

**Sierra Vista Environmental Stewardship Commission (ESC)
Minutes of Recycling Work Group Meeting
Wednesday, October 16, 2024 (3:30-5:00pm)
Sierra Vista Library Small Conference Room**

Attendees: Joelle Buffa, ESC Commissioner and Recycling Work Group Coordinator
Steve Spearman, ESC Commissioner (Chair)
David Jones, ESC Commissioner (Co-Chair)
Karen LeMay, ESC Commissioner and Work Group Secretary
Tom Runyon (interested community member)
Ted Mouras (interested community member)
Lori Kovash (interested community member)
Steve Conroy (interested community member)
Joe Kraps (interested community member)

Introduction / Icebreaker:

Each attendee introduced themselves and shared a childhood experience of making money selling recycled items. Responses were:

- soda bottles
- milk bottles
- newspapers
- blemished cantaloupes that would have been thrown away
- barbed wire removed from fields

Debrief of 10/5/2024 ESC booth at Vineyards in the Park:

Five ESC members staffed a booth provided by the SV Parks & Recreation Department at Vineyards in the Park to raise awareness of our recycling survey published on the City's Engage website. The booth had a poster with QR code for visitors to scan and complete the survey later, along with other recycling information. Everyone agreed it was great to chat directly with the public about local recycling interest and participation.

Other Ideas for Recycling Survey Outreach:

Ideas were:

- Print QR code or website on sewer/refuse bills or envelopes
- Farmers Market booth
- Chamber of Commerce events
- Joint Service Club meeting at VFW 1st Friday of the month
- Table in front of Home Depot / Ace Hardware/ Library, etc.
- ESC members do personal outreach to friends & organizations they belong to

Past City Recycling Programs / Future Suggestions:

Ted Mouras and Lori Kovash, members of the former Environmental Affairs Commission (EAC), spoke about Sierra Vista's recycling program started around 2008. This commission had recommended the recycling program idea to their City Council liaison, who then took the idea to City Council. The City did a multi-media public education an outreach blitz along with the curbside pickup which worked for a while. Contamination and international market for recyclables collapse halted program.

An idea proposed as a City program (but not implemented) was to have a recycling drop-off station near a school. This idea would have been convenient for parents and an opportunity to teach children the importance of recycling.

Suggestions for future programs were:

- make drop-off location convenient
- start with 1 or 2 bulky and/or heavy items such as cardboard or glass
- charge trash pickup by weight (to encourage recycling)
- drop-off locations should be staffed to limit incorrect items
- drop-off location containers with a small slit for cardboard, and small round hole for plastics, etc. to reduce or eliminate contamination
- encourage an Environmental Club at Buena High and work with them to promote recycling

Recycling Opportunities at Sierra Vista Golf Center (SVGC):

At the last ESC meeting, members recommended recycling bins be placed at SVGC, at least for aluminum cans. Sharon Flissar (Public Works Director) said she would explore the idea. These cans would be added to the cans collected at the Nancy Brua Animal Shelter for funding the shelter.

It was suggested that providing a machine at the golf course that refills water bottles would encourage golfers to bring their own reusable water bottle. Another idea was to bring back the 5-gal plastic water jugs that were available at various places along the course and re-filled each day prior to their removal during COVID

EPA Grant to ADEQ for Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR):

In 2023, the EPA awarded Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) a SWIFR grant to develop a new statewide solid waste plan to move toward a circular economy (by addressing trash reduction, reuse, recycling and composting). This grant focused on developing a new solid waste plan, but future grants are available for recycling programs. Karen has sent an email to J.B. Shaw, the ADEQ Recycling Coordinator, for more details and will report back to the work group with information.

Ideas for Future Activities:

One suggestion was to have a city-wide recycling day to assess the community's interest and participation in drop-off recycling services involving multiple partners: Boy Scouts to unload cars, Sierra Vista Herald to publicize, big box stores to collect cardboard, Bisbee to take glass, and Vinny's to donate pizza. Another member suggested this idea would make sense after a recycling program was already in place, so the community could continue recycling after this "kick-off" event.

Earth Day 2025 was suggested as a target date for a recycling event.

Another future activity previously discussed was having an art contest using all recyclable materials at Art in the Park in 2025.

Wrap-up / Set Next Meeting Date:

Our recycling survey period ends December 15th and results are expected from the City by January.

The next Recycle Work Group meeting will be sometime in January 2025.