

**Sierra Vista Environmental Stewardship Commission (ESC)
Minutes of Recycling Work Group Meeting
Thursday, June 6, 2024 (3:30-5:00pm)
Sierra Vista Library Small Conference Room**

Attendees: Joelle Buffa, ESC Commissioner and Recycling Work Group Coordinator
Steve Spearman, ESC Chair, Commissioner
Gabe Squires, Sierra Vista Public Works
Mark Hays, Sierra Vista Herald
Bob Poynter (non-voting ESC member) via zoom
Betty Poynter (non-voting ESC member) via zoom
William Indelicato (non-voting ESC member)
Karen LeMay (non-voting ESC member and Work Group Secretary)
Steve Conroy (interested community member)

Introduction / Icebreaker:

Each attendee introduced themselves and shared their memory of the first person that influenced them to recycle. Responses were:

- father saved ours & neighbors newspapers/rags to sell for making paper
- family and friends recycling glass bottles for 5 cents each
- Audubon Society program
- in time of World War II, family saved aluminum and rubber bands
- food co-op encouraged members to bring own containers
- living in Italy, recycling was a way of life
- educational program in grammar school
- office practice of draft printing on two sides of paper and saving soda cans
- parents were big recyclers, with separate bins for each material. Every Saturday we'd load up the car and bring everything to the town dump; the recyclable drop offs were on top of the hill, while the trash compactors were on the bottom

Debrief of 5/29/24 Vista 2040 Public Meeting:

Three members of the ESC attended this meeting. The total audience, including city employees, was about 75 people. Matt McLachlan gave an overview of the plan and status of public comments. After the overview, the audience asked questions and walked around to break-out tables. Steve Conroy gave a strong argument that SV should engage in recycling and after the meeting William gave him an overview of the Recycle Work Group. He was an active participant in today's meeting.

Thoughts on 5/22/24 ESC Meeting:

Work group members that attended the 5/22/24 ESC meeting voiced their takeaways from Staff Liaison comments about the "Let's Recycle" nonprofit concept presented at the 4/24/24 ESC meeting.

ESC members agreed that Staff Liaison mentioned that a recycling nonprofit could be formed, as long as it had no Commission, Work Group or City involvement. Likewise, contacts made with potential partners should be careful that a relationship with, or support of the City, is not implied. The Work Group discussed the idea of forming a new citizens group to explore the "Let's Recycle" concept in order to show a clear separation from this Work Group.

ESC members had mixed takeaways on whether the City was willing to provide any additional recycling services to residents (other than curbside green waste pickup and aluminum can recycling at the animal shelter). Some members thought since the City was unwilling to raise fees, they would not be willing to provide more services. Other members thought the City may be willing to perform more recycling services if no-cost or economically viable in other ways than raising residential trash fees. Recycling glass for Bisbee's glass crusher was mentioned and the general feeling is that it's possibly a no-cost action worth pursuing, especially since it initiates a partnership with a successful recycling program.

Discuss Ideas & Formulate Recycling Presentation to City Council:

As approved by Commissioners at the 5/22/24 ESC meeting, a presentation will be given at a City Council Work Session to ask for approval and guidance on our recycling goals. Joelle had drafted talking points and power point slides and then practiced the presentation in front of this work group for feedback.

Joelle started the presentation with graphs showing the decline in Sierra Vista residential households participating in recycling from 2012-2024. Then she talked about short-term, medium term, and long-term recycling goals of the ESC. She finished the presentation with asking for concurrence and/or guidance on:

- a marketing study to determine community interest in recycling,
- an outreach program to encourage recycling,
- whether the City was interested in reinstating glass recycling,
- whether the City would support a cardboard drop-off center in partnership with a local business,
- whether the City would promote a competition of art made from recycled materials, and
- whether the City is interested in a long-term plan for developing a Memorandum of Understanding between a nonprofit or other entity (such as Fort Huachuca) to expand the local recycling effort.

Member comments were very positive on the draft presentation, but cautioned about the length to ensure there would be enough time for discussion with Council members. Joelle will finalize the presentation and send via email to ESC Commissioners for their comments and concurrence.

Transitioning to Let's Recycle Nonprofit:

Members agreed a new citizens' group could be set up, apart from this Work Group or the ESC, to move forward with exploring the Let's Recycle concept and validating its feasibility. This separate group could report findings and recommendations to the ESC. Bob agreed to coordinate this separate group and contact anyone he feels may be interested.

Wrap-up / Set Next Meeting Date:

- Joelle will coordinate with Jill Adams for giving our ESC Update and "Ask" presentation to the City Council at a June work meeting. [note: Subsequent contact with Ms. Adams indicated our presentation at either upcoming Work Session (June 25 or July 23) must come through Sharon, our liaison. Joelle contacted Sharon about setting up the meeting.]
- The next ESC meeting will be the field trip to the EOP and compost center on June 26th.
- Bob will coordinate the new citizens group to work on "Let's Recycle".
- There is no scheduled July Recycling Work Group meeting at this time.