

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL AND SUCCESSOR AGENCY



DATE: February 7, 2017

TITLE: Ordinance Amending the Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code Requiring Landscape-Related Businesses to Complete a Course on Water Efficiency

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RECOMMENDATION

Introduce First Reading and read by title, An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Desert Hot Springs Amending Title 5 “Business Licenses And Regulations” of the City of Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code to repeal and readopt Chapter 5.04.040 “License Required” with a required landscaper course on overseeding alternative to include a course on Water Efficiency for issuance of a Business License to landscape-related businesses in the City of Desert Hot Springs in its entirety.

DISCUSSION

The Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) is requesting that each member city and the County adopt consistent valleywide regulations that require completion of a course about water efficient landscaping as a prerequisite for the issuance of a business license to landscape-related businesses. Last fall, CVAG staff began working with Coachella Valley Water District staff to create a program modeled after CVAG’s existing Landscaper Overseeding Certification Ordinance and the online “smart scalping” course. The new course would focus on water use efficiency for professional landscapers, to increase their knowledge and use of best practices in water conservation. Since that time, CVAG staff has been working with CVWD, College of the Desert (COD), and other local water agencies to combine the water efficiency course with the existing Landscaper Overseeding Certification Program. By doing so, landscape professionals could be certified in best practices to meet regional goals to improve our air quality and increase water efficiency in a “one-stop shop” approach.

The original model ordinance for a landscapers’ course on the overseeding alternative, known as smart scalping was developed and approved by the CVAG Executive Committee in July 2007 and subsequently adopted by CVAG member agencies. The smart scalping course has been offered since 2007 and continues to be a very effective part of our regional air quality program. The course is offered free of charge to landscape professionals and there is no cost to member agencies. In the first 18 months of the course approximately 630 overseeding certificates were issued. The smart scalping course is now offered online by College of the Desert, providing easy access for landscape professionals.

The original model ordinance is Chapter 5.04.040(D) of the City of Desert Hot Springs Municipal Code.

An amendment to the existing Landscaper Overseeding Certification Ordinance to add the requirements for water efficiency certification is attached for your review. This amendment has been reviewed by CVAG general counsel and CVWD staff. It was approved by the CVAG Executive Committee on June 6, 2016. The water efficiency course will be combined with the air quality course and will be free to participants.

CVWD staff has developed the water efficiency curriculum with their professional staff and is now working with COD to prepare the course to be offered online. The content of the course is complete; the current task is formatting the curriculum into an online class and translating a version to Spanish. COD will ultimately manage the course along with CVAG’s existing online

smart scalping course, also managed by COD. Educational outreach in coordination with CVWD, COD, CVAG member agencies, and other local water agencies is planned. The goal is to complete the curriculum and amended ordinance by fall 2016.

This amendment to the existing “smart scalping” model landscaper certification ordinance was reviewed by the CVAG Energy and Environmental Resources Committee at their meeting of May 12. They recommended approval of the proposed amendment. The online water efficiency course and proposed amendment were also discussed with the CVAG Technical Planning Subcommittee of planning directors and community development directors at their May 17 meeting. They were supportive of the approach. CVWD and Desert Water Agency also participated in that meeting. Following the approval of the CVAG Executive Committee, the model ordinance is now being circulated for consideration by all CVAG member agencies. By combining course material on overseeding and water efficiency, participants could be certified in one simple process. Thus, implementation of this program should require little to no staff time on the part of the local jurisdictions.

Mission Springs Water District staff reviewed this amendment to the ordinance and did not have any objection or comment. All landscape plan reviews and approvals will continue to be completed by the Mission springs Water District.

Staff is recommending the approval of the attached amendment to the Model Landscaper Overseeding Certification Ordinance to include a course on Water Efficiency.

FISCAL IMPACT

The costs associated with developing the program with College of the Desert are being funded by the Coachella Valley Water District.

EXHIBIT(S)

- 1) Draft Model Landscaper Certification Ordinance Amendment