

**NEW HAMPSHIRE WATER SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION**  
*Public Engagement Working Group*

October 5, 2011 – Meeting Notes

Present: John Gilbert, Denise Hart, Amy Manzelli, Paul Susca  
Guests: Rebecca Wagner, Bill Housel

Discussion about goals and objectives for public meetings:

- 1) Satisfy directive in Executive Order.
- 2) Refine vision/principles/issues.
- 3) Build constituencies/support for watershed perspective.
- 4) Engage broadest public participation in expanding awareness of, dialogue about and support for measures related to water sustainability.
- 5) Spur participants in public meetings to become significantly engaged in issues related to water sustainability and supporting solutions to state's water sustainability challenges.
- 6) Build on previous DES public hearings by harnessing energy, further motivating public to get involved and move forward.

Paul's reflections on DES public hearings

- 1) Preaching to the choir – need to actively recruit participants.
- 2) Municipal officials wanted more guidance materials – they seemed overwhelmed – so much related to water depends on municipal decisions – land use decision.
- 3) Didn't structure meetings to come up with solutions – need people to do work. Their meetings were one hour of listening to a presentation and then 1 hour of discussion.
- 4) Need discussion about role of laws and fact that they don't work in support of decision-making (particularly at local level).

Discussion of ideas for components of public meetings:

- 1) Icebreaker – 3-8 minutes.
- 2) Introduction to principles of water sustainability.
- 3) Session/exercise – participants identify issues/solutions/focus on one issue particular to that region – deliberative session.
- 4) Short presentation – what Commission can do/what audience can do.
- 5) Get local groups to have tables with materials – possibly host roundtable in advance about local issues.
- 6) Create Google list serve for Commission (participant lists – lists of interested people/parties).
- 7) Working with specific issues – how to frame: public/private, water supplies, DES, Funding/EPA/regulatory.
- 8) Ask participants to promise to do something – one thing in their community to help advance sustainable water management – tell what the Commission will do.

Public comments:

- 1) Bill Hounsell raised issue of SB 60 Commission – why it hasn't been reorganized as it is designed to address funding for infrastructure.
- 2) Question of how we get enough people out to challenge elected officials to do something
  - a. Importance of understanding dynamics between federal/state/public/private – what is.
  - b. Is working is when federal mandates (clean water act) coupled with federal/state aid grants (RSA 486/486A) as funding mechanisms.
- 3) Demonstrations/models of how that can work – North Conway/Ashland.
- 4) Demonstrations/models Southeast Water Alliance.

Follow-up:

- 1) Tentative dates: First week in November for Seacoast (Paul will check with GBNER Center for availability). First week in December for North Country (John will check with WMCC – Berlin). Both will solicit input on recommendations for best times to hold meetings.
- 2) John will confirm with Governor's scheduler to set specific dates.
- 3) Denise will contact Bruce Mallory at Carsey Institute to discuss availability/interest in helping to design program with the deliberative democracy approach.
- 4) Public Engagement Group will meet again from 1-2 before the WSC meeting on 10/18 – Denise will confirm with Jen availability of room.

*Meeting adjourned at 4:30pm.*