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Permanent household hazardous waste facility planned in Mesa

Feb 10th, 2017 · by Olivia Q Davila, Special to the Independent · Comments: 1

The Mesa City Council heard from Scott Bouchie on Thursday, Feb. 9, about the details regarding a permanent household hazardous waste facility.

[Related link: <http://mesaindependent.com/news/manager-sought-for-pre-construction-work-on-household-hazardous-waste-collection-facility/>]

Mr. Bouchie, city of Mesa director of environmental management and sustainability, presented the current plans and renderings for a new household hazardous waste facility, which would be located at 2412 N. Center St. in Mesa.

At present, the city holds two household hazardous waste collection events a year, one in the spring and another in the fall. Each event lasts eight hours.

As the events have increased in popularity and the demands for hazardous disposal have grown, Mr. Bouchie feels it is time to have a more permanent solution to the disposal of hazardous waste.

"We're sending anywhere from three to four semi's [of waste] by the end of these events," he said.

Current household hazardous waste events accept items such as aerosol cans, appliances, batteries, gasoline and others. The new facility will continue to accept most items listed as "accepted" on the city of Mesa's website page under "Household Hazardous Waste Program," apart from items such as prescription drugs.

Mr. Bouchie explained that for the collection of prescription drugs "we are required to have a police officer on site," and employing an officer to be present during the hours of operation at the facility each week is not economically effective to the project.

Mesa Vice Mayor David Luna questioned the facility's ability to take plastic bags that residents collect, saying "... I have big bags of them in my garage." To his dismay, the household hazardous waste facility does not currently have a system in place to properly dispose of plastic bags.

Even so, the new facility is projected to significantly lower wait times and increase convenience to residents with it being open six days a week. According to Steve Wright, city of Mesa director of public information and communication, the new facility will operate Monday through Saturday, 40 hours a week, with 20 of those hours being open to the public. The remaining 20 hours closed to the public will be spent sorting and disposing of the material dropped off.

The new facility will be open to Mesa residents only, with verification being requested in the form of a utility bill. The city hopes to have the facility open to the public in late 2018.

Olivia Q Davila is a journalism student at the Arizona State University Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and wrote the article as a class assignment.

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