

NOTES OF WORKING GROUP MEETING, MARCH 14, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m. by T. Gray, co-chair.

Members present: Dan Beardsley; Paul Beaudette; Robert Bibbo; Terri Bisson; Clayton Carlisle; Geoff DiCenso; Patrick Fingliss; Tom Getz; Terry Gray; Susanne Greschner; Sally Johnson; Sarah Kite for Barry Schiller; Robert Lamoureaux; Angela Macera Briggs; Jamie Magnani; Russell Marcoux; Steven V. Mutter; Chris Ratcliffe; Timothy Regan; Shim Silverstein; Jeanne Tracey-McAreavey; Harold Ward; Dante G. Ionata.

Mr. Ionata made a brief presentation concerning the *“GOAL FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF SOLID WASTE IN RHODE ISLAND”* to introduce the issue and open discussion on the adequacy of the Goal as set forth in the current Solid Waste Plan and whether the current Goal should be changed.

Ms. Johnson recommended that the term “Goal” be replaced with the term “Vision”, which has gained widespread usage in long-range plans. Ms. Johnson further recommended that the Vision should be re-crafted using more elegant phrasing because, she said, the current Goal had all the appearances of having been written by committee. A Working Group member also suggested that the Vision should emphasize that recycling should be maximized.

Mr. Ionata presented a series of seven bar charts and line graphs showing the tonnages of commercial and municipal solid waste disposed of at the Central Landfill annually since 1982, and the tonnages of recyclables processed by the MRF since 1991, explaining and interpreting significant characteristics of the data depicted. Mr. Ionata highlighted the fact that the graphics indicate that the generation of residential municipal solid waste appears to have increased over the past five years.

Mr. Gray said it would be important to seek to determine the consumption rate since the waste generation rate increase could very well be driven by the economy and that the amount and type of packaging being used should be investigated with a view toward adopting measures aimed at reduction of packaging.

A long and spirited discussion ensued with several Working Group members participating in an extended discussion of whether commercial solid waste is co-mingled with municipal solid waste. A number of Working Group members expressed concern about the extent to which this co-mingling occurs and they wanted to know the impacts that co-mingling has on solid waste management and whether it affects the generation of waste. Furthermore, several Working Group members also indicated concern about whether and how co-mingling affects the amounts of money paid by municipalities to manage their waste streams, and they asked whether the RIRRC can take action to prevent the co-mingling of commercial and municipal waste and what those actions would be.

Mr. Ionata said that the MSW which comes to Central Landfill via a transfer station is unavoidably mixed with commercial waste and that in some cases haulers mix commercial and municipal waste, getting paid for handling the commercial waste by the commercial customer and then again by the municipal customer. Mr. Ionata said it was the responsibility of municipalities to ensure that their haulers do not mix commercial waste with the municipality's residential waste. He said that if a municipality paid for the collection and disposal of commercial waste inserted into the municipal waste stream after its collection had already been paid for by the commercial customer, that was the municipality's decision to make and that RIRRC should not interfere in the affairs of municipal government.

Mr. Ionata said the mixing of commercial and municipal waste was not and should not be the concern of the RIRRC because they are both solid waste and are managed in the same way at Central Landfill. He said some municipalities may exceed their annual caps because of co-mingling, but that over-the-cap MSW is charged the contract commercial tipping fee which is substantially higher than the municipal tipping fee, in effect penalizing the municipality for cap exceedance. As a result of the higher fee for over-the-cap waste, the RIRRC does not lose revenue if the over-the-cap tonnage increment is represented by commercial waste that had been inserted into the municipal waste stream, Mr. Ionata said.

Mr. Fingliss explained that the RIRRC worked extensively with municipalities that exceeded their caps in attempts to help them get below their caps.

Mr. Mutter said municipalities had the authority to prevent co-mingling if they so chose and Mr. Beardsley said the RIRRC should not seek to interfere in matters of municipal governance.

A number of Working Group members expressed concern that municipal tonnage cap levels that are set too high by the RIRRC could serve as a disincentive to recycling. Mr. Ionata explained that while the RIRRC currently reduces all municipal caps by 15% to account for recycling, the RIRRC plans to increase the recycling deduct to 20% to take into account the Maximum Recycling Program, thus lowering the caps, which in turn, would serve as a greater incentive for the municipalities to recycle.

Working Group members requested that the Corporation provide the formula for municipal cap calculation. Members also requested to see the per capita generation rate by municipality.

Mr. Ionata distributed an engineer's drawing showing Phases I through V of the Central Landfill and a conceptual outline of a proposed Phase VI. Mr. Ionata explained that the plans for Phase V are currently being reviewed by DEM for licensure and that Phase VI is very preliminarily conceptual and has not yet been submitted to DEM for review. He said that if the airspace proposed by the RIRRC for Phase V and currently conceptualized by RIRRC for Phase VI were to be approved for licensure by DEM, total landfill life would extend to 2017 at current loading rates of approximately one million tons annually.

Mr. Gray said that Phase VI, which has not yet been submitted to DEM, would have to be approved by the State Planning Council in the landfill site certification process.