

PUBLIC INTEREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PIAC) MEETING

Tuesday, August 8, 2006, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Battelle, Duxbury, MA

MINUTES

AGENDA TOPICS

- Review of OMSAP meeting

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Bruce Berman, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay (alt.); Peter Borrelli, Center for Coastal Studies; and Steve Tucker, Cape Cod Commission.

Observers: Ben Lasley, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay; Andrea Rex, MWRA; Larry Schafer, MWRA WAC; Lauren Thirer, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay; and Cathy Vakalopoulos, MassDEP.

MEETING SUMMARY

PIAC approved the August 11, 2005 meeting summary with no amendments.

PIAC reviewed the OMSAP meeting. B. Berman listed his concerns about the permit, blending and OMSAP meetings. He noted that it is one year after the MWRA discharge permit has expired and we have not been given an update on the permit status, but at least the monitoring is continuing. He does not want the permit and blending taken off of the agenda and he wants to see the new permit development to be a public process. He is also concerned about the length of time between OMSAP meetings. C. Vakalopoulos suggested that these concerns should be voiced to EPA. P. Borrelli thinks that it may be useful to schedule a meeting with EPA. The delay in the permit could be a staffing issue, with limited staff working on other issues. B. Berman thinks that in general, the permit is working, but that the renewal should be done publicly. P. Borrelli thinks that it is good that OMSAP has continued its work and that MWRA maintains a good working relationship with its colleagues, unlike the problems encountered with monitoring review in Chesapeake Bay. He agrees that the permit is working, the treatment plant is working, MWRA has learned from their mistakes (e.g. power failures), and the buoy development represents a commitment to ongoing science.

P. Borrelli also agrees with S. Nixon in that we should re-evaluate what the modeling is all about and what we are using it for. S. Tucker thinks that though the model has evolved, it should be predictive to be more useful. A. Rex noted that MWRA has tested the model with various scenarios, e.g. turning off the outfall. She added that MWRA is issuing a new request for proposals (RFP) for modeling. P. Borrelli suggested that in the RFP, MWRA request some predictive capabilities be added. A. Rex replied that the model does have some predictive capability, but what would make it more useful is if it were easier and quicker to run. One thing that the modelers have been working on is having the model run real time hydrodynamic tracking. P. Borrelli thinks it would be useful to share this with Mass Maritime's and their oil spill simulations. He also agrees with OMSAP's opinion that there should be a closer examination of the modeling.

P. Borrelli is discouraged that D. Anderson is going to put a lot of effort into red tide modeling, and less on field work. He is disappointed that there is no more funding from NOAA for red tide work in Mass Bay. B. Berman suggested that we urge MA Marine Fisheries to do some red tide work in Mass

Bay. P. Borrelli noted that the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary has a new research vessel. S. Tucker would like to see more work done on how nutrients from the outfall affect *Alexandrium* cysts. This is important to learn so that we can see if the outfall is having an effect.

B. Berman also voiced his concern about flounder lesions – that if others aren't sampling, then there are no additional data. P. Borrelli said it has been difficult since there is no known cause of the lesions. B. Berman would like to find out more about the NMFS/Marine Fisheries fall surveys. S. Tucker is still wondering if flounder with lesions die.

B. Berman wondered if there is a difference between effluent that has had 100% secondary treatment, and effluent that has been blended, even though both have met the permit standards. A. Rex that there has not been much work on this on a national basis, but she thinks that EPA and WEF may be beginning to research it. B. Berman has heard that blending was done to save money, but it was our understanding that the effluent would be receiving secondary treatment unless the secondary capacity was exceeded. L. Schafer said that "secondary bypassing" is a better term than "blending". A. Rex said that the DITP has to blend because of MWRA's CSO policy that states that they have to maximize the flow to the DITP to reduce CSO discharges. Other facilities don't have CSOs, but they still blend on a regular basis. P. Borrelli understands that this is still a legal issue between MWRA and EPA, but he would like to see this discussed at an OMSAP meeting, to the extent that a discussion of the legal issues can be avoided. S. Tucker and B. Berman think that cost should not enter OMSAP's discussions. P. Borrelli disagreed. He thinks that if there are limited funds, then MWRA needs advice on how to responsibly allocate the funds.

ADJOURNED

MEETING HANDOUTS:

- August 2005 draft PIAC and OMSAP meeting summaries
- MWRA information briefings

Summary prepared by C. Vakalopoulos.