

Minutes
Solid Waste Working Group
September 12, 2008 9 am -12 noon
Mad Tom Notch Room, Osgood Building
State Office Complex, Waterbury

Minutes Prepared by: Julie Hackbarth, Coordinator

Facilitators: Natalie Starr and Ted Siegler, DSM Environmental Services.

Committee Members Present: Karen Flanders (alternate for John Casella), Robert Foster, Pete Mattos & Reg Beliveau (alternates for Thomas Jagielski), Cathy Jamieson, Erich Kruger, Fred Moody, Tom Moreau, Paul O'Leary, Alyssa Schuren, Norm Staunton and Tracey Tsugawa.

Committee Members Absent: Sen. Robert Hartwell, Rep. Jim McCullough and Jeff Meyers. Rene Perry has resigned due to change of employment.

Waste Division Staff Present: Jeff Fehrs, Skip Flanders, Carolyn Grodinsky and Julie Hackbarth.

Introductions and Overview:

- The facilitators, Natalie Starr and Ted Siegler introduced themselves and provided a summary of ANR's role in the process. Cathy Jamieson, Solid Waste Program Manager, will actively participate as a member of the working group. Solid Waste Program staff will provide administrative support, do research as needed and maintain a web site where information can be accessed.

- The members of the group were then asked to complete the sentence:

"When I think about solid waste management in Vermont today the most important thing is ... "

- To do something.
- Increase diversion rate by any means possible.
- Provide more public facilities for solid waste management.
- We need a mathematical model to determine highest and best use of any economics carbon nutrient balance.
- Shift the paradigm from waste management to waste prevention.
- Need data on what we need to manage first before learning how to manage.
- Change peoples view of waste to resource optimization
- A consistent plan through out Vermont.
- More education to the population.
- Waste needs to be looked at a resource, what is potential life cycle, once disposed once can be used.
- Change the financial structure to value waste reduction and not disposal.

- Equitable services statewide so we can manage our materials as resources with the right economic structure.

- The minutes from the June 23, 2008 meeting were reviewed and approved. After some discussion it was decided that documents for the group would be emailed to group members and also posted on a web site that the solid waste program is setting up.

- Natalie Starr reviewed various handouts and background information that has been provided to the group members.

Boundaries and Process:

1) Working Group Goals and Objectives

Natalie Starr reviewed the purpose of this group which is to evaluate ANR's Solid Waste Report, develop recommendations to implement and improve upon the report (Legislative mandate), incorporate existing work on solid waste, and determine if modifications to solid waste statutes (Act 78) are necessary and if so in what areas (broadly).

There will be 4 meetings once a month through December 2008 which is a limited amount of time to address the matters before the group.

2) Agreement on Working Group Process and Ground Rules

The group discussed and agreed to ground rules for working together including listening, brevity, staying on task, being respectful, keeping an open mind, one person speaks at a time, no side conversations, giving everyone a chance to speak, staying focused, agreeing to stick to the questions asked or posed, with a diverse group realize that there is no one right answer, we not here to judge each other but hear the issues, be honest, be candid, and raise your hand if you want to talk when some else is talking.

Natalie Starr presented 3 ways to make decisions: 1) consensus; 2) democratic (majority) vote; or 3) democratic vote with minority report(s). After some discussion the group agreed that they would try to achieve consensus but that given the makeup of the group, it was likely that there would be issues when consensus was not possible, in which case they would make a decision based on the third option (majority vote with minority report).

Natalie Starr reviewed member representation. Each person has been appointed to represent a certain group at the meetings and for the final report. While the facilitators do have opinions on many solid waste management issues, they will try to refrain from presenting them as facilitators, and if they do choose to present them they will step out of their role as a facilitator to do so. More importantly, the facilitators will share relevant information from their experience working in the solid waste profession. The facilitators will attempt to help the group focus on a few key critical issues (2 - 4) considering the short period of time to complete the work.

Norm Staunton made the comment that there may be additional issues that the group wants to identify. Ted Siegler indicated that he hopes to find overarching themes but some may not fit.

3) End Product (January 15, 2009 Report to Legislature)

Natalie Starr recapped the current status of this work which includes an ANR report submitted to the legislature in January 2008, ANR is both at the table and has staff to help the group complete its work both through administrative functions and when needed by providing resources and information. This is now the group's work. ANR will take summary of the group's work and compile a draft report and send out to the group for approval so that the report represents the group's work before send to leg. A goal of the group should be to review as to whether there is a need for changes in the broad sense - institutions, programs and legislation.

Natalie Starr emphasized the hope that members can participate in all meetings and will come prepared to discuss the issues at hand. If a member can't come an alternate should be briefed and should attend on the member's behalf.

Other Solid Waste Work/Processes Recap:

Waste Prevention Initiative - Carolyn Grodinsky summarized the waste prevention initiative. She stated that it was exciting that 60 stakeholders were involved representing the 5 waste sectors. The status at this point is that implementation of recommendations Implementation of recommendations from the waste prevention initiative will wait until we have the opportunity to consider the recommendations and results of several related planning process that currently are under way (e.g. Solid Waste Working Group, Composting Advisory Group, District Managers' Workgroup, Climate Change Collaborative). There are 27 priorities and 7 overarching themes. We are working on some over arching themes through the Vermont Product Stewardship Council, Government Lead by Example, and the Climate Change working group. When all those committees currently underway are done, the waste prevention group will get back together and work on implementation. In the meantime Carolyn is preparing a newsletter to keep stakeholders informed. She stressed that a critical aspect of this work is to work with national and regional efforts.

Composting Association of Vermont (CAV) - Bob Foster provided a summary of CAV's current efforts to develop a process to address where we would like to be and what the obstacles are. CAV has a draft report with an internal comment period through September. He shared the vision statement and some of the recommendations from the group which are to create accepted composting practices like Vermont Agriculture Agency's Acceptable Agricultural

Practices¹ and to use science and risk assessment to create tiers beyond the current 3. There is a need to know what the next tier is, including quality assurance standards, when a composter establishing a business model. The recommendations will be provided to this group once finalized and may help to focus this group.

Compost Study Committee (Act 130 - 2007 session) - Cathy Jamieson provided a summary of the Compost study committee's work. This committee has met 3 times with representation of various groups on the committee. The purpose of this committee is to bring clarity to the regulation of composting. The goal is to support composting but needs to protect health and the environment.

District Managers' Association - Fred Moody explained that solid waste districts are an outgrowth of Act 78 back in 1987. 80% of the cities and towns are members of the Assn. equating 80% of the cities and towns which also equates to about 82% of the state population. Districts provide essential solid waste services in that municipalities are required by Vermont statute to provide both in preparing and implementing solid waste implementation plans (SWIPs) and managing solid waste facilities. Issues to be addressed through their work this fall with ANR are providing uniform solid waste services around the state and funding to get to next level of solid waste diversion beyond 30%. This group is hoping that as an outgrowth of their process will be a report to present to this group.

In response to several question, Fred clarified that their evaluation of funding will address both solid waste management and waste prevention and that the time for the district managers work is concurrent or sooner than this committee.

Governor's Commission on Climate Change - Earlier in the meeting Laura Pelosi, DEC Commissioner provided a brief overview on the Governor's Commission on Climate Change report. There are 38 recommendations. The Climate Change Collaborative was established by the Governor and consists of representatives of UVM and the state of Vermont and is about to be established through a charter. Their first task is to look at the work of the climate change transition team of various parts of state government whom analyzed and prioritized the 38 recommendations and identified and compiled all the work that is currently going on around state. Carolyn Grodinsky was a member of that team and brought forth the waste prevention recommendations. They are expecting to issue a report in the near future. Once the Climate Change Collaborative is up and running they will be vetting the transition team's report and providing guidance.

¹ Accepted Agricultural Practices (AAPs) are the **base level of management required for all farms** in Vermont. They are designed to be easy to implement, low-cost solutions for addressing water resource concerns.

Group members expressed interest in receiving a copy of the transition team's report.

DEC Climate Change and Waste Reduction Center - Laura Pelosi also reported that the DEC Climate Change and Waste reduction Center will be established by January 2009. This center will consist of the Air and Waste Divisions. Staff from this center will provide support to the climate change collaborative and will work to leverage resource rather than duplicate. She indicated that this is an excellent product, process and forum for discussing and addressing climate change in Vermont.

ANR 2008 Solid Waste Report to the Legislature:

Report Summary and Recommendations/Vision - Cathy Jamieson discussed the term "Sustainable Materials Management" which was presented in ANR's report to the legislature. Over the past 20 years we have focused on waste after people have used it, the end of pipe. There has been progress in waste diversion which is up to about 30%. We want to change our view from waste to resource, looking at design, manufacturing, and how we promote the products so we don't have to dispose the material in the end and the consumer has a choice when selecting a product. Example - is there another option other than single use containers like bottles for water. We want to look at the environmental impacts over the life cycle of the product.

Cathy then discussed the 8 key features of the proposed "sustainable materials vision" that was proposed in ANR's report to the legislature.

1. Focus on Sustainable Materials Management
2. Share Responsibility
3. Establish Statewide Waste Generation Goal
4. More Integrated State-wide Strategies and Implementation
5. Expand Current and Create New Partnerships
6. Continue to Meet Ongoing Responsibilities
7. Expand Criteria Used When Making Decisions
8. Measure Progress Differently and Better

Prior to facilitating an exercise Ted Siegler read an excerpt of the 1987 State solid waste plan to press the point that issues presented then are still current such as the complexities of waste are increasing, consumption is going up and the amount of waste to manage going up as well. He asked the group to talk broadly about what we can do to affect this trend. Natalie Starr shared a graph which showed the impact of per capita waste generation continuing to increase as the population increases.

Tom Moreau shared his perspective that we are in a new era where materials/waste are increasingly considered a commodity. We should be thinking about optimizing commodities not waste.

Ted Siegler posed the question for group members to respond to:

"What are the primary changes (if any) must be made in how Vermont manages solid waste in the next 10 years?"

This brainstorm exercise generated the following responses from the entire group:

- Waste should be viewed as a commodity
- Number of planning entities in Vermont - too many
- Overlap of regulations- jurisdiction unclear
- Disparity of service level statewide, ease of collection
- Policy/rules that support new technology
- Change in funding mechanisms to discourage disposal. Incentify waste reduction
- Funding mechanism that pays for waste diversion and charges more for disposal. Incentives & disincentives
- Environmentally preferable products are not more expensive
- Better incentives for having an approved SWIP
- Educate the public
- Behavior change & cultural identify away from being consumer
- Increased ride in public transit strictly financial but need infrastructure to sustain, more cultural connection, & more than money. Personal identity impact related to having new items
- Larger infrastructure to manage increase waste diversion
- No town on their own
- Prevention is primary rather than management
- Funded mandate to current institutions
- Statewide authority with statewide flow control
- Enforcement of regulations/rules that are on the book
- Develop Model: LCA Product, economics, carbon impacts, energy, & nutrients
- Regional cooperation/collaboration. Small Vermont impact. Examples- Walmart, product stewardship meeting next week.
- Evaluate new technology
- Funding mechanisms. Enable good examples/practices to expand.
- New collaborative - private, public, & institutional cooperation
- Bigger regions managing waste - fewer districts more consistent services. All towns should be within a district.

The group was then divided into 3 small groups to flesh out details and report back on

"What are the primary changes that must be made in how Vermont manages solid waste in the next 10 years? What are the top critical issues that need to be addressed? (e.g. top 2 - 4 changes or issues that need to be addressed)"

The group had about 25 minutes for this exercise and so the results are not fully developed.

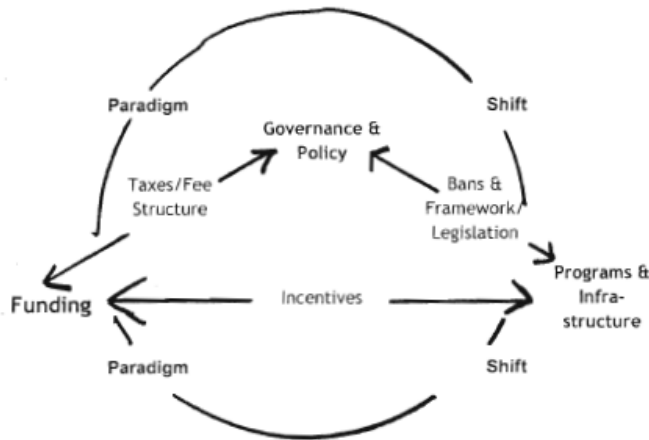
Group 1- Tom, Alyssa, Karen, Pete (IBM)

- 1) Need to look at resources/waste as commodities
- 2) Need to create new infrastructure including new technologies to support new material inflows
- 3) Need to develop economic model that supports diversion and sustainable use
- 4) Need critical mass of commodities to create economies of scale.

Group 2- Erich, Fred, Tracy, Reg

Governance & Policy, Programs & infrastructure, and Funding. All need to be addressed through a paradigm shift. We need mandates, infrastructure improvements, and grants and loans to support the change.

See graphic:



Group 3 - Norm, Paul, Bob, Cathy

Changes are needed in the areas of:

- Legislation/regulation/funding/mandating
- Infrastructure/Technology/Investment-Economics
- Organization/Accountability/Standardization
- Education/Behavior change/Sustainability

Need to have appropriate Incentives and disincentives

Need to have fewer districts with no independent towns to create economy of scale and provide equitable service

Next Steps

Natalie and Ted will boil down the priorities from the 3 groups into a list of 3 or 4 overarching issues.

The next meeting: October 2, 2008 9:00 - 12:00 noon. Location to be determined. Meet-O-Matic will be used to schedule the November and December meeting dates.