



Update on Recent Odor Concerns

By: City Manager, Jason Little

The City has recently received an increase in input and concerns regarding the presence of odors in and around our community. As you may be aware, there are three facilities in Melissa that are likely contributors to the odors: the North Texas Municipal Water District (NTMWD) Regional Disposal Facility (landfill); Texas Pure Compost; and the Melissa Feeders feedlot. The challenge we face in addressing these concerns as a City is we do not have authority or jurisdiction over any of these facilities, as they operate under a permit issued by the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ). **We wanted to provide some additional background and information on what is already being done to address these odors and what limitations we face in addressing these concerns.**



The Regional Disposal Facility located on SH 121 is operated by the NTMWD under the oversight of the TCEQ. The State of Texas granted TCEQ the authority over air quality, among other things, in the State and the NTMWD Regional Disposal Facility operates under a permit issued by TCEQ, thus concerns and complaints can only be enforced by the TCEQ. In recent years, NTMWD installed a methane collection system that burns off methane gas from the landfill. There are

currently 66 landfill gas extraction wells collecting gases generated within the landfill, with 19 more scheduled for later this year. The collected gases are routed to a flare where they are destroyed. **This system does not guarantee there are never any odors from the landfill, but it likely has limited the vast majority of the landfill odor since the collection system was installed. Even with the District's proactive measures, often the presence of odors coincide with weather related events such as excessive rain, light to no wind, high humidity, and low barometric pressure weather fronts.** NTMWD will be installing additional gas extraction wells, working to reduce the moisture content of the waste mass, and looking at some covering options to minimize odors. They are also monitoring the odors offsite with their own surveys. The District has taken this issue seriously and is working with the City to try to minimize any odors from the landfill, which is a further commitment to a partnership with our community. **NTMWD has continued to solicit feedback and encourages our residents to contact them with any concerns or to learn more about their odor control efforts which are further detailed [online here](#).**

Also located within the Regional Disposal Facility is the Texas Pure Compost facility which is a City of Plano operation. It is also governed by TCEQ, through NTMWD since it is located within the Regional Disposal Facility permit. NTMWD has worked with Texas Pure to reduce the waste brought in to facilitate the composting process, and both agencies are committed to reviewing internal operations to reduce the frequency that their individual operations are contributing to the odors experienced by our community.



The third likely source of the odors, the Melissa Feeders feedlot, has operated in our area since at least 1981. The feedlot is outside the Melissa city limits and is governed by a permit through the TCEQ. Additionally, the City is prohibited by State law (Texas Agriculture Code) from enforcing any odor-related nuisance regulations against the feedlot. This prohibition is because the feedlot's existence (at least 1980) predates the referenced State law which was established in 1981. We are increasingly concerned and frustrated that our hands are tied by State law and the City is attempting to meet with State

Agriculture Commission to discuss the consequences of the current State law and the issues we all are facing in hopes that local control can be exercised in what we feel is an extreme circumstance.

In recent weeks, Staff has continued to keep in touch with TCEQ regulators regarding the feasibility of either TCEQ or the City installing air monitors in and around Melissa. The TCEQ has reported back that it is difficult to pinpoint odors and that no air monitor will distinguish types of odors, only the general compounds detected and the associated levels. Regardless of who installed such monitors, the data would only tell TCEQ investigators the general characteristics of odors and only serve as intelligence that they can further investigate. **We have requested TCEQ install monitors in this area, and they are researching the regulatory process to have such a monitors installed. TCEQ also informed the City that they are still conducting ongoing investigations in the area to monitor the odor issue, and this issue is not closed.**

We recognize that this explanation does not give our community the immediate relief which we are all seeking, so we share your frustration and concern. Finding a resolution to this issue continues to be a priority for the City and we ask for your patience and support as we explore other options available to us.