

MEETING NOTES
Public Engagement Working Group
Water Sustainability Commission
February 14, 2012

The meeting was held on February 14, 2012 at the Higher Education Foundation offices, 4 Barrel Court in Concord, NH

Commission members present: Denise Hart, Amy Manzelli, Marcy Lyman, John Gilbert
Guests: Paul Susca/DES staff

Business:

- 1) Meeting notes approved for 1/17 and 1/30.
- 2) Fundraising update: Report on anticipated decisions from Bean Foundation the next day 2/15.

Issues discussed:

1) NH Listens: The subcommittee discussed the framing questions and how to create questions that move the discussion into the arena of sustainability. It was suggested to keep working through the issues and the sustainability piece will emerge. Commission members will be identifying issues in the following full Commission meeting and sustainability piece may emerge from that. It was noted that the framing questions will shape the participants' guide – will be important to inform NH Listens on any changes/revisions to framing questions as well as working with them to build the framework around sustainability.

Publicity: Denise indicated that she will work with Molly to plan for advance PR (potentially jointly with UNH Media relations office) about the Commission's partnership with NH Listens. Questioned whether we have to coordinate with Governor's office.

NB: Commission Chair Gilbert indicated that it was not necessary to clear with Governor's office and that Denise should go ahead with planning with NH Listens/UNH Media Relations office

2) Developing a constituency for making good water policy: Much of the group's discussion was around the complex challenge of building a constituency for water. It was noted that the lack of literacy, even among purported leaders in LNH, was surprising and informative – reinforcing the challenge ahead. The group identified two issues of importance:

* Need to extend the life of the WSC or some entity to continue process of expanding public awareness and building the constituency. Amy posed questions about strategy: Do we as the WSC design the process or system for developing that constituency OR does the WSC develop the constituency? Denise suggested that WSC will do some of that building through NH Listens and follow-up, but the other part is the need to design a process or road map for a long-term building process. Denise suggested a recommendation to create a legislatively mandated Water Sustainability Commission that can work over longer period of time. Another suggestion was a recommendation to form a state-wide non-profit to coordinate public engagement around water issues/policy. Amy suggested that what the WSC recommends and how the "hand-off" is structured will be important work of the WSC. Examples of other efforts were offered: NH Water Table (a statewide conference), Legislative Water Resources Committee created to develop a water plan for the state resulted in Primer. The Southeast Watershed Alliance and the Solid Waste Districts are other legislatively created examples that enable local, collaborative action. Some worry expressed over possibility of "commission fatigue" among the general public that sees these initiative come and go without much change.

ACTION: Coordinate a joint meeting with Implementation Working Group and Public Engagement Working Group to further explore these questions in the next month.

- 3) Outreach: Issues related to outreach came up in a variety of places during the meeting: How can we create news/maximize citizen engagement from NH Listens? Need to have catchy picture and logo in longer term effort to build constituency,
- 4) Water/Watershed Conference in March: Paul gave update on planning. Waiting for confirmation that Governor will speak, but there is session with John Gilbert on work of WSC; possible workshop opportunity also.
- 5) Participant lists for NH Listens: Amy will send names to add to participant list to Jennifer Rowden who will keep a master list. Amy will work with Jenn to merge/purge lists.
- 6) Water stories: Denise promoted efforts to continue to gather good water stories. She mentioned the story that Jim Gallagher had presented from the dam program about the 1st salmon run.

ACTION: Paul will ask Jim if he would write a page on that story.

- 7) Precautionary Principle: The discussion circled back to looking at some of the principles of sustainability and the question that John Gilbert had posed to the implementation working group "What are the things that if we don't do in the next 25 years will foreclose the possibility to manage water sustainably?"

The Group focused on how to plan for unintended consequences and whether/how to build into the Commission's recommendations one that embedded the precautionary principle into decision-making.

ACTION: Identify someone to come to talk to the Commission about the precautionary principle, how it applies to the WSC and whether/how it can be incorporated and advantageous over the long-term. Denise will check with Information Working Group to suggest for Commission briefing.

Next meeting scheduled for **Monday, February 27 2-3:30** at Baldwin & Callen Law offices in Concord

Meeting adjourned at 2pm