

SEPTEMBER
2004

Landfill for Lease?

John Darling

Seems like the push to privatize Arlington's landfill came out of nowhere; an official request for proposals has recently been issued while I'm still fretting about environmental and recycling (same thing?) consequences. So last week I spoke to the city official who oversees the landfill, Trey Yelverton, Director of the Neighborhood Services Department. Here are some of the points that concerned me the most:

Why is it happening so fast? It's not; some form of privatization has been considered for about a year, culminating in the hiring of a consultant and his production of a favorable report.

Why is it happening at all? It's part of a national trend among cities to take advantage of their assets. Arlington could expect an estimated doubling of annual revenue from a lessee.

Will all current environmental safeguards and monitoring continue? Yes, they are mandated by state or federal rules that must be followed. Mr Yelverton discussed the idea of a lease administrator, a city employee who would oversee and enforce these and other aspects of the operation.

Will we continue to be able to recycle a variety of items at the landfill if it is leased? The request for proposals (RFP) contains provisions for current recycling services to remain in place. That's a yes, but with this provision: The RFP is viewed as a starting point, and there could be changes during negotiations. This might mean big recycling changes or none at all, something unknowable at this time. Mr Yelverton's goal is an invisible change, that is, no visible differences in the operation.

Will leasing shorten the life of the landfill? Yes. Companies buy or lease landfills in order to fill them quickly. Arlington's anticipated increase in revenue would be related to the increase in trash coming in.

How much time do we have left? That's hard to say. We recently received a permit to fill part of it 50 feet higher, and there's some talk of expanding to the west. Currently, the landfill might last 20-30 years. If it is leased and becomes a regional site, a conservative estimate might be about half of that.

What will happen once the landfill is full? Our trash will have to be taken to a transfer station, possibly at the closed landfill, compacted, loaded onto trucks, and carried to an outlying landfill. This will happen sooner or later, presumably sooner with a lessee operating the landfill. Then Arlington residents can expect to pay more for trash disposal, and recycling possibilities could remain the same or change in various ways, possibly for the worst.

Should we do anything? A lessee might be in place by next May. We have a superior landfill now, and it appears that the

September Meeting

TOPIC: Things You Can Do to Improve Air Quality

SPEAKER: Sam Adamie,
Environmental Specialist,
Tarrant County Public Health
Department

WHEN: Wednesday, September 8, 7:00 pm

WHERE: First United Methodist Church,
313 N. Center at Division.
(Enter through north door.)

Remember to bring
something for the raffle!

From the President Marian Hiler



Three environmental issues of note affecting Arlington citizens certainly have captured ACC's attention. Clean air, or the absence of it,

has been a local issue for years now. Blue Skies Alliance, the clean-air advocacy coalition, is expanding its monthly meeting locations into all the non-attainment counties in North Texas. Last month, ACC proudly sponsored Blue Skies Alliance's first Arlington Clean Air Now Meetup. Its executive director and our August speaker, Wendi Hammond, spoke to a large turnout of environmentally concerned folks. She said that North Texans do have the power to influence the outcome. Blue Skies will continue to have monthly Arlington meetups, tentatively on the 4th Wednesday of the month, at the West Police Service Center Community Room on

West Green Oaks Boulevard.

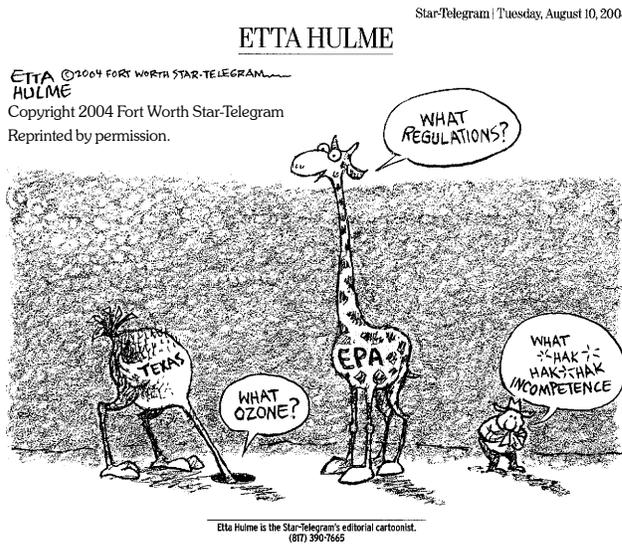
Of more recent concern is what the leasing of the city's landfill will do to its exemplary recycling program. John Darling checked into that recently and you can read his findings in this month's newsletter.

The third issue of the moment is only

quality riparian forest and bottomland habitat in the study area." This finding was reported in the Johnson Creek Corridor Plan prepared by the Johnson Creek Consortium in 1997. This section of Johnson Creek has a good diversity of vegetation providing food and shelter for a number of wildlife species.

We have questions. Where is the exact site of the stadium and surrounding parking lots to be? Is protection of this natural resource part of the plan? At this point, specifics are not known. The area in question may be a proposed Army Corp of Engineers project. If the land was purchased as part of that federal project, then the city does need to heed any restrictions. (I was unable to verify this in time for this month's newsletter).

In addition to any impact on the creek habitat, runoff issues must be addressed. Building such a large structure with its expanse of parking lots within the creek's watershed will increase the burden on the creek. Earlier this summer, the rains and subsequent runoff into Johnson Creek caused flooding at nearby Six Flags. The addition of another large area of impermeable surface will only add to that, affecting many more neighbors downstream. You may say I'm a dreamer, but if a majority of voters do want the Cowboys stadium, I would love to see the powers-that-be incorporate green building methods. How about a parking area using permeable surface materials? Looks like we need to start working on changing some city codes.



a potential one that hinges on the possibility of the Cowboys stadium coming to Arlington. You may be thinking, okay, maybe she's confusing sports with environmental concerns. And yes, the stadium issue would be a great discussion, but that isn't an ACC issue. Instead, our interest is drawn to the location of the proposed stadium. There is a 66-acre tract along Johnson Creek, southwest of Amerquest Field, that "possibly contains the largest high-

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Our August Speaker

We are indebted to Wendi Hammond, Executive Director of Blue Skies Alliance, who presented a spirited program on our dirty air and emphasized the need for action. A major point was her announcement of Arlington's meeting of Blue Skies Alliance on August 23, the first of a proposed series of monthly gatherings. The seriousness of Ms Hammond's topic made it impossible to photograph her properly until ACC veteran Al Vincent volunteered to lighten the mood.



Landfill *continued from page 1*

request for proposals has received exhaustive thought. Given all this, I believe our role now is to make certain that our council members know our priorities as they negotiate a contract.

In my opinion, I still wish they'd leave the landfill alone for a simple reason: I trust our local government much more than any large business constantly tempted to cut corners for greater profits. I also want the landfill to last as long as possible, not just for the unknown future costs of trash disposal, but also because of the adverse impacts of numerous big trucks traveling every day to and from the edge of the metroplex. My domestic supervisor's view is more jaundiced: She sees the landfill lease as a band-aid remedy to our budget woes and believes that the auction of assets by city officials is short-sighted and potentially reckless.

If you know of any real-life experiences with landfill leases, pro or con, please let me know; we need to educate ourselves on this subject. All information will be welcome and printed here or posted on the Web site. Regardless of your opinion, I hope you will take the time to tell your mayor and council members what you think. If, like me, you're not in the habit of doing that sort of thing, remember to communicate with the mayor, your district member, and each of the three at-large members. They're listed below:

Dr. Robert N. Cluck, Mayor

cluckr@ci.arlington.tx.us 817-459-6121

District 1 Council Member Joe Bruner

brunerj@ci.arlington.tx.us 817-917-1304 or 817-633-2332

District 2 Council Member Sheri Capehart

capeharts@ci.arlington.tx.us 817-483-4869

District 3 Council Member Wayne Ogle

oglew@ci.arlington.tx.us 817-371-2872

District 4 Council Member Kathryn Wilemon

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District 5 Council Member Lana Wolff

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District 6 At Large Council Member Steve McCollum

mccollums@ci.arlington.tx.us 817-459-6122

District 7 At Large Council Member Ron Wright

wrightr@ci.arlington.tx.us 817-459-6141

District 8 At Large Council Member Gene Patrick

patrickg@ci.arlington.tx.us 817-459-6122

Thanks Again, UTA

Last week ACC was given seven almost new recycling bins by the folks at UTA's Environmental Health and Safety Office. They were replacing old bins with new ones and once again thought of us and our July 4th recycling effort. This isn't the first time Craig Powell, Becky Valentich, and others in that office have helped us out, and we always appreciate it.

Vandergriff Park Ecological Learning Center

Here's an exciting possibility: Our Parks Department people are thinking about the kind of project that fits beautifully with ACC's goals and interests. On August 20, Park Planner Joe Pack chaired the first meeting, and about 15 people attended. Joe presented an ambitious set of ideas and marvellous examples for an educational site emphasizing every imaginable aspect of water in our landscapes. To learn about the next meeting, contact Joe Pack at 817-459-5489 or *packj@ci.arlington.tx.us*. Here are a few of the ideas behind the project (heavily edited to save space):

The philosophical concept is to combine science with landscape architecture/design.

The way water is handled today is altering habitats by altering historic hydrology. The project's design would address the creation of solutions in a functional and aesthetic manner.

All water that falls on the site should be reused on site or reintroduced into the soil.

Natural resource conservation techniques should be emphasized, observed and studied.

Increased infiltration through the use of various porous pavement materials and increased natural vegetation should be encouraged. Methods to control runoff, prevent erosion, and foster low-impact development can be presented.

The practical advantages of intelligent water management should be demonstrated. This includes the use of native, low water requiring plants, mulches, and ground covers. Intelligent sprinkler design and appropriate head type and spacing add to sound water management practices.

We could help teach the LEED Green Building Rating System developed by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Constructed ecosystems could filter, clean, and stabilize wastewater from buildings and their sites. Constructed wetlands, planted rock filters, recirculation wastewater gardens, and solar aquatic systems are examples of filtration methods.



Site of the proposed Vandergriff Park Ecological Learning Center. ACC members who helped plant there a while ago will agree that it's a great place to learn about water.

Wildscape Update John Dycus



Welcome back from vacation, Molly Hollar, who took off for Colorado because “we senior citizens must be careful not to risk getting over-

heated in case August should revert back to normal.” As if any of us at Veterans Park could outwork the Wonder of the Wildscape, regardless of the weather. The Olympics, just completed, should have a competition in long-term nurturing. They could call it the 100-mile Molly.

And what did happen to the dog days of July and August with their overheated afternoons? Our very unusual cool, rainy—delightful—summer has kept the wildscape volunteers enthusiastic and the native plants verdant. That enthusiasm poured forth in July as the volunteers attacked the fire ants with the recommended drench, cut down the unwanted plants and added compost at the prairie site adopted by Jan Miller.

Weeds and Bermuda grass have proliferated, but your weed warriors have risen to the challenge. Pat Lovejoy led a squadron of eradicators at the August workday, enhancing the sunny butterfly garden while it was still cool, eliminating any undesirables (plants, not people!) brazen enough to reappear. As it got hotter, the team moved to the shade and continued the battle all along the northern sidewalk for about 6 feet back. (The poison ivy had been removed to maintain the volunteers’ enthusiasm.)

Now the walkers, joggers, cyclers and skaters can enjoy the weedless plantings of red salvia coccinea and turk’s cap along with the hummingbirds, admire the beautyberry and coralberry sought after by the songbirds, and watch the butterflies and hummingbirds nectaring on the lantana and zexmenia as they make their way along this major sidewalk.

During the July and August Tuesday workdays and Friday propagation days, volunteers from Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, the Native Plant Society, Arlington Conservation Council and park passers-by have planted turk’s cap, violet ruellia, frogfruit, horseherb, lantana, salvia coccinea and columbine to add color and attract wildlife. More color has come from the Giant Swallowtails and Tiger Swallowtails as they seemingly float through the air. Birds chase the Eastern Black Swallowtails, and the Giant Sulphurs have been spotted rushing to and fro. Gulf Fritillar-



ies lay their eggs on the passionvine, and the recently planted Hercules Club trees behind the pavilion have a new crop of swallowtail caterpillars.

Hummingbirds add amazing speed and motion as they hover at the coral honeysuckle, turk’s cap and salvia coccinea. Mockingbirds feast from the beautyberry and add their songs to the cardinals’ and wrens’, with the squirrels’ chatter joining in. Rabbits scurry down the trails, and a toad was recently seen emerging from the pond covered in duckweed, comically resembling a green jumping plant with legs. Now that’s entertainment. And at no charge to wildscape volunteers!

Back indoors, Glenn Troutman, president of the West Sector (WECAN)

and a member of the Arlington Parks Board, continues to keep everything running smoothly at the greenhouse on Wednesdays. He lifts and mixes the heavy sacks of soil, moves plants around as needed and does whatever he can to make the tasks more tempting for the propagation volunteers. In turn, they’ve been busy preparing for the Sept. 25 native plant sale benefitting the wildscape.

After propagating more than \$6,000 worth of plants, the focus is now on the fall sale. Most of the seed and cuttings come from local plants, which are perfectly adapted to the local weather and soil. Other plants are rescued from the bulldozer’s path. Enough are grown to put out in the wildscape, and the remainder are sold to benefit the work. Thanks to the Arlington Parks Department for use of the greenhouse.

Fall, incidentally, is the ideal time to plant in Texas because of the summers. In response to the cooler, wetter weather, plants shoot their roots deeper in preparation for the inevitable hot-and-dry. With spring planting, the plants must be tended much more carefully to ensure they survive their first summer.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Tuesday mornings, 9–noon at the Molly Hollar Wildscape in Veterans Park

Wednesday mornings, 9–noon at the greenhouse in Randol Mill Park

Friday mornings, 9–noon at the greenhouse

First Saturday morning of the month (second Saturday on a holiday weekend), 8–noon at the wildscape.

Bring gloves, trowels, shovels, etc. Water and snacks are provided. Contact Molly—mahollar@earthlink.net, home (817) 860-5580, cell (817) 319-6924—if you can help.

New York Avenue Blackland Prairie

Jan Miller has been working with the Parks Department to get workdays restarted in the prairie. She reports that workdays will resume in October. Please contact Jan for more information at 817-483-0579 or jmiller12@mindspring.com.



Arlington's First Community Garden

The initial garden meeting on August 16 drew about 15 enthusiastic people, and now the second meeting has been set for Monday, September 20 at 7:00 pm. It will be held at the Parks Department headquarters, 717 West Main Street (NW corner of Cooper and Main), and everyone interested is encouraged to attend. Senior Park Planner Gordon Robertson will be available to answer questions. Stephen Smith has been working hard in hopes of opening the garden next spring and has a list of subcommittee possibilities sure to interest some among you.

Fall Native Plant Sale

Don't miss the next big native plant sale. It will be held on Saturday, September 25, at the Molly Hollar Wildscape at Veterans Park from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm. Here's what you'll find:

Perennials

blackfoot daisy
butterfly weed
columbine, yellow
fall aster
four-nerve daisy
lanceleaf coreopsis
mealy blue sage
Mexican butterfly weed
pavonia
purple coneflower
salvia coccinea
zexmenia

Vines

coral honeysuckle
passionvine
snapdragon vine

Groundcovers

cedar sedge
frogfruit
golden groundsel
horseherb
lyreleaf sage
Texas sedge
violet ruellia
white avens

Shrubs

beautyberry
flame acanthus
lantana horrida
salvia horrida
salvia greggii
turk's cap

Trees

Carolina buckthorn
Eastern red cedar
Mexican buckeye
roughleaf dogwood
soapberry

Grasses

(and miscellaneous from Bluestem Nursery)
Lindheimer's muhly
Mexican feather grass
little bluestem
Indian grass
willow leaf sunflower
giant rudbeckia
obedient plant

Books

Native Texas Plants, 2nd edition, Wasowski and Wasowski
Texas Wildscapes: Gardening for Wildlife, Damude and Bender
Butterfly Gardening for the South, Geyata Ajilvsgi

Prices

4-inch pots, \$2
quarts, \$3
6-inch pots, \$4
gallons, \$6
trees in larger pots, \$10-\$15

Thanks To Shane Goetz for supporting our efforts. If you'd like to help ACC and publicize your business, call any board member for details.



METRO 817/265-2902
LOCAL 817/274-2905

THE LAW OFFICE OF SHANE GOETZ

715 WEST ABRAM ST. ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76013

ACC Garage Sale Returns - Save Your Stuff!

It's been gone a while, but now our garage sale will be returning on Saturday, October 2. You may recall that Dale Denton has a great location for a garage sale, and thanks to him we're planning for another profitable garage sale. Here's the point: Save your stuff for the sale, and we'll do our best to recycle it while making a buck for ACC. Thanks.

Arlington Conservation Council Membership Application

Memberships are good for one year, renewable each January. Your dues go directly to our public education efforts.

Membership Information

Please circle membership category.

Name _____

Individual \$12.00

Address _____

Student \$6.00

Family \$18.00

Telephone _____ Fax _____

Supporting \$24.00

E-mail _____

Organization/Business \$36.00

How did you hear about us? _____

Make checks payable to Arlington Conservation Council. Mail to ACC, Box 216, Arlington, TX 76004-0216.
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THE POST OAK

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Don't forget!

Sam Adamie

Things You Can Do to Improve Air Quality

**September 8
First United Methodist Church**

**Be sure to visit us at
arlingtonconservationcouncil.org**



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