

Minutes of Clean-up Task Force Meeting
September 9, 2015, 5:30 PM
Chairman's Honor Hall, Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce
319 Broadway, Rockport Texas

Present at the meeting:

Mark Waters, Kevin Carruth, Barbara Long, Cindy Duck, Barbara Gurtner, Paula Dean, Lynn Baskind, Nelida Spurrell, Karen Mella, Tiffanie Hoover, Diane Probst

Mark Waters, Interim Chair, opened the meeting. Barbara Gurtner was designated as Temporary Secretary to take minutes of the meeting.

Mark asked for information about Johnny Taylor and the Adopt-a-Beach clean-up program on September 26th. Johnny has organized clean-ups along the shoreline and in Fulton for years. Barbara Long, who has coordinated clean-ups in Rockport in cooperation with Johnny, will contact him to coordinate ongoing efforts.

Diane brought up using specifics in order to measure accomplishments towards goals. In conversation with Steve Reisinger, he asked what the total tonnage was of materials at the transfer station in a year, in a month. Brian Cornelius at Republic Services could tell us what they pick-up. Diane will get the numbers from the transfer station and Republic.

Someone mentioned that at the Talkin' Trash Chamber Luncheon yesterday, Tempe Parisette said there was no recycling of paper that she had to drive her paper to Corpus Christi. Neli said everything is about the market. There must be a market for anything to be recycled. Mark asked Neli to be in charge of Education for the interim.

Paula talked about the drop off point at Fulton Learning Center for aluminum cans which would be another measureable quantity. The cans help support school programs.

Education about what is recyclable and what is not needs to be more wide-spread. It should be on the Aransas County website, but the link is not working, according to Neli. Kevin remarked that information is located on the City of Rockport website.

Paula suggested a Pre- and Post-Test, possibly using Chamber members, asking them what's recyclable and what's not, then using those answers to determine how well the public understands recycling and what information and education is needed.

Karen stated that there first needs to be a goal, then have sub-committees come up with the steps needed to reach that ultimate goal. Currently we're talking steps and plans.

What is the goal, to reduce trash and to increase recycling.
Discussion of trash bins on the outskirts of town led to relating experiences of how it had not worked in the past.

Twice a year County-wide clean-up when residents could dump trash at the transfer station for free was suggested by Neli, who has seen it work in other communities. Currently in Aransas County, there are a limited number of vouchers that residents can use to dump trash free once a month. Tires and hazardous waste is another matter to be considered.

Mark stated that Rockport is unique and pride must be adopted by the citizenry. Signage could be used to encourage proper disposal of trash.

Diane mentioned that currently there are 7 "Adopt-a-Highway" signs; one goal might be to increase that to 20 to have more groups actively involved cleaning up litter on the roadways. Barbara Long suggested 'Adopt-a-Spot' to not limit it to highways. Cindy liked this idea, and she and Paula thought this might be more manageable for those who didn't want to walk two miles of highway with busy traffic. And trash collects everywhere.

Cindy asked if litter in Bird Sanctuaries fell under Federal Law and commanded higher fines. There was no certain answer.

Neli told the group of a "Don't Mess With Texas" app which allows one to take pictures of someone littering and report it directly to authorities. There have been prosecutions resulting from this activity.

Barbara Long mentioned that one member of the Aransas County Clean Team used to go through trash looking for name and address and reporting them if such was found.

Paula asked Kevin about the City working on revisions of Ordinances that had been discussed in a past City of Rockport workshop. What do the ordinances need to do, and what do they cost to enforce, was a question asked by Barbara Gurtner.

Mark suggested volunteers with trailers picking up trash twice a year for those who couldn't get to the transfer station. Neli brought up the problems of liability and injury using volunteers for this. That people will find a way to get their trash to the transfer station when it's free. Otherwise trash may collect waiting for someone else to come clean it up. Lynn talked about the Colonia where people leave their trash in the yard and let vegetation grow up around it to cover it.

Karen talked about trash blowing out of trashcans and dumpsters and being thrown out of vehicles. Over Labor Day weekend the Stripes at entrance to Key Allegro was overflowing, people were leaving trash next to the dumpster. Trash cans were overflowing and trash blowing all over. Education and increasing the pride of the store owners would help. Shop the World cleans their grounds 3 times a day. Karen has reported cups and debris from fast food restaurants to the staff. How does one instill Pride in a community? Possibly it can be done with t-shirts, buttons, recognition for accomplishment.

Diane contributed a short synopsis:

1. Overall goal is to clean up Aransas County
2. Educate our community to prevent littering.
3. Enforcement –
4. Clean-ups, Adopt a Highway, Adopt a Spot, signage.

Neli was asked to put together a information for next meeting outlining an education program.

Sylvia Vela, was suggested to head up the Recycling Effort.

Enforcement?

Tiffanie discussed recycling at Fulton Elementary where Martha McLeod uses the aluminum cans to raise money for science projects, entering her class in collection competitions. Karen suggested a program and information exchange. Paula said this was one way to make the community aware of the program, eliminate more aluminum can litter at no expense. Tiffanie is to invite Martha to the next meeting.

Lynn said that she has a guy in the area who pays cash for steel and metal and hauls it off. Tiffanie said Martha would take other metals also. Tiffanie related that Aransas Pass has a KAPB (Keep Aransas Pass Beautiful) organization and will find who is running it, since part of Aransas Pass is in Aransas County.

Tiffanie shared that she has found a donor for the \$800 fee when the organization is ready to file as a 501c3.

Barbara asked for clarification of the three arms of the organization

1. Education & Prevention
2. Enforcement
3. Recycling

Plans for the next meeting:

- Name Permanent Officers
- Get the word out to as many people as possible to ask them to attend
- Encourage participation of Aransas Pass, City of Rockport, Aransas County Commissioners, Town of Fulton, Navigation District, Schools, Chamber and other businesses and private residents.
- Think of a name for the organization

Meeting to be Monday, October 19 at 5:30 PM in the Chairman's Honor Hall, R-F Chamber of Commerce.

Barbara Gurtner, Temporary Secretary