

NOTES OF WORKING GROUP MEETING, APRIL 26, 2005

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

Members present: Jim Allam; Dan Beardsley; Terri Bisson; Angie Briggs; Claude Cote; Tom Getz; Terrence Gray; Leo Hellested; Dante Ionata; Mike McGonagle; Eugenia Marks; Sherry Mulhearn; Chris Ratcliffe; Tim Regan; John O'Brien; Jennifer Tuttle; John Trevor; Harold Ward.

Guests: Wolfgang Bauer, West Warwick Town Manager; Paul Caccia, RIRRC; Andrew Hajian, RI Schools Recycling Club; Steve Iacobucci, City of Cranston; Anthony Nunez, City of Providence; Danielle Poulin, RI Schools Recycling Club; John Souto, WasteXpress.

The Notes of the April 11 Working Group meeting were reviewed and set down without change.

Mr. Ionata briefly described the Landfill section in Part 6. Mr. Ward pointed out that the text of ¶ 6-4-3f indicates Phase VI of the Landfill has a capacity of 5.2 million tons of while Table 171-6-4 indicates a capacity of 6.5 million tons. Mr. Cote explained that the larger capacity would be available if the landfill gas power plant is moved. This explanation will be added to the Plan and the table will be re-calculated.

Mr. Beardsley recommended that the second paragraph in ¶6-4-3a should indicate that a principal objective of the RIRRC is to maximize the life of Central Landfill. The appropriate text will be added to the Plan.

Mr. Beardsley said ¶6-4-3, which indicates RIRRC should reduce Central Landfill to a "back-up" facility, could be construed to mean RIRRC intends to reactivate incinerator planning. Mr. Ionata said that was not the meaning intended and Ms. Mulhearn said RIRRC does not intend to reactivate incinerator planning. Mr. Ionata said he will amend the language to eliminate the potential for confusion.

Mr. Beardsley asked if technology similar to the baling of cars existed to ultra-compact solid waste to maximize landfill utilization. Mr. Ionata said RIRRC investigated the feasibility of landfilling solid waste bales and found that balefills are seldom developed and/or operated by private sector, they are declining in number, and they do not achieve super-compaction rates. He said the prohibitive cost of the massive balers required would be in addition to the costs of re-engineering Central Landfill for conversion to a balefill. Ms. Mulhearn said the O&M costs of operating such balers would also be prohibitive.

Mr. Bauer said ¶6-4-5c, which discusses employee incentive compensation systems designed to improve the compaction of landfilled solid waste, and ¶6-4-7d, which recommends that RIRRC consider implementing such a system, raise the question of why RIRRC is not already employing such a system. Ms. Mulhearn said this language would be eliminated from the Plan.

Mr. O'Brien said that while the Plan abundantly addresses the need to maximize Landfill life, neither the Plan's Goal nor any of its Objectives include language specifying that Landfill life should be maximized. Mr. Ionata said appropriate language would be included in both the Goal and as an Objective.

Mr. Gray asked about RIRRC's plans to investigate the feasibility of developing Central Landfill into a bio-reactor landfill. Mr. Cote responded that there are a number of regulatory impediments that currently prevent the development of Central Landfill as a bioreactor landfill, including 1) the consent decree imposed by EPA concerning air emissions from Phases I-IV; 2) DEM's air regulations; 3) 40 CFR, Sub Part WWW which deals with the regulation of large landfills; and 4) the Central Landfill Operating Plan approved by DEM. Mr. Gray said DEM could not approve development of a bio-reactor landfill unless RIRRC provides details concerning what and how it plans to proceed.

In response to Mr. Bauer's question concerning the effectiveness of bioreactor landfills, Mr. Cote said the technology is still being tested and that most bioreactor landfills are demonstration projects.

Mr. Gray noted that the Objective of maximizing solid waste compaction in the Landfill is fulfilled by Recommendation 6-4-7d. In response to Mr. Gray's question concerning the impact of the Tipping Facility on solid waste compaction in the Landfill, Ms. Mulhearn said it has resulted in improved compaction.

Ms. Marks said the text in ¶6-4-1 that describes landfilling as the “only economically viable disposal option available to RIRRC” is misleading because there are other options available for the management of waste and they should be referenced. Ms. Marks requested that landfilling not be described as the “only” disposal option available. Mr. Ionata said he would clarify the language.

Ms. Marks requested that the environmental safeguards that are a necessary adjunct to landfilling be described in the Plan along with their costs. Mr. Ionata indicated this would be done.

Mr. Beardsley said the sixth paragraph in ¶6-4-3b focuses on the municipalities to divert waste from landfilling with no reference to commercial sector diversion. Ms. Marks said the aforementioned paragraph should refer to CSW and MSW. Mr. Ionata agreed to amend the text appropriately.

Mr. Beardsley requested that the Recommendations sub-section of the Landfill section specify that programs to reduce waste generation and divert waste from landfilling should apply to all the users of the facility, municipal and commercial. Mr. Ionata indicated the appropriate text would be developed.

Mr. Bauer said the Plan should recommend that RIRRC utilize best available technology for Landfill operations.

With completion of the discussion concerning the Landfill section, the Group took up consideration of Part 7, *Management of Special Wastes.*”

Mr. Beardsley and Mr. Bauer said ¶7-2-1 can be construed to mean that “waste” tires are being landfilled and that it should be clarified to avoid the possibility of such misinterpretation. Mr. Ionata said the clarification would be made.

Mr. Bauer discussed the problems West Warwick has disposing of its sewer sludge compost which “has been approved by the State.” Mr. Bauer also questioned why RIRRC has become involved in the recycling of mattresses.

Mr. Gray suggested the sub-sections on waste oil and oil filters should be combined.

Mr. Gray recommended that a section be added to address mercury-added waste items.

Mr. Gray said data should be acquired concerning new developments pertaining to the recycling of electronics. Mr. Trevor said the Northeast Recycling Council is developing model legislation concerning the management of waste electronics components and that there have been a number of significant developments nationally concerning the recycling of electronics.

With completion of consideration of Part 7, the Group turned to a discussion of Part 8, *“Economics of the System.”*

Mr. Bauer objected to the second and third paragraphs of ¶8-1 which say, respectively, that “most Rhode Island municipalities do not contribute to solid waste management programming or to the development of innovative (diversion) technologies. . . .” and “the typical approach to solid waste management by the cities and towns (again with a few exceptions) has been that they will undertake a new program only if the RIRRC subsidizes the endeavor. . . .” He illustrated by describing efforts planned by West Warwick. He and Mr. Beardsley said the text focuses only on municipalities without reference to commercial haulers. Mr. Ionata said the Plan focuses on municipalities because under the Rhode Island General Laws municipalities, along with RIRRC and DEM, are assigned the responsibility for managing solid waste while haulers are contractors utilized by municipalities and RIRRC.

Ms. Marks distributed her proposal to revise Part 8 which focuses on reporting the value of Central Landfill and other facilities at the Landfill complex, including the total investment made by RIRRC since 1980 in terms of land acquisition costs and facility design, development and construction costs; total investment in equipment; the value of the Landfill’s disposal capacity and the value of the processing capacity of the other solid waste management facilities in Johnston. Ms. Marks’ outline also addresses the issue of the ownership of municipal and commercial wastes, the costs of operating the various solid waste management facilities in Johnston and the revenues derived from the various operations. A copy of Ms. Marks’ outline, which had been circulated electronically to all Working Group members in advance of the meeting and which was also distributed at the meeting, is attached to these Notes.

Ms. Marks said she does not propose that her outline should serve as a complete substitute for the existing material in Part 8. However, she said, she does propose that the Plan should include a discussion of the economics of solid waste management which, she said, is important to making good public policy. Ms. Marks said the public has a major investment in RIRRC's solid waste management facilities and deserves to know what the value of those facilities is. Ms. Marks said a full discussion of the underlying economics of solid waste management that incorporates the value of the Corporation's assets is essential to developing a broader perspective concerning solid waste management and the various issues related to solid waste management.

Ms. Mulhearn asked what end would be served by such an analysis, what conclusions could be drawn for the purpose of undertaking this task. Ms. Marks said this analysis would result in the development of a methodology for determining the worth of the landfill and the value of access to its capacity and the capacity of the other solid waste management facilities.

Mr. O'Brien agreed with Ms. Marks' proposal. He said Part 8 should address the economics of solid waste management as an issue worthy of consideration in solid waste decision-making. Mr. O'Brien said the existing Part 8 does not recognize what the prospective costs of solid waste management will be when the Central Landfill's capacity is used up. He said that since the goal of the Plan is extend the useful life of Central Landfill to the maximum extent possible, there should be a discussion of the price structure for using the facility to ensure that the use of the facility is priced according to proper relationship between the value of the facility and the price charged for its use.

A discussion followed concerning the level of tipping fees necessary to generate sufficient revenues to fund RIRRC's programs, the potential impact of high tipping fees driving waste to out-of-state disposal, and the General Assembly's practice of appropriating RIRRC funds.

Mr. Beardsley suggested the incorporation of a recommendation in the Plan requesting that the General Assembly not appropriate funds from the RIRRC for the State's General Fund. Mr. Ionata said such a recommendation had already been included in another section of the Plan. Mr. Beardsley and others recommended that this recommendation should be included in more than one section of the Plan.

Mr. Ionata said a complete draft of the Plan will be distributed to the Working Group for review at the next meeting which was scheduled for Wednesday, May 25 at 9 a.m. at RIRRC.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.