

**TAG Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday, February 3, 2004**

MINUTES

Present: Michael Maynard (Chair), Nonny Ferriday (BWA), Donald Holmes (BWA), Kel House, Jesse Leach (PBA), Kathy Lirakis, Jane McCloskey (EPBEA), Margaret Quinn (MERI Education Coordinator), Bruce Rutland (BCPCT); Shirley Carville (citizen); Gunilla Kettis (MERI Development Director) and Greg Williams (MERI Outreach Coordinator).

Gunilla Kettis opened the meeting with a welcome and introductions of new MERI staff. Updated contact lists for the steering committee and MERI were distributed and discussed. Kettis and Margaret Quinn explained the role of each MERI staff member and gave an update on Sally Chadbourne, MERI Associate Director, and Jen Traub, MERI's former Assistant to the Executive Director.

Copies of the minutes from the October 6, 2003 informational meeting were distributed and corrections were noted. Kettis asked the committee to share any concerns they have heard from the community since the last meeting. Michael Maynard said he was glad to have the opportunity to discuss concerns. He said that he does not want the community to say at the end of the process that they didn't have a chance to give input. So far, he thinks the steering committee and MERI have done a good job of getting the word out.

Kettis and Quinn told the committee that MERI has received only a few concerns and that they are still waiting for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) community survey. They advised the committee that Sally Chadbourne had recently spoken to Pam Harting-Barrat, the community involvement coordinator for the EPA, Boston region, and that Harting-Barrat had promised to provide MERI with a summary report of the survey by the end of the week (Friday, Feb. 6). A similar promise from Harting-Barrat had been received in September.

Maynard said it is precisely this kind of behavior (EPA delays) that gets the community angry and suspicious of outside agencies, and he doesn't want the committee to provoke the same frustration, aggravation and hysteria in the community. Jane McCloskey suggested that members take turns pressuring the EPA by phone to release the survey. Kettis proposed that MERI should try once more to obtain the summary report from EPA.

Maynard said the committee should try to better understand the likelihood of EPA funding for the cleanup and then make it clear to the community. He asked fellow members how best to do that. Donald Holmes said it is unfortunate that EPA funding is based on the level of community concern and that, in his opinion, the community is "already worn down by the process." Kettis said the committee may be thinking too pessimistically and encouraged members to be stick with it and the money may come as a result. Holmes reiterated his point that the community is not active right now. Lirakis said it has to do with the community's feeling of discouragement that nothing will change as a result of the TAG process. Kel House said there is an underlying

element of fear and suspicion in town. Maynard said while he wants to get more responses, he doesn't want to "beat a dead horse." Holmes, a marine biologist, shared Maynard's concern that the community may choose not to take part in the process because of the way the EPA and Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) have handled the situation. He mentioned his concern about the use of "bad science," for example testing taps instead of well heads. Maynard said the DEP shouldn't have shared the preliminary results during the October meeting, because the analysis has yet to be done. Maynard said the DEP told people in attendance that there was a problem and that wasn't right. The EPA and DEP, he said, are supposed to be proving to the community that they are trustworthy, but it appears they are not.

Maynard and other members shared their discontent over EPA Project Manager Leslie McVickar's behavior during the October meeting, saying it was "unprofessional." Maynard said the committee ought to relay its sentiment to the EPA.

Maynard said McVickar has been "vague" when responding to community concerns about EPA funding. He questioned the EPA's ability to provide funding and its investigations into the potentially responsible parties (PRPs). Holmes said the EPA told the public in October that the list of PRPs would be completed within two weeks after the meeting and that the committee or MERI should get a copy. Kettis said MERI would ask for the list of PRPs.

Nonny Ferriday told the committee that she was not present at the October 6 meeting, but that she has received 16 messages from people who have general concerns about the site. She responded that she would keep them informed as the process moves on. Ferriday, who represents the Bagaduce Watershed Association (BWA), also said she has sent e-mails to her group's 175 members. Other members of the steering committee agreed that informing their constituents is a good way to get the word out. Maynard said the committee may want to somehow formalize this process of communication in the future. Lirakis added that there should also be a central contact list managed by MERI staff. Maynard said the committee had discussed previously how MERI would provide a forum for concerns on its web site and that that is a good way for the community to air its viewpoints. Kettis said MERI will e-mail the committee the minutes from this meeting and members can send them on to their constituents. McCloskey said she can't involve her group's members right now because they are too focused on salmon farming, but that in the future she could involve them more. Other committee members suggested to McCloskey that she make a general inquiry to see who might be interested in the process and not ask them to be actively involved.

House said the key method of informing the public is for MERI to have a central e-mail list and to provide space on its web site for citizens to air concerns. Ferriday said it also important to keep the committee's work in the local newspapers via press releases and/or articles. Quinn said MERI will assume that duty. Lirakis reiterated her point that the committee and MERI should be in regular contact with those citizens who have expressed an interest in the process. Maynard said all committee meetings are open to the public and he welcomes their involvement and input, whether it is direct participation in the meetings or feedback on MERI's website.

Kettis began discussion on the request for proposals and asked Quinn to talk about technical advisers. Quinn told the committee that because of the nature of the project it would be best to hire a firm with multiple specialties – hydrology, soil science, geology, ecology, etc. In formulating the RFP, Quinn proposed reviewing other TAG recipients' request for proposals and expected such information to be readily available from the EPA. Holmes said many firms with those qualifications exist in the area. Kettis said that at least three firms have been in touch with MERI to date to indicate their interest in responding to an RFP, but noted that when the time comes for MERI to issue RFPs that request will be widely advertised in the press.

Holmes said that before drafting an RFP the steering committee needs to incorporate the results of the EPA survey. House asked Quinn if there were any deadlines to be met and she answered that as long as the committee keeps the EPA's Mike McGagh informed of their status it is OK. Maynard said the committee is really in a position of power because the EPA has failed to provide the community survey, which is indeed needed to write a request for proposal. The committee decided a letter ought to be sent to Harting-Barrat of the EPA informing her that they want the survey immediately. All relevant parties, including the Maine DEP, should be included in the mailing.

Quinn told the committee that MERI's projected timeline is to finish drafting an RFP and distribute the request for proposal by the end of March and to hire a technical adviser by summer. After some discussion, the committee agreed to wait for an RFP draft to review.

The committee agreed to meet before the end of March if the survey results are available. Members also agreed that a press release on the meeting ought to be distributed and that a letter about the TAG steering committee's progress in 2003 should be submitted to relevant towns to include in their annual town reports, if not for 2003, at least for 2004. Members questioned whether a selectman was going to join the committee. Kettis and Quinn said they would find out and selectmen would be informed of the committee's work. Maynard reiterated his belief that the committee has done a good job of keeping the public informed.

Kettis asked if there was any other business to discuss, to which the committee said it did not. Kettis adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Greg Williams
MERI Community Outreach Coordinator