

**LCRA Water Conservation Incentives Program Review Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes: Aug.14, 2017**

The Water Conservation Incentives Program Review Committee convened at 2:01 p.m. Monday, Aug. 14, 2017. The following members attended:

- Karen Bondy, LCRA Water Resources
- Joseph Crane, LCRA Board of Directors
- George Russell, LCRA Board of Directors
- Mike Hodge, City of Marble Falls, Committee Chair
- Ken Gorzycki, Horseshoe Bay Resort
- Drema Gross, Austin Water Utility
- John Hoffman, South Texas Project (participated by phone)

LCRA staff members, John Hofmann, Valerie Miller, Brett Briant, Bailey Smith and Stacy Pandey, also participated. Committee member Stephen Cooper, LCRA Board member, was absent.

LCRA staff discussed proposed Water Conservation Incentives Program rule changes. Miller gave an overview of recommendations and discussions from the May 10, 2017, meeting. She said staff met with firm customers to seek guidance of how they would like to see the rebate and grant programs develop. Staff sought out additional water authorities and utilities with well-established rebate programs to discuss pros and cons of smart controllers, Commercial, Institutional and Industrial (CII), and rainwater harvesting programs and rebates.

Briant presented on smart controllers and the CII program. Staff recommended rebates of 50 percent of the cost up to \$100 for pre-approved WaterSense-labelled controllers. For the CII program, staff recommended a rebate of 50 percent of cost up to \$20,000 per customer. An applicant must have staff approval and a water audit. Gross asked if applicants would have to fix any leaks found during a water audit. Staff responded there is no wording in the rules to require this, but each application will be reviewed by staff, and staff will work with the customer on the most effective measures to improve onsite water conservation. Gross asked if the rules define who can perform a water audit. Bondy asked how a pre-approved professional is defined. Staff reported Section 4.2 of the rules states “a comprehensive water audit of the facility by a pre-approved professional, such as a plumber, auditor, or inspector, is required prior to applying for any water-saving technology rebates.” Gross commented TCEQ, based on enforcement programs, determined a licensed irrigator cannot perform an inspection. Hodge commented if we restrict to only irrigation professionals, there will not be enough professional available to perform and execute program. Gross asked if the 50 percent up to \$5,000 for the audit is inclusive of the 50 percent up to \$20,000 for water-savings technology. Staff responded, no; the two rebate amounts are independent of one another.

Pandey presented on rainwater harvesting and small grant funding. She discussed the rainwater harvesting rebate for residential applicants would be 25 cents per gallon of

storage capacity for a non-potable system, 100 gallons or greater. Customer may apply for up to \$600 annually until sizing capacity is met. Pandey explained customers asked for a more flexible and user-friendly rebate program and increased resources for customers to market and implement the rebates program. She said staff also is recommending a more flexible small grant program under the cost-share program that will not be tied to acre-feet savings; can focus on education, outreach or technology advancements; and can be adopted within other communities. The rebate amount would be a minimum 20 percent cost-share requirement for applicants applying for up to \$15,000, which can be made through a combination of local funds and/or in-kind services. Gross asked if the rainwater harvesting rebate would allow customers to come in yearly for up to \$600 in rebates. Staff said they would be, until the sizing calculator for their site is met. Gorzycki recommended removing the Skydrop and Rachio controller name from the rules, and have it read “pre-approved WaterSense-labelled smart controller.” He asked that the small grant fund not allow for start-up companies or general research programs.

Crane recommended staff partner with county agents to help get rebate information out to the public to help grow the program. Russell was concerned the rebates did not include the domestic use customers. Staff responded all firm water customers, which includes domestic use, are eligible for the program. He asked how staff will be getting the word out on the expanded program. Staff responded they will partner with the firm water customers to help distribute information developed with LCRA’s communications department to reach the end users. Staff will be working directly with customers to determine the most effective methods for each community. Hodge asked to make the deadline for a rebate be increased to 90 days. Gross asked if the City of Austin or their customers would be eligible to apply for rebates that are not currently being offered from City of Austin. Staff said at this time, no, but are open to discussing future options.

The committee approved all recommendations, with three amendments: 1) 50 percent up to the \$5,000 for a water audit is not included in the 50 percent of the cost up to \$20,000 under the CII program; 2) increase the application deadline to 90 days from date on receipt; and 3) remove the controller names, Rachio and Skydrop, from the rules. Crane made a motion to approve all recommendations with amendments, seconded by Gorzycki. Motion passed unanimously.

The committee discussed filling customer representative vacancies, and agreed staff needs to take recommendations at September 2017 customer meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:28 p.m.