

## Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

February 19, 2020

The City of Las Cruces Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Ad Hoc Committee meeting was held February 19, 2020 at the City of Las Cruces Room 2007-A meeting room, 700 N. Main, Las Cruces, NM. Meeting commenced at 2:30 p.m.

### **Ad Hoc Committee Members Present:**

Craig Weisbart  
Bo Cichuniec  
Ron Fitzherbert  
Gill M. Sorg  
Sylvia Hacker  
Yvonne M. Flores, City Councilor, District 6  
Kari Bachman

### **Adhoc Committee Members Absent:**

Krysten Aguilar  
Mary Armstrong  
Gabe Jacquez  
Bobby Stout

### **Others Present:**

Sonya Delgado, Director of Parks and Recreation  
David Maestas, Director of Public Works  
David Sedillo, Deputy Director of Public Works  
Josh Garcia, Airport Operations  
Cathy Mathews, Landscape Architect  
Hazel Nevarez, Parks and Recreation Senior Office Manager  
Franco Granillo, Parks Administrator  
Lisa LaRocque, Sustainability Officer

### **1. Introductions**

IPM Ad Hoc Committee members introduced themselves and gave a brief synopsis of their background. Staff introduced themselves and stated their position.

#### **2. Current Discussion Items** **2.1 Overall History and Timeline**

Ms. Delgado briefed committee members on City's portion of the IPM timeline history:

May 2019 – Parks and Recreation Department took their IPM Policy to City Council for adoption as a living document. Ms. Delgado said Parks and Recreation never had an IPM policy before and wanted to put something on

paper to get it started. She said by living document, the policy would go back to City Council annually with any adjustments, giving Parks and Recreation the opportunity to look the policy over, gives the community an opportunity to give input, and lets Council know what the Department is doing. The IPM Policy was tabled, and the Department was asked to conduct a couple work sessions between May and August 2019. As a result of the work sessions – need more community input and a policy that will encompass all City Departments that utilize pesticides (Parks & Recreation Department, Public Works Department, and Economic Development Department (where Airport resides)).

August 2019 – back to Council to establish IPM Ad Hoc Committee. Also, at this meeting, Resolution banning glyphosate on City property by City Staff and contractors that work on City property. This would happen once all current supply had been exhausted. At this time Parks & Recreation and Public Works had already stopped using glyphosate. The Airport will stop using glyphosate when they are out.

Around October 2019 – Call for persons interested in participating in IPM Ad Hoc Committee. Appointment by Mayor in late November, early December 2020.

January 29, 2020 – First IPM Ad Hoc Committee meeting.

Committee Member Bachman said there was history prior to this with a lot of conversation at various City Council meetings. Ms. Delgado said that piece is prior to when Parks & Recreation came in, which was in May 2019. Ms. Delgado said she did not know the prior history prior to doing the IPM policy.

It was asked what the main concerns were for tabling the IPM policy. Ms. Delgado responded the IPM Policy that was presented was just for the Parks and Recreation Department (Parks, Trails, Medians, Right of Ways, Alleyways) and Council wanted an all inclusive policy, to include Public Works (Facilities and Streets) and Economic Development (Airport).

Councilor Flores said there was a work session on August 27, 2017 and Councilors asked for alternatives for glyphosate. Councilor Flores said what City Council wanted and those present wanted was an environment and people friendly type of weed killers, non-threatening to the environment, human health and wildlife. She said the glitch for the Parks and Recreation Department was the budget, allocations based on what the cost would be based on what was already being used.

Ms. Delgado said one of the requests was what would it cost to completely stop using any kind of chemical and that dollar amount was provided. The other question was what it would cost to stop using glyphosate, and used Avenger, and that dollar amount was given, which was extremely high just on the Parks and Recreation side. Staff was then asked to look at how many applications of Avenger it would take versus Roundup which ended up being three to four times as much depending on what the weed was, where it was, and how often staff could get back to it. Ms. Delgado said now, Avenger is not being used because it is too expensive. Staff is looking at other things to use and in process to see what is working and not working. Councilor Vasquez asked how long this process would take. Ms. Delgado said at the

next meeting, could report what chemicals have already been looked at if this is something the committee would like to see.

Committee Member Cichuniec commented that pesticide labels are open to the public to see toxicity levels. There was discussion as to how accurate the information is and Committee Member Bachman said there has been discussion on this in length at Council and if available to look at, it would be helpful.

Ms. LaRocque added to the history saying that in 2014, 2015, La Semilla had funding to do an urban agricultural plan and one of the actions of the plan was to promote the development of an IPM. As spokespeople came forward, it elevated interest in different pesticides and overall management. Ms. LaRocque said part of this is becoming more aware of what preventative steps to take when we cross the threshold that is needed to have more of an intervention, and where to apply this. She said how do we bring down the use of chemicals without excessive labor or cost, how do we transform the environment to be self-sustaining, to be regenerative so it doesn't require more money.

## 2.2 Different Environments

Ms. Mathews informed the Committee members that the City has recently adopted a Median Landscaping Policy. It involves defining different zones of the City that will have different types of median designs in them and some specific guidelines regarding the actual design of those medians. Ms. Mathews said these different types of landscapes and landscape designs require different types of maintenance regimes. Ms. Mathews provided a PowerPoint presentation showing the four defined types of micro-climates – Urban, Mesa, Bajada, and Valley and provided examples of landscapes in each. Also provided were recommendations for trees, shrubs, ground covers and other pellets for each micro-climate.

Councilor Flores asked if pesticides or herbicides needed are kept in mind for these landscape designs. Mr. Granillo said the style of landscape doesn't dictate what kind of herbicide or how much herbicide is used, it is the land it is put on. It depends on what's in the land that you develop on.

Committee Member Cichuniec added that from a management strategy, depending on what types of grass covers are used could determine/force cutting down on selective herbicides.

Chair Sorg said there are a lot of other environments besides medians and parkways and asked if there was any information on those. Ms. Mathews said there are no guidelines per se or as detailed as for medians. In general, the zones can apply to parks similarly, but many parks have open space to play in which means turf grass. Chair Sorg asked if there is anything besides turf grass and medians that the City has to manage. Mr. Granillo said there are a lot of landscapes within the parks. Just at landscaping, there are planters, pots, parking lots, turf. The major ones for IPM are the medians and open space turf.

### 2.3 List of Plants with Pictures That We Control

A PowerPoint was provided displaying pictures of plants that are controlled.

Director Maestas informed Committee Members that for Public Works, maintenance isn't about putting in types of landscaping, it is about taking out stuff that doesn't need to be in areas they maintain. As to what works best on the different types of applications, they defer to Park staff knowledge. Director Maestas said on mechanical means of controlling, bigger excavating equipment, backhoes and labor are used in the pond. As for spraying, they defer to Parks. As for open channels, smaller equipment is used, labor, and spraying is similar to Parks.

Mr. Garcia, of Airport Operations, informed Committee Members plants need to be removed from around the lights on the runway and are sprayed, and they also spray around some of the landscape areas.

Mr. Granillo named the vegetation maintained and controlled by the Parks Department throughout the seasons. He said, for the record, as far as establishing a threshold, acceptance or tolerance to weeds, staff has done that for a couple of years now, because staff doesn't spray in the parks. Staff has allowed a threshold of weeds to develop and try to maintain it through habitat manipulation, through selecting proper grass for the environment to control weed growth. He said staff also performs mechanical, physical, and cultural practices in the parks, so herbicides aren't used. They uniform irrigate, use fertilization, uniform mowing to keep grass strong and healthy so if a weed does pop up on turf, the grass will choke it out. Mr. Granillo said one area that is difficult to provide a threshold is the medians and non-gathering areas, because those areas are dangerous for staff to work in if maintaining heavily weeded areas by hand. Having weeds in those types of areas can promote infestations that you don't want to see in other areas, homes or garden areas. There are a lot of reasons to keep down weeds in medians because they are wide open, they are susceptible to windblown seeds - so these areas are sprayed more. Goal in the median area is to spray with pre-emergent to prevent weeds and not post-emerge, and then spot spray.

### 2.4 Other IPM Plans

Ms. LaRocque informed Committee Members she contacted colleagues in other southwestern cities on their IPM plans. She said she brought them together with the hope they have some great ideas. She said things in common on several of them was creating zones that have thresholds for when it tipped you into a more invasive or labor intensive or chemical intensive style and to be able to record and document progress. She reiterated what prompted this Ad Hoc Committee was the clear delineation of what prompts you to go to a more invasive way and what steps you take to let nature do its job as best you can. Ms. LaRocque said

she is still trying to get an updated plan from Santa Fe, and once has all the plans, she will send forward to Committee Members.

Ms. LaRocque said there is a new research botanical garden going in south of the Convention Center. It will have four different research plots that have different moisture regimes and created different landscape collections. The person doing the research for this said they could help us with the education about embracing our native vegetation and looking into the challenges of transitioning back to the native vegetation.

Mr. Granillo said when the IPM document is created, it needs to be workable, something people can find information in easily, and don't want it to be 500 pages.

Committee Member Cichuniec speaking, adding a health threshold to an IPM program for landscapes would be new. Results are being measured but are not totally measured and documented on the health impact side and if it was, it could make a huge impact on the reduction of chemicals. Threshold needs to be set.

### 3. Future Discussion Items

Chair Sorg would like to see how we control our plants in the City now, what we have been doing, and what we do where, what methods we use and where we use them.

Director Delgado said when Ms. Larocque sends out the IPM plans, if Committee members can start diving into the policies themselves and start talking about what we are looking at, so at next meeting, we can start pulling the pieces apart and putting it back together. Ms. Delgado said this will be a living document. Keep in mind it is possible that although this Ad Hoc goal is to present a living document June 15, 2020, we could extend the date to finish up a little bit more.

Director Maestas added along those lines, like with any plan, we can still have approval on one and have amendments that come later on.

Councilor Flores said Ms. Mathews presentation dealt with what we do have and what we could have in some areas, but we also have to look at the immediate situations where herbicides are needed.

Chair Sorg requested at next meeting, when present, tell what will be done in places where Roundup was used and can't be used anymore.

Committee Member Bachman said La Semilla had provided a document in a previous meeting that provided certain elements of an IPM policy or plan, and asked Mr. Granillo if he had that document. Mr. Granillo said those things listed were put in the Parks and Recreation draft plan and were highlighted in yellow. Committee Member Bachman said she would like a copy of La Semilla's document. Ms.

Larocque said she would also go through the IPM plans with that checklist, to see what is there and what is missing.

Director Delgado clarified that she was not aware of the Urban Ag plan form 2014, 2015 when she first went in front of Council and found out rather quickly that something had happened and there were other conversations. Had she known that in that plan, it was talking about an all inclusive IPM program, she would have approached this in a different manner. Secondly, she did forget to put the 2018 first work session in her timeline, where the idea was introduced.

Committee Member Cichuniec asked because meetings are recorded, if there was any retro collaboration done with other committees that would help create some sort of dialogue outside of these meetings, but in an open committee format online just to save time. Chair Sorg and Councilor Flores both said they hadn't.

4. Next Meeting Date

4.1 Wednesday, March 25, 2020, 2:30 pm

5. Adjournment

Chair Sorg adjourned at 3:49 p.m.

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Hazel Nevarez, Recording Secretary

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Gil Sorg, Chair