

City of Amarillo
Environmental Task Force

On January 21, 2021, the Environmental Task Force met remotely via Zoom at 12:00 P.M., with the following members present:

MEMBERS	PRESENT	NO. MEETINGS HELD	NO. MEETINGS ATTENDED
Tim Dillon	Y	8	8
Roger Gloe	Y	13	12
David Moody	Y	8	8
Adam Schaer	Y	8	4
Howard Smith	Y	21	18
Ryan Zimmer	Y	13	12
EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS/STAFF			
Blair Snow	Y		
Donny Hooper	Y		

The following guests were also present:

Julie Allegretti, Utilities Program Manager
Jonathan Gresham, Director of Utilities
Julie Herman, Public Works Program Coordinator
Damen Ratliff, Assistant Director of Utilities
Will Smith, Solid Waste Superintendent
Courtney White - City Attorney I

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 P.M. by Ryan Zimmer, Chairman. The following items of business were conducted:

1. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

2. MINUTES

Motion to approve the December 17, 2020 minutes as written was made by Adam Schaer, seconded by Howard Smith. Roger Gloe noted a minor change to item 4 regarding the old rebate program that was incorporated. The revised minutes passed with a 6-0 vote.

3. DISCUSS WATER CONSERVATION ORDINANCE

Julie Allegretti provided a handout that detailed the proposed changes to the ordinance. Proposed warnings and fines were agreed to previously. David Moody commented on the wording “excessive amounts of water from any sources”, noting that residential swimming pools and other water sources are allowed. Julie Allegretti noted that the ordinance allows for the use of discretion. The board agreed to leave the restrictions as written. The draft ordinance will be vetted, reviewed by Legal and discussed with various groups to obtain feedback.

4. DISCUSS AND CONSIDER A RECOMMENDATION FOR CITY STAFF TO PURSUE REVISIONS TO TIERED RATE STRUCTURE

Julie Allegretti discussed tiered rates and usage (residential and commercial) and stated that tiered rates curb usage and promote conservation. People can be educated to change the way they water and be more efficient. Jonathan Gresham stated that a request will be made in the summer and sent for City Council approval. Proposed rate changes must go through the budget process October 1, 2021. Roger Gloe expressed concern that the increase be based on cost. A motion that the task force recommend for City staff to pursue revisions to the tiered rate structure was made by Adam Schaer and seconded by Tim. It was approved 6-0. City staff will report progress at the next task force meeting.

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5. DISCUSS WIFI SMART WATER CONTROLLERS

Ryan Zimmer discussed smart controllers that monitor weather and temperature and report watering. This alleviates the need to turn the system on and off. The company Ryan Zimmer contacted partners with cities and offers reduced rates through a city website that they set up. Everything is done online and linked to the city. It is high tech but simple. This is easier than rain sensors. Tutorials are offered. There are a lot of good, new ideas and companies that want to help municipalities. Jonathan Gresham noted that Julie Allegretti is looking at the old rain sensor program to determine the funding source and options. Roger Gloe expressed a concern that customers are not comfortable with the technology. Education is key. Some cities have a paid staff member (Water Educator) who educates people on water conservation. David Moody expressed a concern regarding the cost of smart water controllers. Ryan Zimmer will send more information on the smart water controllers to Julie Allegretti and the discussion will continue.

6. DISCUSS COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL COMPOSTING

Will Smith reported the High Plains Food Bank would like to continue participating in the composting program and he is providing a new container by February 1, 2021. The Greenways HOA would like the grass collection container to be placed at the landscape contractor's facility at McCormick and Western. Ryan Zimmer will deliver a container to that location. There is a high level of interest in moving forward with the pilot program. Will Smith has made good progress. Ryan Zimmer will be taking a load of tea leaves for composting tomorrow (weight requested by Will Smith). It was noted that containers must be placed in accessible locations because contractors will not go out of their way to participate. Education regarding the value of the program is needed.

7. SET DATE AND AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environmental Task Force will be held remotely via Zoom on Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 12:00 PM. Agenda items will include: Discuss water conservation incentives and requirement changes (Julie Allegretti); Discuss progress on tiered rate structure changes (Julie Allegretti); Discuss commercial and residential composting (Will Smith); and elect task force chairperson and vice chairperson.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 PM.