

NOTES OF WORKING GROUP MEETING, MARCH 15, 2005

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Mike McGonagle, co-chair.

Members present: James N. Allam; Dan Beardsley; Terri Bisson; Claude Cote; Clayton Carlisle; Patrick Fingliss; Dante Ionata; Mike McGonagle; Sherry Mulhearn; Steve Mutter; Barry Schiller; Jeanne M. Tracey-McAreavey; Harold Ward.

Guests: Dixie Boucher, West Warwick Public Works Dept; Maria Broadbent, Newport Public Works Dept; Paul Caccia, RIRRC; Mike Mesolella, RIRRC.

The Notes of the March 1 Working Group meeting were reviewed and set down.

The meeting opened with a discussion of the paper *"An Alternative Model to Enhance Commercial Recycling in Rhode Island"* circulated by Mr. Gray on March 14 to Working Group members. The paper proposes that DEM establish a "self-implementing and self-sustaining model" under which each of the 1,300 or so companies with 50 or more employees would appoint recycling managers, register their company's recycling programs with DEM and self-certify to DEM that their company's program is achieving the statewide minimum commercial recycling goal to be established in the Comprehensive Plan. Pursuant to a suggestion by Ms. Mulhearn, it was agreed Recommendation 6-3-2 f4 should be amended to encompass a summary of the DEM commercial recycling model.

Mr. Beardsley explained at length that the Plan should focus as much attention and detail on commercial recycling as it does on municipal recycling, observations he has elucidated on a number of occasions. Mr. Cote said a mechanism should be developed that will enable the management of commercial recycling statewide to focus on the haulers. After a discussion by several members of the concept of self-certification set forth in the DEM model, Ms. Bisson illustrated the self certification mechanism by describing other DEM regulatory programs based on self-certification. Mr. Ward expressed concern that the self-certification process in the DEM paper is too cumbersome. Mr. Schiller said there should be an economic incentive in the DEM program to encourage haulers to increase their commercial recycling.

There was a discussion involving Ms. Mulhearn, Mr. Ward, Mr. Schiller, Mr. Mutter and Mr. Cote of licensure of haulers. Ms. Mulhearn said haulers must be controlled and that the practice by some haulers of co-mingling recyclables with trash must be stopped. She said the Plan should make it very clear that the co-mingling of recyclables with trash must be stopped and that haulers should be required to manage their waste loads properly. Mr. McGonagle described how some haulers improve their profitability by hauling partially empty boxes. Ms. Mulhearn said a recommendation to license haulers to leverage commercial recycling should be included in the Plan. Ms. Bisson said that given its current budget situation, DEM would not have the resources to license haulers.

It was agreed that the licensure of haulers should be placed on the agenda of the March 29 meeting and that RIRRC would notify haulers of the forthcoming discussion.

Mr. McGonagle asked the Working Group to react to DEM's proposal to establish a commercial recycling goal for the state. He did not receive a direct response.

Mr. Ward said the level of commercial recycling would be improved if RIRRC strictly enforced the terms of its commercial disposal contracts, which prohibit the disposal of recyclables, and if the Corporation used its inspectors to closely monitor the materials being tipped to reduce the tipping of recyclables in the commercial waste stream. There was an extended discussion of the various methods and difficulties of monitoring and enforcing commercial recycling with Mr. Ward observing that RIRRC should be able to control the disposal of recyclables in the commercial waste stream by monitoring and enforcement activities at the Tipping Facility and the Landfill.

Mr. Beardsley wanted to know what was to be done to improve commercial recycling. He said it is essential to address commercial recycling in a more detailed and thorough manner than is included in the DEM proposal, which is vague, imprecise and ambiguous. Mr. Beardsley said the commercial recycling section of the Plan should include more specifics and details.

Mrs. Schiller suggested that the commercial tipping fee be restructured to provide haulers with incentives to recycle. Mr. Ward indicated that the RIRRC should structure its commercial tipping fees so that loads with recyclables are charged higher rates.

There was a long discussion of how to improve commercial recycling, involving primarily Ms. Mulhearn, Mr. Ward, Mr. Beardsley, Mr. Cote and Mr. Mutter concerning the ability of the RIRRC to leverage higher commercial recycling rates at the Landfill, the kinds of incentives needed for haulers or generators, the kinds of actions to be taken by DEM and RIRRC, the advantages of hauler licensure, the lack of RIRRC enforcement authority asserted by Ms. Mulhearn and Mr. Cote. Ms. Bisson reiterated her observation that DEM lacks the resources to license haulers. Mr. Mutter responded that municipalities, like DEM, are short of financial resources and yet are being asked to increase their recycling efforts. Mr. Beardsley said it is important that haulers attend Working Group meetings so they can participate in discussions of proposals to increase commercial tipping fees and hauler licensure as means of increasing commercial recycling. Mr. Ionata said several different haulers have been repeatedly invited to attend the meetings but, except for Angie Macera initially, have not done so.

State Agency Recycling. Mr. McGonagle said more complete data will be collected from CleanScape. There were no changes recommended to the State Agency Recycling section.

Multi-Family Recycling. There was a long discussion on multi-family recycling, particularly on the issue of delivering CSW multi-family recyclables to the MRF tip fee-free. Ms. Mulhearn said RIRRC is open to receiving multi-family recyclables at the MRF provided they do not limit the availability of MRF capacity to municipalities. Mr. Schiller suggested that RIRRC develop model multi-family contracts that contain incentives to improve recycling. There were no other recommendations for changes to the Multi-Family Recycling section.

School Recycling Program. There was an extended discussion concerning the many problems with schools recycling and the low level of recycling generally observed from schools. Ms. Mulhearn declared that schools recycling must be increased and that the schools recycling program must be improved. She asked the Working Group for ideas concerning how to improve schools recycling. There was a consensus that the recommendations in the Schools Recycling section should be strengthened. Mr. Beardsley said he would try to develop suggestions for improving the program. Mr. Mutter, Ms. Broadbent and Mr. McGonagle also participated in this discussion.

Market Development. Mr. Carlisle suggested that RIRRC should seek to develop markets for computers. Mr. Ionata said the draft Plan currently includes text describing RIRRC's efforts to market waste computers. There were no recommendations for changes to Market Development section.

Leaf and Yard Waste. Mr. Ward said that he and Ms. Marks have petitioned DEM to institute a ban prohibiting the landfilling of leaf and yard waste. There was a discussion of whether seaweed can or should be classified as leaf and yard waste for the purposes of solid waste management in Rhode Island. It was agreed that an attempt will be made to clarify this. There were no other recommendations to amend the leaf and yard waste section.

Food Waste Management.

Ms. Mulhearn said the Plan should include a description of a project to recover a useful product from food waste that is currently being investigated by RIRRC. International Bio-Recovery Corp. has developed a process to liquefy food waste to produce organic fertilizer in both solid and liquid forms. Ms. Mulhearn said the RIRRC Board of Commissioners' Special Projects Committee is currently investigating the validity of the process and whether it can be adopted in Rhode Island in a cost-effective manner. There were no other recommendations for changes to the Food Waste Management Section.

The Materials Recovery Facility. Mr. Fingliss briefed the Working Group concerning the operations of the MRF, the retrofits being made to the facility's processing equipment, the tonnages of materials being produced by the facility and the market prices being obtained for the recyclables sent to market.

The next meeting is scheduled for 9 a.m. Tuesday March 29 at RIRRC.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 a.m.