



Meeting Summary
Tuesday, February 16, 2010

Members Present:

Michael Bloom	Jason Iken	Ceil Price
John Blount	Tom Ivy	Kathy Richolson
Pat Buzbee	Ron Kelling (phone)	Jim Robertson (phone)
Marilyn Christian	Craig Maske	Linda Shead
Robert Collins (phone)	Michael Mooney	Brian Shmaefsky
Catherine Elliott	Becky Olive	Melvin Solomon
Carol Haddock	Raymond Pavlovich	Michael Turco
Teague Harris	Linda Pechacek (phone)	

Joe Ferro was represented by Jesse Espinoza.
James Tynan Kelly was represented by Bruce Heiberg.
Jack Murphy was represented by Susie Blake.
Robert Stokes was represented by Lisa Miller-Marshall.

Members Absent:

Mike Garver	Cathy McCoy
Helen Lane	Mitchell Page

Guests Present

Adam Aschmann (GHBA), Chris Attar (City of Houston—Council Member Costello), Mike Bagstad (CH2M Hill), Steve Barry (Jones & Carter), Tom Beck (TxDOT), Tony Bennett (AECOM), Ralph Calvino on phone (AECOM), Bill Carter (TCEQ), Anju Chalise (TCEQ), Richard Chapin (City of Houston), Catarina Cron (Harris County), Anu Desai (University of Houston), Bryan Eastham (TCEQ), Chris Forest (R.G. Miller), Jedediah Greenfield (City of Houston), Monica Harris (TCEQ), Nicole Hausler (PHA), Millie Holifield on phone (City of Missouri City), Jonathan Holley (HCFCD), Steve Hupp (Harris County), Clem Kinney (City of Katy), Brian Koch (TSSWCB), Carol LaBreche on phone (City of Houston), Kim Laird (TCEQ), Mike Lindsay (Montgomery County), Frank Manigold (City of Friendswood), Alisa Max (Harris County), Sam Metzger (City of Pasadena), John Morris (City of Friendswood), David Munn (AECOM), Snehal Patel on phone (Harris County), Mary Purzer on phone (AECOM), Nick Russo (Harris County), Carol Serna (AEI Engineering), Craig

Smith (TCEQ), Camille Sowell (CDM), Nancy Sullins (AECOM), Laurie Thanheiser on phone (Environmental Infrastructure Planning), Mel Vargas on phone (Parsons), Guyneth Williams (City of Houston), Jim Wolfe (Severn Trent Services)

H-GAC Staff Present

Rachel Powers, Erin Livingston, Todd Running, Jeff Taebel, Carl Masterson, Kristi Course, Bill Hoffman, Justin Bower, Cheryl Mergo, Aubin Phillips

1. Welcome & Introductions

Rachel Powers welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. She initiated self-introductions of BIG members, those on the phone, and H-GAC staff. Rachel then reviewed the agenda.

2. Certification of Quorum

Twenty members and alternates were present, achieving a quorum.

3. Approval of Proposed Alternates & Members

No new alternates or members were proposed.

4. Approval of January 19, 2010, Meeting Summary

Meeting notes were approved without any changes.

5. Workgroup Report

Stormwater and Land Development

Carol Haddock reported. The workgroup meeting was well attended, although the majority of attendees were from the central portion of the BIG area. Rural and agricultural stakeholders were not represented, but need to be participating in the discussion. There was generally agreement on the implementation activities (IAs). H-GAC staff will draft up the IAs based on comments. IAs that will come from the workgroup include:

- Continue existing programs
- Disseminate information about local examples of best practices through a web library and a series of meetings
- Promote land development voluntary recognition programs similar to LEED-ND,
- Encourage voluntary expansion of stormwater quality programs and, if necessary in the future, consider the expansion of MS4 programs, and
- Support and petition TCEQ to reinterpret the reimbursement rules regarding infrastructure and bacteria reduction.

Q: Could you explain what “expand stormwater and land development programs” refers to?

A: This is two-fold. Both elements would begin with a voluntary program. First, MS4 permit holders would be asked to voluntarily focus their programs on bacteria. Second, the permit coverage could be expanded geographically to include larger areas. If voluntary programs do not result in change within five years, the situation would be evaluated and stakeholders might consider petitioning TCEQ to expand permits. This is not an expansion of the rules.

6. Staff Presentations

I-Plan draft progress

Staff has sent out drafts of the following sections of the I-plan: Wastewater Treatment Facilities, Construction, and Geographic Priorities. Next up will be Onsite Sanitary Sewage Facilities and Illicit Discharges and Dumping. The goal is to have all sections out by the next March meeting.

Clarification – drafts are going to workgroups for comments and to the BIG for informational purposes. It is preferred that workgroups submit comments/changes before it officially goes to the BIG for comments. However, if a BIG member sends comments now they will not be discarded. Contradicting comments will go back to the workgroups and any continuing disagreements will be handled by the BIG.

Improving and deteriorating assessment units

Todd Running provided an overview of H-GAC’s Clean Rivers Program. Staff reviewed the 2010 303(d) list. New assessment unit listings include:

- 62 for bacteria
- 18 for dissolved oxygen
- 54 for PCBs
- 44 for dioxin

Five assessment units have been delisted for dissolved solids in Clear Creek Above Tidal due to the capping of abandoned wells.

Q: Are all monitoring partners using the same methods?

A: Yes.

Q: Are the new bacteria listings due to new waterways being monitored?

A: Fourteen are newly monitored waterways. The rest had been assessed previously, but are just now considered impaired.

TCEQ looks at the last 7 years of data to make assessments and waterways are listed as impaired when the geomean exceeds the standard or when at least 25% of the samples exceed the single grab standard. H-GAC has reviewed monitoring data and found that 16 sites have seen statistically significant improvement including sites along the Houston Ship Channel, Buffalo Bayou, and Greens Bayou. The term statistically significant means there is a 95% possibility that the trend is real and not due to scatter

or chance. The geomean for White Oak Bayou, for example, has gone from over 4000 to less than 1000 MPN/100ml. The sites are still impaired, but have made significant strides in improvement.

There are 11 areas of increasing bacteria geomeans such as Lake Conroe, Clear Creek above tidal, Dickinson Bayou, and Chocolate Bayou.

Todd asked for stakeholders to look at the list of improving waterways and let H-GAC staff know if they have completed significant projects in the areas in question, or if they know of other reasons that may account for the improvements. Data will be posted on the H-GAC website for review.

Q: Is sampling conducted relative to stormwater flows?

A: This monitoring is ambient monitoring and is done on a pre-set schedule.

Q: What happens if there are multiple sites for assessment units?

A: They are averaged within the assessment unit.

Q: What was the timeframe of the data assessed?

A: Data reviewed was from 2002/2003, to August 2009. The date range was based on the fact that TCEQ switched the bacteria indicator from Fecal Coliform to *E.coli* or Enterococcus in 2001.

Maps

H-GAC staff presented draft GIS maps depicting various combinations of information regarding impaired watersheds in the region. The maps presented are described below, along with the discussion that ensued.

Geomeans in relation to impervious cover

Color-coded watershed imperviousness was presented with color coded stream segments based on the geometric mean values of water column bacteria concentrations.

WWTF flows in relation to stream segment length

Estimated and actual wastewater treatment plant discharge flows per stream segment mile were presented in a scaled manner. Estimated flows were assumed to equal 60% of the permitted flow for the calculations. The EPA has a new database that should have all of the reported flow data. H-GAC will work to get the flows.

Discussion

Q: Is staff looking at the fact that waterways showing improvement are in developed areas and those that are increasing in degradation are in more rural areas?

A: That is why we are asking communities what is being done to improve water quality in the highly developed areas.

WWTF flows per linear mile in relation to geomean

Quintiles of WWTF flows and quintiles of impairment levels were represented on the map.

BIG members questioned the usefulness of the presented maps in determining the content of the I-Plan. It was suggested that the data displayed might indicate or hint at causation and correlations that may not actually exist and that may not help refine the content of the I-Plan. It was suggested that implementing localities could use existing data to conduct more refined and focused analysis during implementation rather than conducting these types of analyses now. The question was posed to the group of what data needs to be collected in the future to determine the effectiveness of the implementation activities (IAs) that will be put into practice. Clean Rivers data cannot be used for determining effectiveness from specific IAs, particularly in the short term. A database will need to be developed to house effectiveness data collected in the region. Flow data would also be valuable to collect.

7. Other Business/Roundtable

Monica Harris, Section Chief of Planning and Implementation in TCEQ's Office of Water, provided an update on the Houston Metro and Lake Houston TMDLs progress. Only one comment was received during the public comment period for the Greens Bayou TMDL. TCEQ hopes to adopt the TMDL in March or April. The four remaining Houston Metro TMDLs will be on the TCEQ commissioner's agenda in April or May for proposal for public comment. The Lake Houston TMDL will follow in May or June.

On February 24, 2010, a meeting will be held in Seabrook regarding the Implementation Planning process for the Upper Coast Oyster Waters TMDL. Questions can be addressed to Lisa Miller-Marshall.

8. Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on March 16, 2010.

Rachel reported that Meredith Blount of the River Systems Institute has asked present information about funding for grants at the March meeting. The next grant cycle begins in June. The group agreed to have the presentation at 1:00 pm, before the BIG meeting.

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:40 PM.