatagan suggested that if TCEQ releases a statement with the correct information, local newsletters would publish it.

Ms. Garrett discussed the progress of the Irrigation Technician license. Ms. Garrett stated that the draft exam should be complete and ready for review by mid-December, with a Spanish translation later.

Ms. Garrett discussed Installer licensing and renewals. Ms. Garrett noted that information is being sent to newly licensed Installers about when the license will expire.

Ms. Garrett gave an update on irrigator licensing, training, testing and renewal.

Ms. Garrett reported on enforcement actions by discussing NOV's and NOE's in the past year. There were 49 NOV's issued and 32 NOE's issued in fiscal year 2008. Ms. Garrett noted that since the beginning of fiscal year 2009, there has been 10 NOV's issued and 1 NOE issued.

Ms. Garrett reported on IAC replacements and stated that the item is still waiting to be put on agenda. Mr. Gardner reassured the Council that the item should be on agenda before February.

Ms. Garrett reported on the status of IAC requests to EPA regarding the Water Sense program, stating that the letter has been sent to Mayor Greene and staff is waiting on a response.

6. Receive, Discuss and Act on Committee Reports.

Chairman Lewis discussed several concerns with the new Chapter 344 rules.

Mr. Goodwin reported on the Education Committee's progress, stating that the Committee is ahead of schedule.

Ms. Baker reported on legislative issues.

Mr. Weiss reported on the Tiered License Sub-Committee. Mr. Weiss stated that there is a tiered license that went through and the Committee feels that the hands-on portion of the exam is very important. The Committee recommended a High School diploma or GED to be licensed, that the exemption for engineers and architects be removed, and determined the apprenticeship program is not a good idea. Mr. Hubbard made a motion to move the draft of the Tiered License Sub-Committee's report to TCEQ staff for comments at the next IAC meeting. Mr. Goodwin made a second and all approved.

Mr. Hubbard reported on the Acceptable Topics for Irrigation CEU's document, distributing a draft that has been worked on most of the year, noting that there is a difference from the original outline. Mr. Hubbard noted that there was significant contribution from George Boothe. Mr. Goodwin made a motion to accept the report and move the draft to TCEQ staff for review. All Council members approved.

7. IAC report to TCEQ.

Chairman Lewis prepared the annual report to TCEQ and it was distributed it to Council members. Chairman Lewis discussed the "Future Goals" section of the report. Chairman Lewis made a motion to move the report to TCEQ staff and all approved. Mr. Goodwin asked about the link to the Texas Municipal League. Staff replied that the link is on the web site.

8. Receive Discuss and Act on New Business and additional items of interest.

Mr. Magatagan asked staff to include clarification about stamp requirements for individuals who hold multiple licenses in the "Questions and Answers for Irrigators" document.

Mr. Hubbard noted that North Carolina now has a licensed irrigator program.

9. Elect 2009 IAC Chairman.

Mr. Weiss made a motion to nominate Mr. Goodwin as the 2009 IAC Chairman. Ms. Baker seconded the motion. Ms. Baker made a motion to nominate Mr. Hubbard as Vice Chair. Mr. Weiss seconded the motion and the Council approved both nominations.

Mr. Goodwin presented plaques to Ms. Baker, Mr. Weiss and Chairman Lewis for their service on the IAC.

Mr. Goodwin suggested that the next meeting be on February 25, 2009 and that the following meetings be set at that meeting.

10. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.