

INFRASTRUCTURE & GROWTH COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2013

11:30 A.M.

MUNICIPAL PLAZA B ROOM

Members Present: Councilmember W. Reed Williams, Chair, *District 8*
Councilmember Leticia Ozuna, *District 3*
Councilmember Rey A. Saldaña, *District 4*
Councilmember Ray Lopez, *District 6*
Councilmember Carlton Soules, *District 10*

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Peter Zanoni, *Deputy City Manager*; David Ellison, *Assistant City Manager*; Ted Murphree, *Assistant City Attorney*; Chris Hebner, *Assistant City Attorney*; Roderick Sanchez, *Director, Development Services Department*; David W. McCary, *Director, Solid Waste Management Department*; Terry Kannawin, *Interim Assistant Director, Development Services Department*; Mary Hammer, *Interim Director, Office of Sustainability*; Denice Trevino, *Office of the City Clerk*

Also Present: Diane Lang, *Chair, Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee*;

Call to order

Chairman Williams called the meeting to order.

1. Citizens To Be Heard

There were no citizens to be heard.

2 Approval of Minutes of the February 20, 2013 Infrastructure & Growth Council Committee Meeting

Councilmember Lopez moved to approve the Minutes of the February 20, 2013 Infrastructure & Growth Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember Ozuna seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by those present.

3. Briefing and possible action on the Consolidated Permit Fee for New Residential Construction [Presented by Roderick Sanchez, Director Development Services Department]

Terry Kannawin reported that an Audit by the city had identified the need for better controls. She noted that currently, trade permit fees are assessed based on the number of items to be inspected. The proposed fee structure would establish fees based on the square footage of new residential construction. She reported that the Greater San Antonio Builders Association supports the proposed fee structure.

Chairman Williams asked if the data gathered was sufficient to develop a comparable fee structure. Ms. Kannawin replied that Development Services hired a consultant who compared past fees assessed to fees that would be assessed under the proposed fee structure and fees were comparable. She stated that the intent of the proposed fee structure was not to raise or lower fees. Chairman Williams noted that a follow-up audit would be performed next year.

Councilmember Lopez asked if the proposed fee structure would improve services to applicants. Ms. Kannawin replied that the process would be streamlined through the use of the proposed fee structure.

Councilmember Saldaña moved to approve the proposed Consolidated Permit Fee for New Residential Construction. Councilmember Ozuna seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by those present.

4. Briefing on the Single-Use Plastic Bag Pilot Program [Presented by David w. McCary, Director Solid Waste Management Department]

David McCary updated the Committee on the Single-Use Plastic Bag Pilot Program (Pilot Program). He stated that the Solid Waste Management Department (SWMD) had partnered with five area retailers which include HEB, Walgreen's, Wal-Mart, JC Penney, and Target, and the Texas Retailers Association. He stated that the Pilot Program began in 2011 and ended in December 2012. He noted that the Pilot Program goals were to increase recycling by 25%, decrease use by 25%, and encourage the use of reusable bags. He reported that 29.6% were returned for recycling during the baseline period and bag use increased by 1.18%. He stated that SWMD would discuss the Pilot Program with stake holders to establish next steps. He added that the Program results were presented to the Governance Committee on February 20, 2013 and SWMD presented the results to the five area retailers on February 27, 2013. He further noted that results of the Pilot Program would be presented to the Citizen's Environmental Advisory Committee at their next meeting on April 5, 2013 or at its meeting in May. He stated that they would follow the best practices of cities with bag policies. He reported that a marketing plan was developed and focused on Green shoppers, scheduling three clean-up initiatives. He stated that staff would review and develop strategies for moving the Pilot Program goals forward.

Councilmember Lopez asked of the reason for the increase in bag use. Peter Zanoni replied that retailers did not aggressively promote efforts to decrease bag use. In response to Councilmember Lopez, Mr. McCary stated that a cumulative total was given for all five retailers and data of individual retailers would be required to assess the impact of their promoting efforts. Councilmember Lopez asked when feedback would be available. Mr. McCary stated that data from other cities would be available by June or July 2013. Mr. Zanoni added that the results of a Pilot Program in Austin were similar to the City of San Antonio.

Councilmember Ozuna inquired if other cities besides Washington, DC have implemented a cost per bag tax rather than an outright ban. Mr. McCary replied that New York City has implemented a cost per bag tax. Councilmember Ozuna expressed concern that a ban would be imposed before exploring other options.

Councilmember Soules asked for background data, goals, and the scope of the issue. Mr. McCary stated that the issue was to prevent litter and protect the environment. He stated that a Request for Proposals had been solicited for bag recycling utilizing the blue cart system. Councilmember Soules inquired if the bulk of plastic bags could be recycled utilizing the

existing blue cart system. Mr. McCary replied that bags could be recycled this way. Councilmember Soules asked for a briefing on the existing data. He added that House Bill 2416, known as the Shopping Bag Freedom Act, would eliminate and prevent Municipal Bag Bans.

Councilmember Saldaña spoke of the plastic bag tax in Washington, DC and asked if a pilot program could be implemented to study the results of assessing a bag tax. He stated that he does not support any measure that would impact the consumer and expressed support for implementation of a bag tax of 2-3 cents per bag.

Chairman Williams stated that the objectives were unclear and that any efforts to decrease the use of bags would impact the consumer. He suggested that staff define the goals and understand how bags end up in the hands of the consumer. He emphasized that behavior must be altered to resolve said issue.

Councilmember Soules asked if the end goal was the implementation of a new fee structure and stated that the goal for establishing a fee structure should be understood. He cautioned that citizens with a lower income would be affected the most by the implementation of a bag tax.

Chairman Williams asked if retailers were asked to voluntarily impose a bag fee. Mr. McCary replied no, they were not.

5. Citizens Environment Advisory Committee (CEAC) appearance regarding plastic bags [Presented by Diane Lang, Chair]

Diane Lang, Chair of the Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee (CEAC), presented a proposal to the Committee for consideration. She noted that in view of the significant problem of littering, landfill costs, and damage to waterways and wildlife, the proposal seeks a commitment from the city to promote an aggressive education program to reduce single use plastic bags at retail checkout. The proposal focuses on providing education and incentives to the public and retail employees. She stated that the Plastic Bag Ad-Hoc Committee, part of the CEAC Environmental Committee, met with city departments in 2010 for their input. She added that the Plastic Bag Ad-Hoc Committee attended meetings of the San Antonio Retailers Association to discuss various ways to reduce plastic bag use. She reported that a 1993 state statute 306.096 of the Health and Safety Code prohibits local governments to regulate or assess a fee or deposit for a container or package in a manner that is not authorized by state law. She reviewed the benefits of the proposal. She stated that the CEAC seeks a commitment from the city to significantly reduce single-use plastic bags at retail check-out through a strong educational program for the public and retail employees, and through incentives for significantly reducing single-use plastic bags at retail check-out. She noted that this would be accomplished by increasing recycled bag use and reducing single use plastic bags for single or easy carry-out items. She stated that the CEAC recommends that the Infrastructure and Growth Committee bring the proposal before City Council.

There was no action taken on Item 5.

6. Consideration of future items

- Consideration of Applicants to the VIA Metropolitan Authority (3 slots)

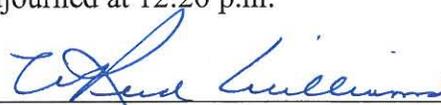
7. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Denice Trevino
Office of the City Clerk



W. Reed Williams, Chair