

Minutes from the First Meeting of the Solid Waste Management Advisory Council

Wednesday, June 25, 2008

Council members present: Gregory Keene, Carol Fuller, Jackie Conway, Robert Peabody, John Bubier, Kevin Roche, Greg Louder, Joe Kazar, Mark Draper, Jeff McGown, Mike Barden, Jody Harris (designee for ex-officio member Martha Freeman), Paula Clark (designee for ex-officio member David Littell). Staff from SPO: George MacDonald, Sam Morris, Nick Miller

Council members absent: Don Hudson, Susan Millet

Meeting convened shortly after 1 PM by Jody Harris. Introductions were made. The agenda was reviewed.

Ms. Harris led a discussion on proposed ground rules for Council meetings, roles and responsibilities (attached) of Council members, the Council Chair, and staff support for the Council provided by SPO. Council members generally felt the organizational documents were sufficient as presented. It was noted these organizational documents could be further supplemented over time as needed. While talking about Council meetings, several Council members indicated that they would like to meet more frequently than once or twice a year, perhaps quarterly. This will be left to the discretion of the chair, as needed to ensure the proper discharge of Council duties while recognizing a practical limit on the availability of SPO staff resources.

While reviewing roles and responsibilities of the Council, several members expressed a desire to discuss each of the six policy issues set forth in the enabling legislation. It was noted that the Council did not need to look at every issue every year, rather "as appropriate." Ms. Clark noted that different issues are at different levels of policy development with considerable discussion around many of them over the past two years. It would be good to bring everyone up to speed on the current status of the issues. General consensus of Council members was that an update on the current status of the six policy issues would be slated as a topic for the next meeting.

The Council moved onto the next agenda item, which was 'Election of Chair'. A motion was made by Mr. McGown to nominate Mr. Louder as the Council Chair and was seconded by Mr. Roche. Motion was carried by unanimous vote.

At this point, Ms. Harris turned the meeting over to newly elected Chair Mr. Louder.

George MacDonald provided an overview of recent recycling activities of the Waste Management & Recycling Program, focusing on the state-wide recycling promotion campaign and other current tasks. When discussing tracking the effectiveness of the campaign, Mr. Kazar suggested that the website have a box where visitors could indicate how they 'found' the webpage, which could aid in evaluating which media worked best in directing people to the Maine Recycles website. He also included an overview of the work that Nick Miller, who is interning this summer with the program, is presently doing.

Sam Morris gave a PowerPoint Presentation of the draft State Waste Management & Recycling Plan (the "State Plan") (attached). It was suggested that the various numbers and definitions be checked for clarity and consistency. Mr. Morris was thanked for providing a thorough and thought-provoking presentation.

Mr. Bubier suggested the need to look at the solid waste policy, not against the straight set of priorities in the waste management hierarchy, but to look at the economics of the different waste management options as well. Maybe we need a matrix, rather than a hierarchy. Ms. Clark noted that questions about the waste

management hierarchy are not whether it exists or whether it is eroded, but how it is applied. There are those that feel it is not applied rigorously or absolutely.

Ms. Conway suggested the concept of zero waste be looked at. She requested staff to provide her with information on this concept.

Mr. Roche noted a common thread within the presentation was citing the need for grants and funding, yet the state has struggled with furnishing that.

Ms. Fuller suggested green house gas emissions may be on the rise due to the increase in plastics in the waste stream and that we need to recycle more plastics.

Mr. Draper noted that the solid waste policy task force and blue ribbon commission had tackled a number of these issues, but started with the premise that something is wrong with the state's solid waste system. He stated that, on a statewide basis, we're doing a lot right in the field of waste management and recycling. We should make a good thing better, where possible, but by cost-effective means.

Mr. Barden suggested the State Plan's scenarios might benefit from more analysis about the consequences of the actions envisioned by the scenarios.

Mr. Peabody asked for the opportunity to read the draft State Plan and to reconvene, perhaps in September, to consider it further. Council members concurred, while also noting that the group could learn more about each of the six policy issues under its statutory charge and their current status. General consensus of Council members was to reserve the majority of the next meeting agenda for a review of the State Plan and a report on the status of the six policy issues.

The State Plan will include the 2006 Waste Generation and Disposal Capacity Report, which will be sent to Council members when completed.

Meeting adjourned shortly after 3:30 PM.