

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
APRIL 5, 2012

A meeting of the Environmental Policy Advisory Committee (EPAC) was convened on Thursday, April 5, 2012, at 5:15 p.m., in the Pueblo County Conference Room, 1001 North Santa Fe Avenue. Chair Reynolds called the meeting to order at approximately 5:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Those members present were:

Ted Lopez
Charles B. Pelto
Marvin Reynolds
Chad Wolgram (arrived at 5:25 p.m.)

Members absent were: Susan Finzel-Aldred (excused) and Doris Kester (excused). Thelma Archuletta submitted her resignation from EPAC on February 5, 2012.

Guests: County Commissioner John Cordova; Andy O'Riley with Blue Star Recyclers; and Jack Pendleton with Southern Colorado Recyclers.

Staff present was Sandra Smith and Julie Ann Woods, Director of Planning and Development.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 3, 2011; APRIL 7, 2011; JUNE 2, 2011; AUGUST 4, 2011, OCTOBER 6, 2011, DECEMBER 1, 2011; AND FEBRUARY 2, 2012 MEETINGS

The minutes could not be approved due to the lack of a quorum.

CHAIR'S REPORT – MARVIN REYNOLDS

Chair Reynolds commented on the Black Hills transmission line from Huerfano County north to the Black Hills new energy plant. He stated he spoke with a gentleman that filed a suit against Pueblo County stating it failed to verify that the proper environmental assessments were done by Black Hills Energy prior to the approval of the transmission line. He commented on the Colorado Energy Masters Program that was started last fall. Volunteers are trained to perform home energy audits or visit with residence to discuss energy efficiency in their homes. He stated the program would continue this year starting in the fall. The program is having good results, which in turn is helping the community. He stated the CSU-Extension conducted a community survey of 1,500 homes within Pueblo County asking questions about extension programs. One of the questions was whether or not they considered energy efficiency/conservation to be important in Pueblo County. He stated that question had the highest ratings of all as a "yes". This indicates that people are concerned and would like to see improvements.

Mr. Pelto stated one of the problems with energy conservation, is when you conserve too much energy, the energy suppliers go to the Public Utilities Commission to ask for a rate increase because they are not making enough money to pay for their infrastructure and/or employees. He stated this has happened in Florida. The other issue, which as happened in California and may be happening in Pueblo, is the installation of computerized meter systems on residential households. He stated since the employment cost is down because a meter reader is no longer required, you would think there would be a reduction in energy expenses. However, he has noticed that his energy expense for electricity has gone up significantly. He stated he would have to wait for the summer months, when space heaters are not in use, to do a more

reasonable comparison. Chair Reynolds stated that he has been monitoring his utility bills as well and they are climbing. He stated a lot of the increase is due to infrastructure the companies feel they need. Another reason may also be coming from new regulations for energy.

Mr. Lopez stated that Black Hills put a notice in the news paper requesting a rate increase due to a reduction in consumption. He stated that Black Hills is guaranteed a certain return, so if consumption drops, they can request a rate increase. He stated the City of Pueblo should take this into consideration when it's time to renew the franchise agreement for Black Hills.

Mr. Lopez questioned the survey demographics conducted by CSU-Extension. Chair Reynolds replied it was a random choice based on zip codes. He stated they made sure they included the east side of Pueblo. Mr. Lopez requested a copy of the report be presented to EPAC. Chair Reynolds replied the data was still being processed and as soon as the report was available he would present the results to EPAC.

MATERIAL RECYCLING FACILITY (MRF) GRANT – COUNTY COMMISSIONER JOHN CORDOVA

Commissioner Cordova stated Commissioner Chostner also wanted to attend, but he had another obligation. Chair Reynolds asked Commissioner Cordova if he would share information regarding the recycling facility plans for Pueblo. Commissioner Cordova replied a grant was applied for in the amount of \$242,000, noting the County would contribute an additional \$210,000 to help with engineering costs. He is very optimistic they will be awarded the grant. Construction site locations were submitted with the grant and can change during the review process. He stated the intent of the MRF is to be regional serving areas from north El Paso County to the Kansas boarder and west to Canon City. He stated they are using a facility in Albuquerque as a model. He stated he would keep EPAC updated as things progress.

Mr. Lopez questioned the details of "feasibility". Commissioner Cordova replied part of the study would include talking with the surrounding communities to determine how the local recyclables would be transported to the MRF, i.e., would the County be providing trucks or dumpsters, and when would pickups or deliveries be made. Mr. Lopez asked if a consultant would be hired. Commissioner Cordova replied that the County Engineers would be handling the majority of work. He stated Ms. Sarah Spencer-Workman, the County's Community Energy Coordinator would be used as a consultant, noting she was the one who wrote the grant. Mr. Lopez questioned if the City of Pueblo would be included in the study. Commissioner Cordova replied they are going to invite any and all interested groups to take part in the project. Mr. Lopez questioned the approval date of the grant. Commissioner Cordova replied as of this date, the grant was still being reviewed by the Governor's office.

ELECTRONICS RECYCLING – JACK PENDLETON

Mr. Pendleton stated he is gathering partnerships and moving forward to establishing an electronics recycling facility. One of the partners is Blue Star Recycling out of Colorado Springs, and he introduced Mr. Any O'Riley, the Vice-President. The other partner is Jordan Residential, which will provide the employees. Jordan Residential is a caregiver to developmentally disabled adults. He stated he hopes to be in operation by the end of this month. He stated Mr. O'Riley would give a presentation on the need for electronic waste recycling.

Mr. O'Riley showed a brief video that explained some of the environmental issues involved with electronic waste recycling. He stated some of the images are compelling on what can happen if the material is not handled in a responsible way. After the video, he stated that electronic waste is a material stream that doesn't have a lot of oversight at the EPA or State level. The components vary in value. Without the government oversight, it lends itself to the scavenging behavior, which is happening on a global scale. He stated Colorado has a bad reputation regarding this. Sixty Minutes did a program that spotlighted a Denver based recycler that was shipping material to China. Eye News did a series in the Denver Post on some of the other State wide operations focusing on the backyard smelting that is going on in the State and on some of the other recyclers that are taking advantage of the public in claiming they are recycling this material when they are in fact scavenging and dumping things they don't want. He stated he and Bill Morris were working at a human service agency in Colorado Springs that provided services for people with developmental disabilities. Mr. Morris noticed that there was a certain population they were working with that seemed to do really well at the tactile, systematic, black and white activity that is involved in taking apart computers and other IT equipment. Mr. Morris asked the question, "How do you turn this into a job"? Blue Star Recyclers was developed to answer this question. He stated the mission was to use ethical electronic waste recycling as a way of creating jobs for people with developmental disabilities. In the last two and half years, they have learned the recycling business and have gotten to the point where they are financially self-sustaining and have been able to create eleven jobs for people with developmental disabilities. He felt that if he could do it, other communities should be able to do it. He started the Vocational Electronic Recycling Network (VERN) as a way of exporting this model to other communities. He stated he was awarded a grant by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to share his model with La Junta, Pueblo, and Canon City. He stated there is a wide disparity between what's available for recycling services from community to community in Colorado. In Denver there are five or six real good certified national recyclers. In Colorado Springs, Blue Star Recyclers is the only one, and Pueblo historically has not had any ongoing recycling operation. VERN is intended to change the dynamic and make sure that every community has a convenient and on-going place to recycle the material. The second side to VERN is to create jobs for people with Autism and other developmental disabilities. He stated the public has two choices, they can participate in the ethical recycling of E-waste or buy into the non-caring scavenging behavior that destroys small foreign communities and the quality of life for its residents. He stated that E-waste was 98 percent recyclable. He stated by virtue of his customer base and community support, he has been able to create 16 jobs that were not there before, and 11 of those jobs were for those with developmental disabilities. Pueblo should be able to have the same benefit. VERN provides Pueblo with a local organization that is collecting this material on an on-going basis. This is putting money into the local economy and the idea is to employ local individuals with developmental disabilities as the primary workforce. The process will be to de-manufacture the material and separate it by base components, and then the components get shipped to other facilities for ethical processing. He stated by employing the developmentally disabled, they are saving the taxpayer \$10,000 - \$20,000 for each employee in terms of reduction in SSI benefits and government funded services.

Mr. Lopez questioned if Pueblo Diversified Industries would be providing the workforce. Mr. O'Riley replied they have partnered with Jordan Residential out of Pueblo West. Mr. Lopez questioned Mr. Pendleton about the launch date. Mr. Pendleton replied that Jordan Residential has a building located at 85 Silicon Drive in Pueblo West, which will be the de-manufacturing site. He is in the process of getting approval through the Department of Planning and Development and hopes to have everything ready to start by the end of the month. He stated what they need now is support from the community, residences, local businesses, school districts, and governmental entities. The more electronics they can collect, the more jobs they

can furnish here in Pueblo. Mr. O'Riley stated that Mr. Pendleton has been collecting material from businesses and consumers for several years, noting they are currently building their inventory. Chair Reynolds questioned the average amount of E-waste that is generated in Pueblo. Mr. O'Riley replied that the EPA estimates that every man, woman, and child generates about 12 pounds a year. He stated that most people just don't know what to do with it. Most people don't know it's recyclable, but know it should probably not go in the trash. Therefore, it's stored away in the basement or a closet until they can figure out what to do with it. He stated his goal is to educate people on the benefits of E-waste recycling and the resources Mr. Pendleton has to offer. Chair Reynolds questioned what other items could be recycled. Mr. O'Riley replied anything that plugs into a wall, except those items with fuel or Freon, i.e., IT and AV equipment, printers, scanners, toasters, curling irons, microwaves, televisions, most appliances except air conditioners and refrigerators. He stated some fees may need to be charged especially when dealing with televisions and computer monitors. There is about 8-10 pounds of lead impregnated in the old CRT class. The cost of getting the lead out safely is more than the value of the material. Because Colorado law doesn't mandate that community member recycle, it is up to them to explain why there are fees. He stated Mr. Pendleton shipped him approximately 165,000 pounds of E-waste last year and 70,000 pounds the year before, noting it has been growing; however, there is much more available. He stated in El Paso County last year he processed 1.2 million pounds of E-waste, which was only about 30 percent of the market. Mr. Lopez questioned where the component material is shipped to be processed. Mr. O'Riley replied to a facility in California named ERI, which has a Denver outlet. Mr. Pendleton stated with the local facilities in place, a lot of the material will stay in Pueblo to be used by local metal recyclers. Ms. Woods questioned if there were any work related health concerns for the employees. Mr. O'Riley replied the employees would just be dismantling items into separate components. They would be using hand tools like screwdrivers. There might be the occasional cut or pinched finger. The employees would not be involved in any heavy metal extraction process. Ms. Woods asked Mr. O'Riley if he could provide EPAC a copy of his PowerPoint presentation for the record. Mr. O'Reily replied he would be happy to. Chair Reynolds thanked Mr. O'Riley and Mr. Pendleton for their presentation.

ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR REPORT – SUSAN FINZEL-ALDRED

Ms. Finzel-Aldred submitted a written report for distribution in her absence. Chair Reynolds asked Mr. Wolgram if he had anything to add. Mr. Wolgram stated a lot of planning was taking place for the May 12th event at the State Fair and for the Colorado Association for Recycling state wide conference in June. He stated the first cleanup will be in Bessemer on April 28th, with a \$15 charge per drop-off. He stated they would not be able to take hazardous wastes this year at the May 12th event due to budget constraints. They hope to be able to provide the service next year. They will be informing the public of Mr. Pendleton's facility as a place they can go for drop-offs year around and hopefully not hold on to items for a yearly event.

WATER QUALITY SUBCOMMITTEE – C. PELTO

Mr. Pelto stated there's nothing to report.

SOLID WASTE SUBCOMMITTEE – T. LOPEZ

Mr. Lopez stated there was nothing to report.

Mr. Pelto stated he spoke with the City Public Works and they are thinking about a recycling plan. They hoped they would have something on the ballot in 2012; however, it's looking like

everything takes longer and costs more. They are now looking at the 2013 City ballot for getting approval for a system that involves districting. The City Attorney's office now says they think it can be done. As a result, they are looking at ways how the plan can fall apart. One of the issues is what happens if no one bids on a particular district; what do you do to get someone to provide service for the area? Mr. Lopez stated that's even more of a reason to have a coordinated effort and to use the Solid Waste Management Plan as a general guide. He felt just putting the issue up for a vote on a ballot without educating the public would be detrimental. Mr. Peltó stated a community to the north is using the districting method and the monthly waste removal being charged is about half of what he is paying in Pueblo. Mr. Lopez stated when there was a single hauler contract around five years ago, the Home Owners' Association he managed went for \$15 per month to \$9.30 per month. Mr. Peltó stated the big challenge was going to be selling the program to the lower income residents, because they are currently not paying anything. Mr. Lopez stated that is part of the education that needs to occur. One of the suggestions was to have a variable rate plan. Commissioner Cordova stated the community of Boulder kept the small business hauler viable by providing the dumpsters so that anybody with a truck could bid. Mr. Lopez stated small haulers could also join together to submit a bid to help them compete with the larger companies.

AGENDA JUNE 7, 2012

The next regularly scheduled EPAC meeting is Thursday, June 7, 2012, at 1001 North Santa Fe Avenue, from 5:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before EPAC, the meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Smith
EPAC Recording Secretary

SMS