

## **NOTES OF WORKING GROUP MEETING 7, AUGUST 6, 2003**

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Mike McGonagle, co-chair.

Members present: Carole Bell; Terri Bisson; Clayton Carlisle; Patrick Fingliss; Tom Getz; Terrence Gray; Leo Hellested; Dante Ionata; Sarah Kite; Bob Lamoureux; Jamie Magnani; Eugenia Marks; Mike McGonagle; John O'Brien; Chris Ratcliffe; Timothy Reagan; John Trevor; Harold Ward.

Observers; James N. Allam; Nick Bayard; Richard Brussard; Claude Cote; Atiyah Curmally; Mike Mesoella; Sherry Mulhearn.

There were no comments concerning the July 11<sup>th</sup> Working Group Meeting Notes or any of the previously submitted redrafted chapters.

Mr. Fingliss made a presentation concerning the operation of the MRF. He reported that the MRF'S processing machinery will be changed and modernized over the next few years and that it would be important to know now if there are to be changes in the types or quantities of materials to be delivered to the MRF so the necessary accommodations can be made. Mr. Fingliss noted that the MRF was designed for a three-shift capacity of 140,000 tons annually and that it is now processing 91,000 tons annually -- close to its two-shift capacity.

Mr. Fingliss presented and interpreted, in detail, tables and graphs showing, for the past three fiscal years, volumes of materials processed by the MRF, market prices of recyclables marketed by the MRF, revenues generated by the MRF and market profiles of the eight principal commodities marketed by the MRF.

Mr. Fingliss reported that one of the significant changes in materials experienced at the MRF is that whole glass bottles are no longer received at the MRF because recyclables are generally compacted after collection. Moreover, glass is no longer marketed by the MRF because positive markets no longer exist for glass which is now used as a landfill cover material.

Messrs. Ward, Lamoureux, Fingliss, Trevor and Ms. Marks participated in a discussion of the economics of collecting and marketing glass from the MRF for recycling and alternatives to this including the potential development of a program for the use of crushed glass as an aggregate for batching asphalt for road building.

Mr. Gray, chair of the Commercial Recycling Subcommittee, presented in detail, section-by-section the draft report on Commercial Recycling in Rhode Island which was prepared by his subcommittee.

Few of the commercial recycling programs advocated or recommended by the existing Comprehensive Plan are currently active Mr. Gray said, primarily for two reasons: 1) The fee and surcharge revenues generated by the DEM restricted receipt accounts that funded many of the commercial recycling programs have been diverted by the General Assembly from the programs for which they were originally established into the State's General Fund; and 2) DEM staff dedicated to recycling and source reduction has been reassigned to other areas of activity because of a reallocation of DEM priorities forced by budget limitations.

He recognized that a new regulatory approach would have to be developed to accommodate the composting of organic waste generated by restaurants, suggesting these organic wastes should be composted, not landfilled.

Mr. Gray pointed out that the Working Group's sub-committees have, in general, recommended that DEM should expand its involvement in recycling and source reduction programs, that new recycling and source reduction program initiatives should be undertaken and that they should be financed by the RIRRC. This general approach, typically taken by the sub-committees, will not work, Mr. Gray said, because the DEM has neither the manpower or the financial resources to become expand its involvement with recycling and source reduction programming and, he predicted, RIRRC will "have issues" with certain funding recommendations.

Mr. Fingliss said the General Assembly, which took \$6 million from RIRRC last year, has taken about \$23 million from RIRRC over the past several years to help balance the State Budget, thereby depriving the Corporation of funds which it could have used for more extensive recycling and source reduction programming.

A general discussion ensued, initiated and led by Mr. Gray and participated in by many members, of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of enforcing statutorily-mandated recycling based on regulations that prohibit the tipping of truck loads of solid waste loads at the landfill containing more than specified percentages of recyclables. The discussion led to the conclusion, generally ascribed to, that recycling enforcement of percentage-based regulations has failed. Mr. Gray suggested that new enforcement approaches should be developed based on specifically banning the landfilling of recyclables. Mr. Gray led a discussion of an enforcement approach based on banning materials.

Mr. Ionata noted that the effective implementation of bans would serve to place the burden of responsibility for monitoring compliance and enforcement of recycling on the RIRRC. Mr. Gray agreed that it would not be possible or appropriate for the RIRRC to undertake the full range of compliance monitoring and enforcement. He said DEM would be able to help enforce bans through inspections of transfer stations.

Mr. Gray reviewed with the Working Group, each of the Possible Approaches for Improvement set forth in the Commercial Recycling Subcommittee draft report on a point-by-point basis.

He indicated that the few firms that are currently engaged in commercial recycling seem to lack the ability to effectively publicize themselves and that somehow actions should be taken to ensure that other businesses know they are there so they can take advantage of their services.

Mr. McGonagle and Mr. Gray led a discussion of the economics of commercial recycling, agreeing that private businesses are most likely to comply with commercial recycling mandates only if the disposal of recyclable materials is more expensive than having it recycled.

Mr. McGonagle said the institutional and economic barriers to recycling confronted by commercial generators must be identified and addressed in the Plan.

After Mr. Gray completed his summation of the Commercial Recycling Subcommittee draft report, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.