

Weather Modification Advisory Committee

Meeting of January 29, 2010
North Campus Building – 1st Floor Public Meeting Room
1106 Clayton Lane, Austin, Texas

Summary of Minutes

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item B., Roll Call and Certification of Quorum. Committee members Frank Reilly, Everett Deschner, Gary Foster, and James Nance were present. Committee member Don Parrish was absent due to weather. A quorum was present. Presiding Officer made a motion to excuse the absence of Don Parrish. Committee member, James Nance seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item C., Training for Advisory Board Members – Travel Reimbursement Process. Belinda Field, Team Lead in Financial Management provided an overview of the travel reimbursement policy and reported that the travel budget has been suspended due to budget cuts. Bill Kuntz, Executive Director reported that the Department is seeking additional funding for travel expenses.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item D., Approval of Minutes – Meeting of August 9, 2009. Committee member, Everett Deschner requested that the minutes be amended to reflect a change to section E.2.c located on page 2 to add a requirement for additional information regarding the use of hail cannons for hail suppression. The paper submitted by Archie Ruiz does not support hail cannon suppression, and additional documentation is required to approve the use of hail cannons. The Committee agreed to have the January 29, 2010 minutes reflect Mr. Deschner's concerns. Committee member, Everett Deschner made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and add an addendum to the January 29, 2010 minutes to reflect that additional research must be provided before we can accept the use of hail cannons. Committee member, James Nance seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item E., Public Comment. There was no public comment.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item F.1., Staff Reports, Executive Office. Bill Kuntz, Executive Director reported on the upcoming strategic planning process which will include focus group meetings to allow industry input. Mr. Kuntz encouraged the committee member to attend the focus group meetings.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item F.2., Staff Reports, Compliance Division – George Bomar reported that the drought has been broken in South Central Texas and has been decreased in other regions of the state due to extra-tropical activities. Generally, regions where rain-enhancement activities were suspended in recent years sustained a lower than normal rainfall. On the other hand, areas with rain-enhancement have had a greater than normal rainfall in the past year. Mr. Bomar gave an overview of Archie Ruiz' radar-derived statistical analysis of Texas rain-enhancement activity for the year of 2009. Mr. Bomar answered

questions from Committee members regarding Mr. Ruiz's report. Mr. Bomar reported on the renewal of six licenses for fiscal year 2010, as well as two hail cannon operations with meteorologist issues which led to the issuance on November 6, 2009 of new weather modification licenses for FY2010. The Committee addressed concerns about the role of project meteorologists in hail cannon operations. Mr. Bomar presented press articles which reflect the fact that weather modification has been in the news of late based on some activities taking place in China. He also said the search for federal funds to continue salt-seeding experiments in Texas continues Senator Hutchinson's bill to establish a federal weather modification board passed the Senate floor but failed to make the House floor for vote in the late summer of 2009. Mr. Parrish provided a statement requesting the Department staff take an active role in coordinating a search of the literature to write a report of rain-enhancement activities worldwide and how results from those activities might impact the future of cloud seeding in Texas.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item G., Field meteorologists' report on status of rain-enhancement activities. The Committee heard from Tommy Shearer, South Texas Weather Modification Association (STWMA); Gary Walker, Seeding Operations and Atmospheric Research (SOAR) Program; Craig Funke, West Texas Weather Association (WTWA); and Stephanie Beall,—who presented overviews of ongoing rain-enhancement operations in West and South Texas. Ms. Beall also gave a status report on the handbook for meteorologists' field training.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item H., Discussion and possible recommendation on applications for renewal of weather modification permits: Seeding Operations and Atmospheric Research (SOAR) Program; West Texas Weather Modification Association (WTWMA); and South Texas Weather Modification Association (STWMA) (2). George Bomar reported on the permit renewals. The SOAR program has a 4 year permit up for renewal, and the notice of intention was published in three area newspapers. Mr. Bomar reported that three contacts from the public were received regarding the types of seeding materials and their effect on drinking water, and one requested a public meeting. The permit fee has been paid, and all other required steps have been taken by SOAR. Committee member, Gary Foster made a motion to recommend renewal of the permit. Committee member, Everett Deschner seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

Mr. Bomar reported an application had been received from West Texas Weather Modification Association requesting a four year permit renewal of a dual rainfall augmentation and hail suppression permit. Staff reviewed and approved the draft notice to be published in three area newspapers. The permit is progressing, with the fees paid and documents filed with the Department. Committee member, James Nance made a motion to recommend renewal of WTWMA's permit request. Committee member, Gary Foster seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

South Texas Weather Modification requested a four year permit renewal. Staff has reviewed and approved the operations plan and draft notice. Committee member, Everett Deschner made a motion to recommend renewal of the permit. Committee member, James Nance seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote in favor.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item I., Discussion and possible recommendation on rule language clarifying the requirements for obtaining a weather modification license /permit by users of anti-hail devices. George Bomar, Program Specialist referred to rule language clarifying requirements for obtaining a weather modification license/permit by users of anti-hail devices.

Brad Bowman explained the rules review process and outlined the timeframe for the review. The Committee suggested that a work group be formed to provide input on proposed rules during rule review and strategic planning processes. Committee members, Everett Deschner and Frank Riley formed a workgroup to review the rules.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item J., Recommendations for agenda items for the next meeting. The Committee placed the practicality of nighttime seeding missions, a permit renewal from Color Spot Inc. and a summary of the national Weather Modification Association annual meeting in Santa Fe, NM on April 21-23, 2010, on the next agenda.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item K., Discussion of date, time, and location of next Committee meeting. The Committee decided to meet on May 21, 2010, 10:00 a.m. in Austin, Texas.

Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly moved to agenda item L., Adjournment. Presiding Officer, Frank Reilly adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Frank Reilly, Presiding Officer
Weather Modification Advisory Committee