



City of Dallas

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
Dallas City Hall – 1500 Marilla, L1FN Conference Room “C”
Regular Meeting
March 2, 2009
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

MINUTES

Members Present

Sheron C. Patterson
Sylvia Lagos
Diane Benjamin
Cheryl S. Camin
Keith Kwoh
Meredith McQuiston
Russell Scott
Linda Sharp
Susan R. Rader
Kedra Williams
David J. Metzler

Members Absent

Tad Heimburger
Reginald Seastrunk
Mandy Valasek
Mary Warner

Staff Present

Councilmember Linda Koop
Eric Griffin, Interim Director, OEQ
Kevin Lefebvre, OEQ
David Howe, CAO
Dilip R. Shah, Assistant Director, EHS
Lilia V. Gonzalez, EHS

Public Present

None

Minutes

Ms. Sheron C. Patterson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. Minutes from the February 9, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

Goals and Objectives for 2009

Councilmember Linda Koop

Councilmember Linda Koop recommended that the commission pursue the Community Garden Program as an outreach program for the community and children to learn about healthy living. She stated that it would give children an opportunity to live a healthier life.

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Mrs. Koop mentioned that City Council along with Baylor Health Care started an outreach clinic in conjunction with the Juanita Craft Recreation Center for children and adults. In addition, citizens can get checked and receive information on healthy living.

She also mentioned that she would like a recommendation from the commission on the ISWM.

Ms. Cheryl Camin asked for Mrs. Koop thoughts on having restaurants disclose fat grams and calories on their menus. Mrs. Koop said that the idea could work on a voluntary basis and by using incremental steps. She believes that posting that information is a step forward to the healthy living initiative. Mrs. Koop suggested that the commission contact the larger fast food chains and ask when that information will be provided to the consumer on a regular basis on their menus.

Mrs. Linda Sharp informed Mrs. Koop that another topic discussed in the past was the plastic bag issue. Mrs. Sharp asked Mrs. Koop if there was something that the commission could do to have people recycle the plastic bags. Mrs. Koop stated that a dialogue should be started with major grocery stores like Wal-Mart, Target, Whole Foods, etc. to create a recycling program in collaboration with the City. She suggested that the commission invite major grocery store management to meet and come up with different ideas to make a difference in the planet.

Mrs. Diane Benjamin suggested an incentive for hybrid vehicles that park downtown to have a free parking area specifically designated for that type of vehicle. Mrs. Koop informed the commission that the Council will be discussing parking downtown. Council may discuss an incentive for hybrid vehicles that park downtown at a later date.

Community Gardeners Initiative

Eric Griffin, Interim Director, OEQ

Mr. Eric Griffin informed the commission that anti-idling is included in Senate Bill 16. The bill would extend anti-idling throughout the entire year instead of just the ozone season. Ms. Camin informed Mr. Griffin that the commission was going to write a letter in support of the initiative. Mr. Griffin recommended that the commission forward the support letter to Intergovernmental Services. Intergovernmental Services records all the letters by groups and agencies and include them in the packet that will be available when the bill goes to a hearing.

Mr. Griffin stated that recycling in schools is on a school-by-school basic because there is no district policy enforcing recycling. He informed the commission that the city has an excellent program called the Environmental Education Initiative (EEI) with Dallas Water

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Utility and Sanitation Services. The two modules are recycling and water conservation for grades K-12. Dallas Water Utilities said that other modules could be included in EEI.

Dr. Sheron Patterson asked if there is a role for the commission and what is already been doing with plastic bags. The plastic bag issue will be on the Sustainable Community Conference agenda that will be held at the Sheraton Hotel on April 9 – 11. Mr. Griffin will let the commission know of the next taskforce meeting.

Mr. Griffin informed the commission that there is a program in place that put community gardens on city property. The problem with the initiative is how to deal with privately owned property. As of now, you can not do a community garden on a privately owned property based on land use facility. The city does not have an appropriate land use unless they change the land use and insert that it in all the zoning categories that are thought to be appropriate. Mr. Griffin will present the comprehensive policy proposal to the commission at a later date.

Mayoral Environmental Awards

Eric Lefebvre, Office of Environmental Quality

Mr. Eric Lefebvre informed the commission that the Mayoral Environmental Awards ceremony was moved to Wednesday, April 8 at 9:00 a.m. during Council. Breakfast will be provided in the flag room at 8:00 a.m. Mr. Lefebvre mentioned that having sponsors would help out a great deal. Mrs. Sylvia Lagos suggested that each commission member meet with their councilperson and ask them to become a sponsor.

Mr. Lefebvre also informed the commission that Mayor Tom Leppert is participating in an Earth Hour Event in an effort to call attention to climate change and to raise awareness on energy efficiency. The event will be held on Saturday, March 28th, 2009 from 8:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. where the city's facility lighting will be out during that time. Mayor Leppert will also present a proclamation on the event on Wednesday, March 4, 2009 during Council. The city is working on partnering with businesses in the Central Business District to get their cooperation as well. Councilwoman Angela Hunt is on board with the initiative.

Commission Reports

Dr. Patterson asked the commission on their thoughts in compiling a list of items to work on for 2009 and nominating a liaison from the commission for that particular item. She stated that instead of spending an excessive amount of time listening to briefings all the time the liaison would attend the meetings and give updates to the commission. The commission agreed and will list the items at the next commission meeting.

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The annual report will be discussed at the next meeting and Dr. Patterson will have the draft ready for review.

Staff Reports

None

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.