



City of Dallas

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
Dallas City Hall – 1500 Marilla, L1FN Conference Room “C”
Regular Meeting
January 3, 2005
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

MINUTES

Members Present

James Mitchell, Chair
Jon (Tad) Heimburger
Mary Warner

Public Present

None

Staff Present

Laura Fiffick, Director, Office of Env. Management
Dave Howe, City Attorney's Office
James Mongaras, Environmental Health Services Dept.

Members Absent

Diane Benjamin
Keith Kwoh
Thomas Hill
Tom Peck
Casie Pierce
Ronald Walenta
Barbara Pittman
Christopher Schultz
Linus Spiller

Minutes

Mr. Mitchell, Chair, called the regular meeting of the Environmental Health Commission to order at 9:15 a.m. The minutes from the December 6, 2004 meeting were not approved because a quorum was not present.

Environmental Management System for the City of Dallas

Laura Fiffick, Director of Office of Environmental Quality

Ms. Fiffick provided the Environmental Health Commission with background information on Environmental Management System (EMS) and information on what the city is doing. Ms. Fiffick came from an organization that implemented in EMS municipalities. Basically, EMS is a business system designed to better manage environmental issues. EMS makes the organization commit to pollution prevention, continue improvement and regulatory compliance. EMS is not a regulatory program.

She stated that in starting EMS it is key to have a good team of people throughout the organization to help implement EMS. She mentioned that Environmental and Health Services (EHS) Department could not implement the system alone. Office of Environmental Quality (OEQ) is the environmental management representative. Most companies do not want to do the entire organization because it is too large. Some start off with a geographic area or an operational area and get it in place and learn lessons and expand from there.

The environmental policy is key because it states expectations for management. Policies could be used in various procedures or personnel problems. The next step is to identify activities in the operational area that potentially have an environmental impact. Ms. Fiffick prefers to use flowcharting and asks how oil is changed, how a tire is changed, and how do they respond to a spill. She flowcharts the information and in the discussion between herself and the operational person it is enlightening for both sides because they begin to understand the environmental impact on their actions.

EMS allows each activity and category to be prioritized in order to set objectives and targets. Objectives and targets can be anything from reducing air emissions by 10% within the next 5 years or reducing the amount of waste generated. From that a schedule is developed and responsible people are assigned and develop performance indicators.

Once all plans and procedures are in place and audited, a meeting is scheduled with the senior management at least 1 time a year to review audit result, objectives and targets. This step gives senior management an opportunity to comment, direct or redirect the environmental program.

Mr. Mitchell stated that he assumes that OEQ will have the process done in stages. He asked what part of the city's operations will be covered. Ms. Fiffick responded that Aviation Department, Sanitation Department, and Equipment and Building Services are the first 3 departments that volunteered to be pilots. These departments will go through senior management review by next September. Also, the Streets Department volunteered to begin.

Other EMS items that are also important and key to a successful EMS are training classes with the correct staff attending. She believes that it does not make sense to offer a class and not know that supervisors do not to be in the class. Also, document control that is making sure all documents are numbered, assigned, and approved.

Mr. Mitchell commented that EMS depends heavily on senior management being able to set policies. Mr. Mitchell asked if it was a challenge in the past. Ms. Fiffick responded that without senior management the EMS would not work. Mr. Mitchell stated that in his view senior management very often would like to be contacted when the problem has been discovered and until then try to resolve the problem. He stated that that is not a policy procedure and is more operations procedure as opposed to figuring out through a policy statement how to let others in the organization truly operate on the subject.

Ms. Fiffick stated that in municipalities across the country the process works well if there is senior management support from the beginning, a strong policy is set, and are visible in the process throughout the process. She believes it falls apart when senior

management gives support but when money or staff resources is needed that's when you know if senior management is looking at it or not.

Mr. Mitchell stated that a weakness is that if there is no policy making body that believes the policy making body and not an operational body then rules cannot be set in such a way that people under them can actually act. He believes that this has to be approached very carefully because if a need for resources are mentioned that let's you know whether there is a priority or not. Ms. Fiffick stated that you would have to be careful of how it is packaged and disseminated to staff. She stated that the department would spend a lot of time working on that this year.

Ms. Fiffick stated that other organizations put EMS in place and all it is paperwork and then forgotten about. In her opinion, if it is going to be done, it needs to be done right and has to be about environmental improvements. EHS Department and OEQ cannot do this alone and needs the help of all operational people that are involved. She believes that the keys to success are senior management endorsements and strong environmental policies.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a program called performance track. Once the first cycle of EMS is completed you can apply but have to commit to environmental improvements to get accepted. EPA visits the facility once every 5 years. EPA gives access to senior management and have some regulatory benefits which she does not see affecting the city.

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has a program called "Clean Texas". To get into the program you would have to pass an audit. TCEQ has had some problems that program. It has been 2 years and TCEQ haven't certified one company yet. Benefits include regulatory incentives and also will improve compliance history rating.

"ISO 2001" is a program that allows you to hire a third party to audit EMS and if passed you are considered "I Support 2001" certified.

The City of Dallas will use the 3 pilot departments to implement plans and procedures and templates. The OEQ will be a facilitator that will provide technical advice and experience. OEQ will help provide a software system for tracking purposes and provide consistency. In September, she would like to pull up departments and see what everyone is doing and making sure that she is tracking everything the same. For example, air emission will be measured in tons per year. Therefore, everyone would have to be consistent so that she may combine into one.

EMS timeline is 1 ½ to 2 years. The environmental policy that was drafted will go to City Council January 26th for approval. She anticipates that aspects and impacts in April. Procedures will be in place by March. All this will be taken to senior management review next September.

Mr. Mitchell asked if the environmental policy that Ms. Fiffick is suggesting already gone for review. Mr. Fiffick responded that it has gone to Health, Environment and Human Services (HEHS) Committee and they provided comments on it.

Mr. Mitchell asked if a copy of the policy be sent out to the commissioners. Ms. Fiffick said that she would forward the policy to Mr. Mongaras.

To date OEQ has completed aspects and impacts for one of the services center. Objectives and targets have been proposed and OEQ began working on that. An Administrative Directive has been drafted that informs staff on how the city will do EMS.

EMS is a systematic way of looking up your environmental issues on a continual basis focusing on compliance and pollution prevention. OEQ will assist the city in doing this. Some department want OEQ more involved than others. She will be happy to provide an update to EHC in September when they are done.

Commission Reports

None

Staff Reports

None

Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

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