

Environmental Roundtable Meeting Notes February 26, 2004

Attendees: Matthew Auten, Allan Bridgman, Paul Caccia, Beshka Candalaria Jim Celenza, Sheila Dormody, John Fornoro, Liberty Goodwin, Alicia Karpick, Juan Mariscal, Michael Mesolella, Emily Rochon, Barry Schiller, Michelle Smith, Thomas Uva, Harold Ward,

DEM Staff: Bob Ballou, Eric Beck, Terri Bisson, Russ Chateuanuef, Tom Getz, Terry Gray, Janet Keller, Gerry McAvoy, Bev Migliore, Scott Millar, Mickie Musselman (Meeting Notes), E. Stone, F. Vincent

I. Old Business

a. December Minutes

The December minutes were accepted with a correction to the amount of the proposed environmental bond issue. The total is \$60 million, including of \$15 million for Narragansett Bay and watershed restoration and \$10 million for the Water Resources Board. The All-Staff Meeting Fact Sheet, distributed in the meeting materials, has more detail.

b. Budget and Fiscal Fitness Update

Director Vincent presented DEM's budget as proposed by the Governor, explaining the effects on DEM and offered to meet with council members to provide any further information they may want. He also said the Fiscal Fitness recommendations include merging selected functions of the CRMC and the Water Resources Board, and the drinking water and beach monitoring programs into DEM. The implementation phase of Fiscal Fitness is beginning and is expected to be a two to three year process. Broad actions that will affect DEM are the consolidation of personnel offices and more centralized information technology functions for all state agencies. DEM will reorganize, but has discretion in how to accomplish it.

c. Legislative Update

Liz Stone explained four legislative proposals from DEM and one from the Governor. DEM is proposing to increase wetlands penalties, legislation enabling the creation of dam management districts, clarifying eligibility for pollution control tax credits, and amending the commercial fishing licensing statute to allow a grace period for renewing licenses.

The Governor is proposing phasing out cesspools by requiring that ISDS be inspected at point of sale and substandard systems be replaced within 2 years of a sale.

Barry Schiller asked what DEM's position is on DOT's plan to move the planned Jamestown Bridge fishing pier to another location in North Kingstown. Fred Vincent said DEM has ranked sites to develop more fishing access. DEM is concerned about the maintenance of fishing piers and is looking at instituting a fee to use the piers to provide funding for maintenance.

Two anti-idling bills have been submitted, one would limit idling for all buses and the other would limit idling by school buses. Other bills that have submitted are: one to prohibit driving in bike lanes and make sweeping bike lanes four times a year mandatory, one to study how to

increase transit ridership and a refinement of the OSPAR bill that would provide a permanent source of funding for coastal habitat restoration.

II. New Business

a. South County Greenspace Plan

Scott Millar gave a presentation on the South County Greenspace Plan. He emphasized the importance of partnerships in protecting greenspace. Planning for growth includes identifying greenspace to be protected, establishing ordinances and design criteria and identifying areas to accept growth. Two towns in South County have adopted land protection plans based on the project. Harold Ward said several big box stores are planned in the Westerly area and another person suggested regional planning to prevent such developments where they are not wanted. Scott said that there is regional planning going on in Rhode Island, both in the South County area and with the 3 Towns on Aquidneck Island.

There was a comment that zoning that mandates lot sizes up to 4 acres works against conservation development. Scott said his program has developed a conservation development manual and training on this subject will begin this summer. GrowSmart has already trained about 200 planners in conservation development. Scott's presentation is on the DEM website and hard copies are available.

b. Water Allocation

Juan Mariscal presented the recommendations of the Water Allocation Program Advisory Committee (WAPAC). There are 21 priority recommendations out of the total 84. The WAPAC has adopted a priority water uses policy and will adopt a framework for the work plan. They will develop water budgets for each community and make communities consider water availability in approving developments.

c. Dental Best Management Practices Program

Tom Uva told the group about NBC's new Best Management Practices guide for management of dental amalgam. NBC has determined that 60% of the mercury entering NBC's WWTFs comes from dental offices. It settles into sludge and is either buried at the landfill or incinerated and goes into the air to settle on land and water. Although this guide is excellent, and NBC's work with dental community has been successful there is no statewide policy for mercury. Other WWTFs have not been interested in adopting these BMPs and dentists on septic systems are not subject to nay regulations. EPA has recognized NBC's effort regarding mercury and is encouraging RI to become the first state to adopt a statewide policy for disposal of mercury.

d. Commercial Recycling

Deleted from the agenda – will be on next meeting agenda with the draft Solid Waste Management Plan.

e. Supplemental Environmental Projects Policy

Terri Bisson reported that a workshop on the policy will be held on Tuesday, March 9. The policy is on the DEM website and an announcement of the workshop to discuss the policy is in the meeting materials. Environmental Roundtable participants were encouraged to attend.

f. Earth Day Committee Report

Jon Fornoro referred those interested in Earth Day activities to Earth Day website (on handout) and urged Environmental Roundtable members to participate with other exhibitors in Conservation Week at the Roger Williams Park Zoo. The Earth Day Committee is working to do more year round with schools and continues to sponsor community cleanups.

NBC is coordinating a cleanup of the Woonasquatucket River from Olneyville to Waterplace Park, with a festival at Waterplace Park. NBC invites anyone in the area to participate.

g. Less Toxic Landscaping

Moved to next meeting agenda.

h. New Bonds

See above in Budget and Fiscal Fitness update.

i. Cintas Laundry Facility

The Sierra Club is concerned about this facility that is moving into Cumberland, Rhode Island. The company has a record of polluting in other states as well as a record for unsafe working conditions. Cintas has not agreed to meet with the Sierra Club to discuss the concerns. Sierra Club wants Cintas to install a large containment system and wished to have DEM and NBC aware of its concerns.

Miscellaneous

RICOSH's RI Chemical Safe Schools Committee is educating schools on how to eliminate the chemicals that will be banned in 2005 from schools. See the RICOSH website for more information.

III. Future Meetings

A. Topics

Topics that will be on the agenda for the next meeting are: commercial recycling, less toxic landscaping and ISDS and Wetlands regulations. Please send any additional topics to Sheila Dormody or Terri Bisson.