

## Irrigator Advisory Council Meeting

Date: November 7, 2013, 9:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Place: Austin Convention Center Room 15

500 East Cesar Chavez Street

Austin, Texas 78701

Chairperson: Karen Guz calls the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m.

**Agenda Topic:** Introductions and consideration of June 27, 2013, meeting minutes

Decision: Approved.

**Agenda Topic:** Enforcement and Legislative Committees Reports and Updates

*Subtopic:* Council Member Rusty Tucker could not attend the meeting. Council Member David Kahia stated in the future Council Member Tucker would like to continue to look at the correlation between CEUs and violation data.

Decision/discussion: With more data there may be a correlation found in the future.

**Agenda Topic:** TCEQ Program Support Update

Subtopic: Mr. Ross Gilfillan presented the FY 2013 Enforcement Data update.

Discussion: The Council requested that a member of TCEQ's legal department be present for the next meeting to answer long standing questions about enforcement. Also, the Council wanted to know how the Texas Plumbing Board handles license violations for the next meeting.

Subtopic: New TCEQ Landscape Irrigation Program staff member

Discussion: Mr. Andre Clark was introduced to the Council Members and meeting attendees.

Subtopic: Local Irrigation Ordinances

Discussion: The state of local irrigation ordinances and the need for greater enforcement at the local level were discussed. There needs to be more local citations in place to enforce at the local level. The implementation of a local irrigation ordinance survey through the city managers' offices would help move this forward.

Decision: A TCEQ Staff update on this will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

**Agenda Topic:** Education, Training and Licensing Committee Reports and Updates

Subtopic: Irrigation education and course work

Discussion: The need for providers to provide specific education courses to address chronic violations of the 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 344 rules was discussed. Mr. Jerry Lewis and Mr. Jeff Walls added to the discussion that the courses providers teach are market driven. If a class does not sell then they cannot continue to teach the course. Also, they added the guidelines TCEQ has for getting new classes qualified as a course are too restrictive and cumbersome; resulting in a lack of new course creation by education providers. Several meeting attendees added it appears to be less cumbersome to develop a class for expos and symposiums.

Decision: The IAC agreed that the system should be streamlined if possible and comment was requested of TCEQ Licensing Staff.

Subtopic: TCEQ Curriculum Guidance: *Acceptable Topics for Continuing Education Courses* (for the Landscape Irrigation Program)

The Committee approved the TCEQ Curriculum Guidance: *Acceptable Topics for Continuing Education Courses* for the Landscape Irrigation Program. General notes are included in the guidance, including the provision that all training providers provide a copy of the irrigation rules or a web link that enables the user to download a current copy. The guidance can be used by training developers, including associations, to select topics for meetings and conferences.

**Agenda Topic:** Decrease in Landscape Irrigator License applications

Subtopic: Chairperson Guz discussed the decrease in irrigator license applications over the years.

Discussion: The Council Members commented that high school students do not know about the industry or about the opportunity of being a licensed irrigator. Also, those interested in technical jobs are currently seeking opportunities in the oil and gas field.

Decision: A presence from irrigator societies at high school career fairs would be beneficial to attract young workers.

**Agenda Topic:** Permitting and Registration Support Division Update

Subtopic: Mr. Ivan Messer provided an update of FY 2013 occupational license information.

Decision/discussion: The Council Members asked if TCEQ Staff could provide the pass/fail rate for irrigator license exams.

**Agenda Topic:** Individuals to address the Council

*Subtopic:* Landscape Irrigator Program Ordinance Enforcement

Discussion: Mr. Jeff Walls commented that TCEQ has no real local enforcement presence and is failing to enforce the statute.

Decision: TCEQ Staff will enforce to our best ability with the Program's resources. Cooperation with local municipalities and permitting authorities provides a presence at the local level. That is how the program is designed to operate at this time.

*Subtopic:* Retraining or license revocation of irrigators/irrigation inspectors.

Discussion: Mr. Jeff Walls asked what the process was to revoke a license or retrain licensees that did not know what they were doing in their job.

Decision: TCEQ Staff has to address this issue on a case by case basis.

*Subtopic:* Area irrigation newsletters and the TCEQ

Discussion: Council Members asked if the TCEQ could disseminate needed information about the Landscape Irrigation Program through the local irrigation newsletters.

Decision: TCEQ Staff will look into the best and most appropriate way to get information to the associations and newsletters.

*Subtopic:* Plumbing Board

Decision/discussion: Council Members wanted to know what percentage of local irrigation inspectors were plumbers and what percentage were licensed irrigator inspectors.

**Agenda Topic:** Next meeting

Decision: The next meeting was scheduled for February 6, 2014, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The meeting will be at the TCEQ Austin campus.

**Follow ups:**

- TCEQ will look into creating a survey of local ordinances for city managers.
- TCEQ will request a member of legal attend the next meeting to address several questions about enforcement.
- TCEQ will look at streamlining the irrigation curriculum development.
- TCEQ will re-send the "Course Provider" spreadsheet to all Council Members.
- TCEQ will look into providing the pass/fail rate of the irrigation exams.