

MINUTES
LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION CONTRACTORS
EXAMINING BOARD

The Landscape Irrigation Contractors Examining Board held their meeting on March 16, 2010. George McCarthy called the meeting to order. The following members were in attendance:

| MEMBER | AFFILIATION |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Linda Cantwell | NJDEP |
| George McCarthy | Spring Irrigation |
| Patric LiSanti | Growing Concern Inc |
| Robert Dobson | Middletown Sprinkler |

Randy Pease, DAG, Gene Rosenblum, DAG, Amy Telford, Knute Jensen, Sarah Ritchie, Chrissy Gerstnicker, NJDEP, and Deborah Hamlin and Sherrie Schulte, Irrigation Association.

Linda Cantwell read the Open Public Meetings Act statement for the Landscape Irrigation Contractors Examining Board and announced that adequate notice of this meeting had been provided to the Secretary of State and designated newspapers, as well as posted in DEP.

Amy Telford provided the Board members with an overview of the proposed web site for the landscape irrigation program. A discussion was held. Board members inquired whether the site could contain announcements, a link to the EPA WaterSense program, FAQ's for the upcoming continuing education credits (CEC), and a link to the data miner site for reports. The group was informed that the Irrigation Association is looking into offering online exams. A discussion was held concerning the upcoming legislation changes and whether or not the web site should include both the existing and the upcoming changes. The members were informed that the Department could issue an advisory notification concerning the upcoming changes. Bob Dobson indicated that the NJ Irrigation Association also has the ability to send out notifications. Ms. Telford indicated that the Board members should review the link and provide her with any additional comments within the next couple of weeks. It is anticipated that the site could be up and running within the next few months. Amy Telford left the meeting,

Bob Dobson motioned to approve the minutes from the January 26, 2010 meeting pending two spelling corrections on page 1 in paragraph 3. Rick LiSanti seconded the motion. There was a unanimous Board affirmative vote. Rick LiSanti motioned to approve the closed session minutes from the January 26, 2010 meeting. Linda Cantwell seconded the motion. There was a unanimous Board affirmative vote.

The Board reviewed and discussed the Treasurer's report. Bob Dobson motioned to accept the report. Rick LiSanti seconded the motion. There was a unanimous Board affirmative vote

The Board determined that there was a discrepancy between the regulations, the application form, and the practice of the Board. The Board determined that it was appropriate that no action be taken concerning those applicants who complied with the application form. In addition, even though pre-1997 experience may have been accepted, only those passing the examination were approved for certification. The Board was informed that the results from the December 2009 examination were recently mailed to the applicants. In addition, an insert has been created and attached to applications for examination clarifying the experience requirements. Experience will be evaluated based on the current legislation until the new legislation takes effect on July 15, 2010.

Based on the new requirement that experience must be within the past fifteen years, it was agreed that the fifteen-year requirement would be calculated from the date the complete application was received in the Exams & Licensing Unit

The Board members were reminded that they were recently emailed the updated draft of the business firm application. The draft should include a place where the certificate holder can use their irrigation stamp to seal the application. The Board needs to work towards finalizing the application as soon as possible.

A discussion was held concerning the best way to evaluate out of state experience. There is concern that NJ applicants are required to demonstrate more than someone from out of state. Can the out of state requirements be a policy or should it be by regulation? It was suggested that the Board come up with a functional equivalent in order to evaluate out of state experience. A suggestion would be to require 3 years of field experience within the last 15 years and substantiation documentation. It was also suggested that other states with a certificate program be contacted in order to determine how they evaluate out of state experience. More discussion will be needed.

Rick LiSanti motioned to approve additional applications for the April 2010 examination, 1 approved, 1 conditionally approved pending additional information in order to verify irrigation experience. Bob Dobson seconded the motion. There was a unanimous Board affirmative vote.

George McCarthy asked for public comment. No public was in attendance.

Rick LiSanti motioned that the Board enters into a closed session in order to discuss enforcement matters. Linda Cantwell seconded the motion. There was a unanimous Board affirmative vote.

The Board returned to open session.

Randy Pease, Gene Rosenblum, and Knute Jensen left the meeting. Deborah Hamlin, Sherrie Schulte, and Chrissy Gerstnicker arrived.

As a result of the upcoming changes to the legislation to include a renewal requirement for continuing education credits, Deborah Hamlin and Sherrie Schulte from the Irrigation Association (IA) attended the meeting. A general discussion was held concerning the proposed process for tracking continuing education credits and the application process for NJ irrigation contractor to become a WaterSense partner.

The Board has submitted an application to the EPA in order to become a WaterSense certifying partner. Irrigation contractors have the option to apply to EPA to become recognized as a WaterSense partner. Irrigation contractors certified in NJ on or after January 1, 2009 are eligible for WaterSense partnership immediately, however those contractors certified before January 1, 2009 must provide proof of 10 CECs earned on or after January 1, 2008 in order to become eligible. EPA may contact the Exams & Licensing Unit in order to verify information from WaterSense applicants. Based on discussions it does not appear that the EPA would be willing to use our data miner reports in order to verify any information. There is currently no mechanism to get CEC information to WaterSense staff.

NJ Irrigation Contractors will require CECs in order to renew their certification. The following was discussed:

Renewal invoices would be sent out to everyone. Renewal fees along with proof of CECs would be sent to the Exams & Licensing Unit for processing. The renewal fee would be processed or the applicant would be notified that they do not have sufficient CECs.

There is no way to stop certificate holders from sending renewal payment directly to Treasury for processing or from paying renewal invoices online whether or not they have sufficient CECs. Renewal payments must be sent directly to Treasury for processing. In addition, the Department is encouraging payment of renewal fees online. The Exams & Licensing Unit recently started tracking training for one of the licensing programs. While the process has some issues, it appears that it might be possible to incorporate the irrigation contractors into this existing process. However, It has not been thoroughly investigated. All training information would need to be entered into the Department's database prior to the running of renewals. Only certificate holders, having sufficient CECs (based on the Department's records) would be issued a renewal bill. A report would need to be created in order to identify those individuals not receiving a invoice, so that they could be notified. Those providing CEC information after the invoices are run would require manual intervention in order to receive a invoice. Please be aware that this manual process is done outside of the Exams & Licensing Unit.

Irrigation Contractors would select a link listed on the DEP web site so those irrigation contractors could enter their CEC information into the Irrigation Association's web site reporting system. It is anticipated that the link could be accessed by August 1. This CEC information would be stored in the IA's CEC tracking database. On a regular basis (to be determined) the IA would send a file to DEP of those NJ contractor's that have fulfilled their CEC requirement. With proper formatting this information could be imported into the Department's database rather than entered manually

The Board would randomly request CEC documentation and audit a certain percentage of those contractors renewing their certification. A mechanism for identifying these individuals and then randomly selected them will be required.

Bob Dobson motioned to approve the results from the December 2009 examination; 9 passed, 8 failed. Rick LiSanti seconded the motion. It was noted that this approval is conditional pending verification of the applicant's experience. There was a unanimous Board affirmative vote.

A discussion was held on the upcoming continuing education unit (CEU) process. A policy will need to be implemented. An inquiry was made regarding how other Boards are managing this process and how specific the policy needs to be. The Board would like to utilize the National Irrigation Association's existing process in an attempt to avoid an additional burden on the Exams & Licensing Unit.

A discussion was held concerning moving forward with the application process in order to obtain EPA WaterSense recognition.

Public comments were taken.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2010

Respectfully Submitted,



George McCarthy, Chairman
Landscape Irrigation Contractors Board