



Meeting Summary
Tuesday, September 15, 2009

Members Present:

Michael Bloom	Jason Iken	Raymond Pavlovich
John Blount	Tom Ivy	Linda Pechacek (by phone)
Pat Buzbee	Ron Kelling	Ceil Price
Marilyn Christian	Helen Lane	Kathy Richolson
Catherine Elliott	Cathy McCoy (by phone)	Jim Robertson
Carol Ellinger	Michael Mooney	Linda Shead
Joe Ferro	Jack Murphy	Brian Shmaefsky
Teague Harris	Becky Olive	

James Tynan Kelly was represented by Bruce Heiberg.
Robert Stokes was represented by Scott Jones

Members Absent:

Robert Collins	Craig Maske	Melvin Solomon
Mike Garver	Mitchell Page	

Guests Present:

Charlie Adams (TCEQ), Steve Archer (Archer Environmental), Thomas Barnett (TCEQ), Tony Bennett (AECOM), Susie Blake (City of League City), Linda Broach (TCEQ), Bill Carter (TCEQ), Richard Chapin (City of Houston), Catarina Cron (Harris County), Tom Douglas (UTSPH), Bryan Eastham (TCEQ), Jesse Espinoza (City of Webster), Jason Ford (TCEQ), Joe Gautier (SMG Global), Jedediah Greenfield (City of Houston), Eric Hall (KBR), Nicole Hausler (PHA), Margret Hines-Dorman (Citizen), Steven Johnston (GBEP/TCEQ), Brian Koch (TSSWCB), David Kocurek on phone (City of Alvin), Bruce Krewinghaus (Southwest Houston 2000), Kim Laird (TCEQ), Michael Lindsey (Montgomery County), Heather Maloney (TCEQ), Alisa Max (Harris County) Maria Modelska (University of Houston), Philip Moore (Citizen), Chip Morris (TCEQ), Nwachukwu Sam Okonkwo (TCEQ), Allen Peach (URS), Carol Serna (AEI Engineering), R.D. Smith (CCFCC), Robert Snoza II (HCFCD), Laurie Thanheiser on phone (Environmental Infrastructure Planning), Carolyn White (HCFCD)

H-GAC Staff Present:

Justin Bower, Ayo Jibowu, Erin Livingston, Carl Masterson, Aubin Phillips, Rachel Powers, Jeff Taebel, Andrea Tantillo

1. Welcome & Introductions

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

2. Certification of Quorum

Twenty-five members and alternates were present, achieving a quorum.

3. Approval of Proposed Alternates

Nic Russo was approved as an alternate for John Blount. Jesse Espinoza was approved as an alternate for Joe Ferro, replacing Johnny Arrendondo.

4. Approval of August 18, 2009, Meeting Summary

Meeting notes were approved as written.

5. Public Engagement Plan Phase I

The BIG is about halfway through the process of developing the Implementation Plan. It has identified 24 implementation activities (IAs) that merit further consideration at this time. These IAs are being evaluated quantitatively through a literature review and research. We are also communicating the BIG process and information about the IAs to stakeholders so that they have an opportunity to provide input on the recommendations now, instead of when we ask them to support the recommendations later in the planning process. Several hundred letters have been sent to representatives of counties, cities, MUDs, and state legislators. We have been collecting input by phone, in person, by e-mail, on a web-based form, and in meetings. Four meetings were set up to address concerns of the smaller cities and MUDs in particular.

Nine people attended the first public engagement meeting last week in The Woodlands. The plan was well-received and we received helpful input from the participants, indicating which potential activities they might support or oppose. Generally speaking, participants felt that the plan made sense.

Additional meetings geared to small cities and MUDs are scheduled tonight at H-GAC, September 23 in Humble, and September 29 in west Houston.

Q: Did letters to the operators, attorneys, and engineers for the MUDs specify which MUDs were involved?

A: No. We did not have access to information regarding which MUD service providers worked with which MUDs. We worked with the Association of Water Board Directors to get their list of service providers, and sent to them. The BIG area has about 600 MUDs. We did not send letters directly to each MUD.

We also talked with residents at a meeting of the San Jacinto County Extension Service.

Q: At the meeting, did you discuss the possibility of using native plants along waterways?

A: No. We'll see if there is a way to work that into the conversations.

Q: Of the 600 MUDs, is there variation in the input from operators between large and small MUDs?

A: We have not received input from the operators for MUDs, yet.

Jeff summarized by saying that there has been a hybrid approach, addressing each type of stakeholder in a customized manner. H-GAC is hosting meetings for an amalgam of stakeholders in different ways, including public meetings, individual meetings, and correspondence.

6. Workgroup Report

No workgroups have met since the last BIG meeting.

Meetings that we will be scheduling shortly:

- WWTF--to discuss monitoring and bacteria limits in effluent in the context of proposed changes to state standards that will soon be adopted.
- Monitoring & Scheduling—To discuss Clean Rivers and non-ambient tracking
- Sanitary Sewer Systems—Rachel and others attended the Capacity, Management, Operations, Maintenance (CMOM) conference in Austin, sponsored by EPA, TCEQ, City of Austin, and Water Environment Association of Texas.
- Coordination & Policy
- OSSF—One of the top recommendations was to map septic systems (permitted, unpermitted, and failing). H-GAC has received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA or stimulus) funds. Justin Bower of H-GAC briefly described the funding, which covers a variety of programs in addition to this mapping effort. H-GAC will work with counties and other Authorized Agencies to create an inventory and a shared mapping program.

Q: What counties will be covered?

A: The 13 counties in the H-GAC region, plus the portions of those two counties in the BIG but outside of H-GAC.

Q: When will this start?

A: Soon. We just received the contract yesterday.

Comment: Be sure to work with TCEQ.

A: We will.

Q: Will this be shared publicly?

A: Yes.

Comment: As an OSSF owner, I'd be curious to know what problems are out there.

7. Presentation on Literature Research

Allen Peach, scientist with URS, provided a summary and highlights of literature research that URS has been conducting on behalf of the BIG. The objectives of the literature review were to identify BMPs that show evidence of effectiveness, then match the BMPs up with the 24 priorities identified by the BIG.

Relatively speaking, there is less data specific to bacteria than for other pollutants, although that is changing. Many of the BMPs used for other pollutants can be used for bacteria reduction. Costs can be evaluated fairly easily for many of these BMPs. Much of the data is site-specific. General BMP topics researched include stormwater structural controls, stormwater treatment disinfection, and Low Impact Development.

8. Staff Presentations

Carl reported that H-GAC has finished updating the GIS coverage for the bacteria-impaired waterways, and has sent it to TCEQ for review. TCEQ has informed us that, in anticipation of the 2010 303(d) list, they are making changes to the descriptions and numbering for quite a few of the assessment units and segments in the BIG area. H-GAC will be working to incorporate that information.

H-GAC continues to improve the risk analysis. H-GAC will be meeting with Harris County as part of an effort to analyze the percentage of water in each waterway that can be attributed to treated wastewater effluent. H-GAC is also collecting information from a variety of sources, including Clean Rivers monitors and Stream Team Volunteers, regarding observed recreation in waterways.

Comment: We need to make sure we can incorporate potential future use, such as work by Buffalo Bayou Partnership, into the analysis.

H-GAC is also looking at the Annapolis Protocol and PBS&J's bacteria risk tool. Carl asked if the group would like to hear about the PBS&J project at the next meeting, and the BIG agreed.

Carl noted that all of the water quality programs at H-GAC will be incorporated into one group, headed by Todd Running. Carl will be focusing on conversing with local governments.

9. Other Business/Roundtable

Bill Carter, from TCEQ, presented on the Texas Nonpoint Source Pollution Program and the 2010 grant cycle.

TCEQ administers half of the Texas 319(h) funds. TSSWCB administers the other half, focusing on agricultural sources. TCEQ updates goals for the program every five years. Key elements of program goals relate to assessment, implementation, education, and

planning. One focus is on priority watersheds, including the bacteria-impaired watersheds in the Houston region. If the approved implementation plan for the BIG meets the requirements of a watershed protection plan, actions listed in the I-plan could be eligible for 319(h) grant funds from TCEQ.

EPA's interest is to implement the plans once they have been developed, and report progress. Federal performance measures, which must be met in order to continue the program, include:

- The reduction of nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment loading where it is a problem.
- Statistically significant water quality improvements, such as delisted water bodies.

Bill then provided information about project selection criteria for the 2010 grant cycle. Criteria fall into five categories:

- Part of an established Watershed Planning Process
- Implements nonpoint source BMPs that address waterbodies identified in various programs
- Likely to result in measureable water quality improvements
- Applicant/Team Qualifications
- Cost effectiveness

Bill then reviewed common BMPs, which address nonpoint source pollution along the entire stormwater pathway. Bill provided additional information about the following:

- Reduction of runoff through low impact development (LID) practices
- Reduction of contact of stormwater with pollutants through preventative practices
- Recapture of exposed pollutants through cleanup practices
- Erosion control to stabilize soil and prevent runoff
- Sediment control to capture pollutants suspended in runoff
- Channel protection measures to reduce erosion
- Habitat restoration to minimize erosion and remove pollutants
- In-stream remediation to remove pollutants from the water.

Runoff reduction is the preferred type of BMP. Bill provided examples of runoff reduction BMPs, including green infrastructure, infiltration techniques, site design, rainwater harvesting, tree canopy development, porous pavement, retention/irrigation, and dry wells.

Bill then provided examples of source control BMPs, which would reduce the contact of stormwater with pollutants. These are operational and structural practices that reduce pollution at the source. Source control BMPs might include pet waste management, lawn care practices, OSSF or septic tank maintenance, and automotive maintenance.

319(h) funds can be used in urbanized areas for activities such as watershed planning, monitoring, LID activities, retrofits of previously developed areas, demonstrations, and education and involvement programs. These funds cannot be used for activities required by an MS4 permit. Examples of urban uses include riparian management, wetland creation, pollution prevention, alternative pavements, and rain gardens.

TCEQ encourages the incorporation of LID practices into the building process and development review process. Bill showed a table showing incentives to encourage LID activities. He briefly described the City of Austin's incentive program. TCEQ has funded a local project in the Cottage Grove neighborhood to implement and evaluate LID projects.

TCEQ has about \$4 million in funds. Grant terms can be up to three years, although shorter projects are encouraged. A 40% match is required. Governments and non-profits are eligible. Again, these funds cannot be used to comply with NPDES permits. The grant schedule is as follows:

- September 2009—solicitation issued
- November 2009—applications due
- March 2010—TCEQ selects projects
- July 2010—EPA awards funds
- September 2010—contracts executed, projects start

Bill finished by reviewing lists of project examples and additional resources.

Q: Currently, TCEQ does not provide reimbursements to developers for LID techniques. Will that be changed any time?

A: Bill will look into it.

Q: TCEQ has indicated in the past that injection permits would be required for drywells and possibly bioswales. Has that changed?

A: Bill will look into it.

Q: The BIG I-Plan has not yet been approved. Does that mean that the activities that have been identified would not be eligible for funds?

A: Half of the funds must fund activities in approved plans. The other half are encouraged to be in the plans, but do not need to be. It's about \$2 million for each.

Q: Are these funds appropriate for individuals in more rural areas?

A: Brian Koch explained that 319 and other funds are available through the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board to assist with agricultural activities. The TSSWCB request for proposals will be out October 2.

Q: Is this presentation available on-line?

A: If it isn't yet, it will be.

10. Next Meeting Date

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on October 20, 2009. PBS&J will present information about their bacteria decision support tool. The group agreed to a presentation of H-GAC's new Water Resources Interactive Map.

The group agreed to invite Jason Leifester with TCEQ to the November meeting to discuss progress on the Houston Metro and Lake Houston TMDL projects.

11. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at about 3:30 PM.