



City of Dallas

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
Dallas City Hall – 1500 Marilla, L1FN Conference Room “C”
Regular Meeting
April 3, 2006
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

MINUTES

Members Present

James Mitchell, Chair
Diane Benjamin
Jon (Tad) Heimbürger
Linda Sharp
Keith Kwoh
Sylvia Lagos
Barbara Pittman
Chris Schulz
Mary Vogelsson
Mary Warner

Members Absent

Carol Barnett Davis
Tom Peck
Casie Pierce

Public Present

Jan Hart Black, Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce
Kali Bailey, Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce

Staff Present

Patsy Mitchell, Assistant Director, EHS
David Howe, City Attorney's Office
Kenny Shaw, Office of Emergency Management

Minutes

Mr. James Mitchell, Chair, called the regular meeting of the Environmental Health Commission to order at 9:03 a.m. The minutes from the March 6, 2006 meeting were approved.

Update and Discussion of Preparation for Potential Pandemic

Dr. John Carlo, Medical Director, Dallas County Health and Humans Services Department

Dr. John Carlo began with brief remarks on the spread of avian flu among the bird populations world wide. He mentioned that the bird flu is nothing new in the U.S. to poultry farmers. They are well aware of the situation and the dangers that it poses. Poultry farmers feel that their preparations are greater than elsewhere in the world because they have been challenged by this and control measure are already put into place. The poultry industry is consolidated into large farms. Large farms are in sense hospitals in that chemicals are sprayed, poultry are confined indoors, and people enter with protection gear.

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The focus of the discussion was the consequences of a potential human pandemic should the avian flu strain evolve into a disease capable of human to human communication. Dr. Carlo commented that he has seen no evidence to date of such evolution. Still the potential is significant and the resulting pandemic so challenging that the County Health Department and the City are working internally and with other institutions on pandemic preparedness planning.

Dr. Carlo stated that a table top exercise would take place on April 21, 2006 and a pandemic symposium scheduled for May 2006. He also mentioned the forms of communication used to inform city government and the public about the bird flu influenza. Several presentations have been presented to city departments as well as outside organizations like Dallas Chamber of Commerce, Dallas County Medical Society, and several area school district health committees. The Dallas County website with link has been updated. Letters were sent to all area cities and municipalities, faith based and non-governmental agencies, day care centers and schools and other businesses and organizations.

He informed the commission that funding and resources were increased to create 3 new positions in the county. The positions are Emergency Federal Grant, Meadows Foundation and County Support. A copy of Dr. Carlo's presentation was provided to the Environmental Health Commission.

Some Ideas for EHC Consideration

Linda Sharp and Mary Vogelson, EHC members

Ms. Linda Sharp and Ms. Mary Vogelson spoke to Jill A. Jordan, Assistant City Manager, and talked about air quality and other environmental health issue. The results of that meeting informed them that the City is working internally on clean air issues. She mentioned that the Office of Environmental Quality has been working on and partnering with the Texas Council of Governments. Ms. Linda Sharp provided a copy of the Clean Air Plan to the commission. The Clean Air Plan was provided to all city departments with a request of input.

One of the ideas suggested by Ms. Vogelson and Ms. Sharp is the publication of an environmental audit. They stated that there are several examples that might serve as models. Mr. Mitchell asked them to look into this idea further.

Commission Reports

None

Staff Reports

None

Public Comment

The representatives from the Greater Dallas Chamber stated that there is now a forum planned on avian flu preparedness that will include a presentation by Dr. Carlo.

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Adjournment

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Signature: James E. Mitchell, Chair, Environmental Health Commission