

**Designated Planning Agency Roundtable
Meeting Minutes - Monday, July 17, 2006**

The meeting was held at the Ingham County Health Department, from 1:30 PM thru 3:00 PM

Present at the meeting:

Larry Sullivan, Charlevoix County
Cara Clore, Clinton County
Bruce Patrick, Crawford County
Shelia Taylor, Genesee County
Martha Knorek, Ingham County
Amy Shindorf, Isabella County
Sue & Charlie Ringman, Lenawee County
Rhonda Oyer Zimmerman, MDEQ-WHMD
Tom Hickson, Michigan Association of Counties
Jamie Dean, Monroe County
Whitney Calio, Oakland County
Geoff Donaldson, St. Clair County
Kate Neese, Tuscola County
Anna Collinson, Resource Recycling Systems, Inc.
Martin Seaman, Resource Recycling Systems, Inc.
Mary Vangieson, Wayne County

RRSI Administrative Support to DPA Roundtable

Resource Recycling Systems, Inc (RRSI) has offered administrative assistance to the DPA group. At this point assistance will focus on assisting with minutes following each meeting. Cara Clore, Clinton County, will continue to draft meeting agendas, assist with development of meeting minutes in conjunction with RRSI, and facilitate communication amongst DPA contacts.

Update from DEQ on Solid Waste Planning – Next update to plans and improvements to planning process

1. Rhonda Zimmerman, head of the DEQ-WHMD, Solid Waste Management Unit was present to discuss relevant updates regarding the State Solid Waste Policy and the next Plan Update Cycle.
2. The DEQ formed a work group early this year to update the State's Solid Waste Policy. The Solid Waste Policy Advisory Committee (SWPAC) is comprised of stakeholders throughout the state. Clore emailed the latest draft version of the updated policy to DPAs. Attendees are encouraged to review the draft Policy and send comments to either Zimmerman or Clore. The SWPAC will conduct a final meeting on Friday July 21 to provide final comments on the revised draft of the policy. Zimmerman indicated that the policy could be enacted administratively through the DEQ, be taken up by the Governor's office or be adopted by the legislature. Overall, the policy is substantively different from the current one. The SWPAC intended to create a living document to provide guiding principals and not specific prescriptions on how the policy should be implemented. The most striking difference in the revised policy over the current one is the focus on waste as a resource. The revised policy also contains more information regarding waste prevention, reduction, and recycling than before.
3. Zimmerman discussed DEQ's current plans with regard to when the next update to the County Solid Waste Plans would be called. She indicated that DEQ is working to implement recommendations provided by the solid waste planning work group convened last year. According to Zimmerman, the DEQ is working with the legislative service bureau to develop

legislative amendments to implement any changes that are not tied to funding requirements, in particular funding for program development at the state and local level and also recycling and solid waste data collection and reporting. Items in particular that are being worked on can be found in the work group's recommendations included in the report on the DEQ website at: <http://www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-whm-stsw-planningreporttoleg2-22-05.pdf>.

4. Zimmerman indicated that under the best case scenario the DEQ would send notification in spring of next year to counties to express the state's intent to institute a plan update cycle. This however assumes that legislative amendments are introduced and passed into law, that there isn't a staff shortage for solid waste planning staff, and that DEQ is able to revise the plan format and develop guidance documents, as requested by the planning work group.
5. The size of the solid waste planning staff has decreased over the last ten years, and there is currently a vacant position. In total, the vacant position along with the two other current DEQ staff only totals 1 FTE to oversee the updates to the solid waste plans. As a result the DEQ is considering calling for plan updates by focusing on 20% of county's each year, so that it would take five years for all county's to complete a plan update cycle. There was some discussion that this could create problems in some areas of planning, for example in providing for import and export authorizations. However, with the length of time it has taken some county's to implement plans, formalizing a staggered update cycle may not have a negative impact to county's ability to develop and implement plans.

Discussion on improvements to the planning process

The group engaged in a discussion following which are the most salient comments and recommendations:

1. Several different working sessions should be facilitated to improve the next update of the solid waste plans. The sessions could focus on the following topics:
 - a. Provide input to DEQ on a revised format for solid waste plans. The goal of revising the current format is to streamline reporting requirements and eliminate redundancies in the information requested. There is also a need to provide DEQ specific recommendations on the development of guidance documents to assist planners. Zimmerman commented that DEQ learned with the last solid waste update cycle that often times what is conveyed in guidance documents is not what is actually intended.
 - b. Information for municipal agencies on the most important elements that should be included in all solid waste and recycling contracts. This was brought up in regards to data collection and the fact that many jurisdictions can't provide information for county and state level reporting because they can not get the information from their service provider. If it was included in the contract as a requirement, then it would have to be shared with local officials. Sheila Taylor discussed a workshop put on by the Genesee County Planning Department for local officials specifically regarding contracting and what locals should be vigilant against, however it was not received as they had hoped. Many jurisdictions took a defensive approach to the county's involvement in their service contracting.
 - c. Information for county officials on the necessary steps to institute licensing of local waste haulers. It was discussed that there is a wide berth with regard to how and why some county's license haulers, ranging from eliminating bad actors, in order to collect necessary data, and in some instances to generate funding.
 - d. Information on key aspects to include in plans to streamline the planning process and facilitate future development of projects. For example Wayne County has eliminated the need to do plan amendments by incorporating a mechanism for gaining facility approval within the current plan format. Another example is the negotiation of host county agreements and the need to: ensure capacity for the host county for an agreed upon time frame and restrict or otherwise eliminate the imports of waste from out of state or out of

country. Another important aspect is with regard to solid waste ordinances which are in effect the legal documents which enforce the standards established in solid waste plans.

4. Information Management—partnerships with DPA and MAC

Tom Hickson with the Michigan Association of Counties suggested that RRS and a DPA contact conduct a Re-TRAC presentation to the MAC Environmental Committee which will reconvene in the fall, the dates of September 8 or October 13 was suggested. Should MAC support the effort, Hickson could provide some assistance in lobbying the legislature to appropriate funding for a state-wide subscription of the software. Current estimates are \$75,000 for the first year, and \$40,000 each year thereafter. Re-TRAC is a web-based software program designed to track recycling and solid waste data, with particular emphasis placed on producing detailed reports and benchmarking data, making it useful for evaluation and planning purposes at the state and local level.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:00 PM

Next meeting scheduled for October 9, 2006 (tentative, will likely be changed since date is a holiday)