H.C. Clark

Comment: Landfill permit applications should be posted online and remain there after the permit is issued.

The present situation: Landfill permits are posted (now by TCEQ, previously by the would-be operator) through the permitting process and any appeals, then taken down. The permit applications should remain online and easily "findable" by the public.

A permit application is more than a few boxes on a form. It describes what's behind the fence and is the only comprehensive source of information a neighbor might find--a neighbor concerned first about the concept of a new landfill, then later when the landfill is operational and a problem that might lead to enforcement. The application is a stand alone document that serves as a contract that the landfill makes with the public--its geologic framework, how it will operate, and the standards it will follow (e.g. gwsap, lfg, etc.).

The argument for taking a landfill permit application down is that once final, it's no longer an application and doesn't fit 330.57 i.

That's word play and not what we intended when first recommending the plan. 330.57 i says that the permit application must be posted. It does not say the permit application may be taken down.

For years, when the operators were required to do the posting, we were told that internet storage space was too expensive; that response no longer applies, because the applications exist and are now permanently stored by TCEQ--it's a matter of public access to the information.

I don't think I am alone. Following a scathing evaluation of the TCEQ, the Sunset Commission made a number of recommendations; one was specific to this point:

Require TCEQ to review and update its website to improve accessibility and functionality, including by posting all permit applications and associated materials on TCEQ's website once the agency determines the application to be administratively complete and by making its database of water districts easily accessible to the public and regional water planning groups.

This afternoon, I tried both your records site and you home page--testing for Atascocita Landfill, Waco Landfill, UEC Goliad Mine (a mine, not a landfill). No luck.

image.png

Your answer may be that the landfill applications are there, and you understand the Sunset Commission's criticisms and you are working on it, and that would be a good answer. In the meantime, a reasonable stopgap would be set of sample searches on your present Oracle site, demonstrating that a landfill application, and a lot of other information valuable to the public, is easily "findable".