

REGIONAL AIR QUALITY PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, February 28, 2007
H-GAC Conference Room A
3555 Timmons Lane, 2nd Floor
Houston, Texas 77027

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jed Anderson, Dana Blume, Robin Hemstroy (for Edmund Petry), Dale Kornegay (for Robert Lanham), Paul Newman (for Badruddin Karachiwala), Mark Peak (phone), and Adam Smith

STAFF PRESENT:

Andrew DeCandis (H-GAC), Christine Smith (H-GAC), Deanna Johnson (H-GAC), Dick Flannery (TCEQ), Stephanie Lee (H-GAC), Graciela Lubertino (H-GAC), Rebecca Rentz (TCEQ), Shelley Whitworth (H-GAC), and Peggy Wade (EPA)

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Craig Beskid, Don Brandon, Catarina Cron-Gonzales, Delvin Dennis, Dee Ann Haney, Steve Kilpatrick, Matthew Kuryla, Brandt Mannchen, Mark McClelland, Edmund Petry, Betin Santos, Ronald Schultz, Jeff Shuggs, Frances Smith, G. Michael White, Beth Whitehead, and Paulette Wolfson

CALL TO ORDER:

Ms. Dana Blume called the meeting to order and no introduction was given.

APPROVE MEETING SUMMARY

October 26, 2006, December 7, 2006 and January 31, 2007 RAQPC meeting summaries were not motioned and seconded due to a lack of quorum.

AGENCY REPORTS:

TCEQ UPDATE – Kathy Singleton

No update.

EPA UPDATE – Peggy Wade

Ms. Peggy Wade announced that the EPA has released its final staff paper containing recommendations for the ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) which is currently under review. EPA recommendations include reporting the standard to the third decimal place and lowering it to a range between 0.060 to 0.080 parts per million (60.0 and 80.0 parts per billion). There is no recommendation to keep the current standard. The EPA must present proposed rule by June 20, 2007 and a final rule by mid-March of 2008.

Ms. Wade also announced the issuance of the Mobile Sources Air Toxics rule, which consists of three components. The first component of the rule includes lowering the current benzene standard of gasoline. Refiners must produce gas with an annual average of 0.62 percent per volume for reformulated and conventional gasoline with an overall national cap of 1.3 percent to be phased-in beginning 2011. The second component for which the EPA has tightened standards is cold start automobile emissions. Currently manufacturers are producing vehicles according to these standards in all 50 states. The last component of the rule is that the EPA has implemented a national gas can program to take effect beginning in 2009. Gasoline, diesel and kerosene containers will have a leak limit of 0.3 grams of hydrocarbon per gallon per day.

Ms. Wade concluded by relaying the federal court decision regarding the Ozone Implementation Plan, Phase I rule. She stated that although parts were upheld, the court vacated the entire rule in the final summary. Currently, EPA headquarters has not issued an interpretation of what this means for the non-attainment areas. The EPA has

until March 22 to file for a re-hearing and specific information regarding interpretation should be provided around this time. Brief questions followed the presentation.

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION:

Ms. Dana Blume introduced the new agenda item before opening the floor to comments. Ms. Blume inquired about new ways to meet quorum and requested ways to increase attendance and improve the effectiveness of the committee.

Suggestions made during this time include:

- RAQPC should form a better understanding of the role of the Committee within the community and determining if this matches the role that members of the Committee expect. This could result in a reformulation of the Mission Statement for RAQPC.
- Better determine what role the H-GAC Board wants RAQPC to fulfill.
- Look at the total air quality planning picture rather than just air quality as it relates to the SIP. This would entail increasing both the timescale and the scope of the air quality issues that RAQPC typically discusses.
- Enforce the attendance rules in the bylaws.
- Combine RAQPC and Policy Subcommittee meetings. This would remove the multi-pollutant plan discussions from Policy Subcommittee meetings and instead use the monthly RAQPC meetings as a working group for the plan. It was suggested that this would be convenient since the membership of both groups overlap significantly.
- Disband RAQPC and restart the Committee.
- Give RAQPC something to do.
- Work harder to set RAQPC apart from similar organizations.
- Use presentations as calls to action.

Policy Subcommittee meetings will continue temporarily until the transition to a new arrangement is complete. The Committee agreed to prioritize issues and work to implement ideas that will benefit both business and the environment.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Bylaw Subcommittee – Dana Blume and Andrew DeCandis

(Please see handouts.) Mr. Andrew DeCandis stated that minor changes including clarifications of rules and dates have been made to the bylaws report. The revised bylaws will be voted on at the March meeting providing quorum is met. Please e-mail comments regarding the report to Andrew DeCandis at andrew.decandis@h-gac.com.

Policy Subcommittee – Karl Pepple

Due to comments suggested during the round table discussion, the schedule of dedicated policy subcommittee meetings will most likely change. Policy Subcommittee meetings will continue temporarily until the transition to a new arrangement is complete. The Committee agreed to prioritize issues and work to implement ideas that will benefit both business and the environment. Members will be notified of the next meeting via e-mail.

INFORMATION ITEMS:

H-GAC DIRECTION – Shelley Whitworth and Stephanie Lee

Ms. Shelley Whitworth announced that the Clean Vehicle program has issued a Call for Projects. More information is available on the H-GAC website (www.h-gac.com). H-GAC has met with Clean City stakeholders committee and school districts to encourage grant applications. Funding from the Clean Vehicle program is being leveraged with funding for the Clean School bus program since many school buses are not qualified for Clean Vehicle funds due to the cost effectiveness requirements.

(Please see handout.) Ms. Stephanie Lee announced that the Clean School Bus program held a successful workshop on February 20th and has received applications from six school districts to retrofit or replace over 100 school buses. The program is currently being funded with SEP funds and private donations. Ms. Whitworth urged members employed by governmental organizations to inform fleet managers of the Clean Vehicle program.

AIR QUALITY REPORT – Dick Flannery

(Please see handout.) Mr. Dick Flannery reviewed the air quality data from the past month and discussed the region's compliance with the 8-hour ozone standard. Questions and comments followed the presentation.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No comments available.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Texas Senate Natural Resource committee is meeting March 8, 2007 in Austin and taking public comment on Senator Avritt's clean air bill.

NEW BUSINESS:

PROPOSED ITEMS FOR NEXT MONTHS AGENDA:

Action Item – Bylaws Subcommittee

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 28, 2007 at 1:30 P.M. Beginning in April meetings will be held on the last Thursday of each month.

ADJOURN

If you have an item you wish to be added to the agenda for a future meeting, please e-mail Andrew DeCandis at andrew.decandis@h-gac.com.