

City of Amarillo
Environmental Task Force

On July 18, 2019, the Environmental Task Force met at 6:00 P.M. in Conference Room 306 at Amarillo City Hall, 601 S. Buchanan Ave., with the following members present:

MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD	NO. MEETINGS ATTENDED
Charlie Graham	Y	22	12
Michael Graham	Y	4	3
John Kiehl	N	22	16
Howard Smith	Y	11	10
Ryan Zimmer	Y	3	2
Roger Gloe	Y	3	2
EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS/STAFF			
Blair Snow	Y		
Donnie Hooper	N		

The following guests were also present:

Jonathan Gresham, Director of Utilities
Julie Herman, Coordinator of Public Works
Damen Ratliff, Assistant Director of Utilities
Courtney White - City Attorney I

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 P.M., and the following items of business were conducted:

2. CONSIDER AND APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING HELD MAY 16, 2019

Motion to approve the May 16, 2019 minutes as written was made by Charlie Graham, seconded by Howard Smith and passed with a 5-0 vote.

3. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS

Jonathan Gresham, Director of Utilities and Damen Ratliff discussed the following water conservation efforts being made by the City of Amarillo Utilities Department:

- **Rebate Programs:** Rain/Freeze Sensor Rebate Program offers customers a \$50 utility bill credit for installing rain/freeze sensors on sprinkler systems. Rain Barrel Rebate Program offers customers a credit of up to half of the cost (\$20) for using 1 rain barrel and a credit of up to half of the cost (\$40) for using 2 rain barrels. Customers turn in paperwork at the Utilities Billing office. The Task Force asked about advertising these programs on social media and with billing statements; neither are being done at this time.
- **Water Conservation Plan:** Required to be issued every 5 years. Last plan was effective in 2017. The Utilities Department welcomes ideas from the Board to add to the plan in 2022.
- **City of Amarillo Website:** The Utilities Department maintains 4 pages on the website that address Amarillo Water (basics); Indoor Watering Tips; Irrigation Tips; and Efficient Watering of Lawns.
- **Every Drop Counts Program:** A poster contest for students in kindergarten through 12th grade is held annually, and the top 13 entries win prizes and artwork included in the calendar. The grand prize winner this year will get to be "Meteorologist for a Day" with local media. To date, there has been a 150% increase in the number of entries in the poster contest.
- **Utilities Program Manager:** The Utilities Department is in the process of hiring a Utilities Program Manager to focus on Water Conservation and provide a better presence and customer outreach.
- **Community Outreach:** Utilities Department personnel attend Business Connection, Earth Day, High Noon on the Square and visit local schools to raise awareness and educate the public about water conservation.

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- **Reclaimed Water Sales:** The Utilities Department has been selling reclaimed water (approximately 3 million gallons/year) to Excel Energy since the 1950s. Excel uses the water in cooling towers and crop irrigation.
- **Related Discussion:** Included weather-related use/revenue, drought contingency and possible tier rate increases to increase funding (Task Force would like to review and would require City Council approval).

4. DISCUSS AND CONSIDER CITIZEN SURVEY

- Task Force members reviewed the sample questions provided by John Kiehl, and discussion included: What type of questions to ask, what topics to cover, how in-depth the survey should be, commercial or residential and what to do with the information.
- Task Force members decided to focus on recyclables having value (plastics, cardboard, aluminum cans, etc.) and keep the survey short.
- It was noted that a citizens' survey was conducted previously, and the majority said they were interested in recycling but were not willing to pay a fee for it.
- Places must be found to re-use materials. KB Recycling is doing a cardboard program free of charge. Adam will attend the next meeting to discuss.
- The Task Force decided to ask John Kiehl to develop a short survey. The topic was tabled until the next meeting.

5. RECEIVE REPORT ON COARDBOARD RECYCLING PILOT PROGRAM

- Adam Schaer with KB Recycling was unable to attend.
- This discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

6. DISCUSS AND CONSIDER CONTENT FOR RECYCLING WEBSITE

- The Task Force would like the cardboard recycling pilot program information added to the website.
- The Task Force would like the website to be linked to Instagram (also recommended for water conservation).

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

Courtney White noted that all Task Force members are required to complete "Open Meetings Act" training (<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/open-meetings-act-training>) and send certificates to the City Secretary upon completion.

8. SET AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

1. Ideas for Survey
2. Report on KB
3. Television and radio public service announcements

9. ANNOUNCEMENT - NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Task Force meeting will be on August 15, 2019 at 6:00pm in City Hall, Room 306.

10. ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to be conducted, the meeting adjourned at 7:05 P.M.