

NOTES OF WORKING GROUP MEETING, JANUARY 25, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 8:45 a.m. by Mike McGonagle, co-chair.

Members present: James N. Allam; Dan Beardsley; Carole Bell; Terri Bisson; Paul Caccia; Clayton Carlisle; Claude Cote; Patrick Fingliss; Terrence Gray; Leo Hellested; Dante Ionata; Jamie M. Magnani; Eugenia Marx; Mike McGonagle; Mike Mesoella; Sherry Mulhearn; Steve Mutter; John O'Brien; Timothy Regan; Shim Silverstein; John Trevor; Jennifer Tuttle; Harold Ward.

Ms. Mulhearn delivered opening remarks welcoming the Working Group back into session to complete its work on the draft Plan according to a work schedule of three Working Group sessions, including meetings on February 15 and March 1, adoption of the draft Plan by the RIRRC Board in April and adoption by the State Planning Council in November.

Mr. McGonagle and Mr. Ionata briefly reviewed a new Executive Summary that is being developed for the Plan at the request of Mr. O'Brien. Pursuant to the meeting agenda, Mr. McGonagle kicked off discussion of the first five sections of the draft Plan which had been sent to all Working Group members two weeks earlier.

Mr. Mutter recommended, on behalf of a group of 11 municipalities that met previously to discuss the draft Plan, that RIRRC conduct a new comprehensive waste composition analysis because of the major changes that have occurred in waste stream composition, particularly with an increase in paper, plastics and electronics and a decrease in glass, since the Comprehensive Plan was last adopted in 1996. Mr. Mutter also suggested that a new waste composition analysis be completed before the new Comprehensive Plan is adopted by the RIRRC and the State Planning Council but he indicated that a brief sampling prior to adoption of the Plan would be acceptable. Mr. McGonagle suggested that valuable composition data can be obtained from recently completed work in Pennsylvania and other states and that valid extrapolations can be made from that work to the Rhode Island context. Ms. Bisson indicated a CSW composition analysis would be more valuable than an MSW analysis. Ms. Mulhearn indicated she would not object to one-day snapshots of the waste stream but indicated her opposition to performing an expensive comprehensive waste composition analysis as unnecessary. Mr. Ward, Mr. Trevor, Mr. Beardsley, and Mr. Cote also participated in a very extended discussion.

Ms. Marks, Ms. Bell and Ms. Tuttle recommended that the order in which the Objectives appear in Part 1 of the Plan be adjusted so that they appear in the priority order of the federal and state-approved solid waste management hierarchy.

Ms. Marks and Ms. Bell suggested that all references to "source reduction" be changed to "waste prevention" as had been previously agreed.

Mr. Gray said that while a solid waste management hierarchy has been established by federal and state law, the hierarchy often is turned upside down when solid waste managers encounter budget shortages. A number of members indicated that while the hierarchy represents an ideal toward which we should strive, solid waste managers nevertheless must be practical and confront reality. A long discussion ensued in which Mr. Silverstein, Ms. Bell, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. McGonagle and Ms. Marks also participated. Mr. Gray said this situation must be addressed.

Ms. Bisson recommended that the Goal in the draft Plan be replaced by the Goal that appears in the 1996 Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Bisson also recommended that text be added to the Plan to address the siting of solid waste management facilities.

Mr. Gray said text should be added to Part 4 of the Plan to address EPA's Resource Conservation Challenge, a national program to find flexible, yet protective, ways to conserve our national resources.

Mr. Beardsley recommended that text be added to Table 171-4-1, Chronology since 1996, to describe the relationship between RIRRC and the Town of Johnston as set forth in their host community agreement, the

development by RIRRC of the industrial park, and the widening of the highway connection between the new Route I-295 ramps and the Central Landfill.

Mr. Mutter and Mr. Beardsley objected to draft Plan text which says the municipal tipping fee is “subsidized” by the commercial tipping fee. It was agreed that this terminology will be removed wherever it appears and that the bifurcated solid waste tipping fee will be referred to as the tipping fee “structure.”

Mr. Beardsley recommended that the text in Section 4-3-1g on p. 4.6 would be more appropriately included in Section 4-5c.

Mr. Carlisle recommended that pages be numbered in a continuous unbroken sequence. Mr. McGonagle indicated he would do so.

Mr. Mutter suggested that a municipal advisory board be established to RIRRC. A number of members recommended the re-activation of the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB). It was agreed that text should be included in the Plan to recommend re-activation of the CAB. It was also agreed that the text, “because of the increasingly technical nature of the agency’s work” in Section 4-6-1 should be deleted.

Ms. Bell noted that the draft Plan did not incorporate the recommendation of the Waste Prevention Subcommittee that the Plan include a specific waste prevention goal. An extended discussion followed of the validity of a waste prevention goal and the difficulty of measuring success. Ms. Bell said it was important to set a goal to serve as a catalyst to action.

Ms. Bell recommended that Table 171-5-5, Municipal Waste Generation and Diversion Projections, should include an acknowledgement that the projections made take into account the results of existing waste prevention activities. Mr. McGonagle said this can be done in a footnote to the table and Ms. Bell agreed.

Ms. Bisson recommended that the Plan be edited to shorten it and that wherever passive voice text be converted to active voice.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.