

Teleconference Call
GHGRTF Steering Committee
Thursday, June 19, 2008

Members: Steve Fromnick, Victoria Webb, Vicky Will, Duncan Allison, Russell Rickert, Robert McKinstry, Don Verdiani, Bob Watts, Heath Eddy (for Dave Ward), Mike Bullard.

Steve stated that this call was to discuss in general terms the meeting on Friday, June 27, 2008 at the Government Services Center, 601 Westtown Road, West Chester, PA from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

- What should we hope to get from the meeting?
- What should be on the agenda?
- What, if any, interface problems are the subcommittees or groups experiencing that the Steering Committee should be addressing?

Steve said he believes the presentations should include what some of the recommendations from the subcommittees/groups are in some detail to determine:

- Are they appropriate for what the GHGRTF is doing?
- Are there duplications/cross-over items that two subcommittees or a group should be working on together?

Steve stated that the year is half over and the work being done, or to be done, will probably intensify once the items are identified to work on.

Dave Ward of the Transportation and Land Use Committee has indicated that one of his concerns is that his group has come up with some ideas about things that we could reduce, but what they are lacking is a way of quantifying those savings in scientific terms. They feel they need some help or support in doing the quantification and wonder if there is anyone that could help them.

The E/CRI agrees with that and they believe that they need to confirm with the whole group a couple of things to make sure they are all going in the same direction. The E/CRI has agreed on the criteria that they will use in evaluating the various options. There is a need for input from the groups to assure that there are consistent criteria across the groups. Also, the E/CRI has a long list of options based on the Center for Climate Strategies and they asked if anyone had any additional input for consideration. The E/CRI has also identified and is beginning to define within that long list the priorities for analysis that they think they should be working on. They would like to confirm with the other committees what their priorities for analysis are, where there's overlap and if there are any gaps.

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Steve asked if the Steering Committee thought this should be a format for each of the groups making presentations – what was their criteria; what recommendations they made and how did they define and prioritize these things.

Bob McKinstry said the E/CRI defined the initial things to prioritize and then this gets to the need for additional information and additional analysis to develop and prescribe. He said that the groups need to be sure they are working with consistent lists.

Steve asked again if this made sense for all of the groups to use this format to organize a presentation thereby ensuring a uniform delivery of information.

Bob responded to a question on criteria by saying the criteria usually used are: tons reduced (greenhouse gas/carbon dioxide equivalents reduced); cost effectiveness; feasibility concerns or implement abilities and the co-benefits/collateral benefits. The E/CRI focused on these but there are other items that could be included for other reasons and a lot of smart grow items fall into that category.

It sounded like the first two categories are basically the building blocks of what looks like a standard abatement curve and it would be good if the entire GHGRTF would have those two parameters - the cost per ton and the amount per ton – to build a basic curve so it's easy to explain to the Commissioners what it is the task force is returning to them.

Bob said that's what the task force should have at the end of the process but before that there is analysis information needed and some additional analysis for each measure. Once you come up with the overall plan you need to figure out the overall reductions because a lot of time measures overlap and you don't want to double count reductions.

Victoria Webb asked about the Climate Strategy group saying that she believed that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had worked with them and couldn't the task force enlist these criteria and work with them. Bob said they are actually using those criteria. Bob said they could work with Climate Strategy directly but a source of funding would be necessary. Center for Climate Strategies is part of Enterprising Environmental Solutions, Inc. which is affiliated with the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

Victoria said that the funding might be one of the issues in the recommendations.

Steve said that was a good point and he said these were the sort of things he needs to know to go the Commissioners with at some point in time once the recommendations are in to determine what this is going to cost of the County.

He stated that if some of that means that the County is going to have to foot the bill for possibly additional work with the Center for Climate Strategies or maybe the County should put up X amount of dollars for grant matching or something like that, all of that needs to be part of the GHFRTF recommendations at the end of this process.

Victoria Webb said that if someone could get her and Tom O'Donnell (Communications and Outreach Committees) the four points they can get them out to the other committees so that they have some standard that they start to work from. So far the website template isn't working, or at least today it wasn't working.

Victoria was asked if they hadn't had transcribed the entire list of 250 options with those criteria in it. She said this could be provided.

Bob said that he believed the plan development needed to be done first. Maybe at the end there should be a discussion on media strategy and a "next steps" next meeting.

Victoria said the only thing they were doing right now was announcing the basic initiative to the township managers and some nonprofit groups just to let them know what's happening. If Steve hasn't seen the script, she will send it to him.

Bob asked which committee would have any responsibility or consideration of any liaison or other cooperation with the other efforts of other counties – Philadelphia, Montgomery, Delaware - or DVRPC.

Victoria said she and Mike Bullard sit on the Information and Research Committee and Mike has developed a whole website devoted to other county plans and municipal plans and local groups that are going similar things in terms of initiatives. Victoria said Mike would be able to respond further and she excused herself from the meeting.

Steve asked Bob McKinstry of the items mentioned – CO2 equivalents, cost effectiveness, feasibility and co-benefits – if Bob had information that he would be able to share at the meeting that would essentially say, "Here are recommendations and here's how they're going to impact each of these?"

Bob said the committee was not at that stage yet because more analysis was needed. These items are the criteria they will use. They did an initial cut based on their impression of them as to which priorities they thought were applicable to their group and to the County and might make those criteria. He continued that usually in the process you then define and group the alternatives a little more and define how they might be applied which they have done to some degree.

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You then try to quantify those criteria. You do this in greater detail as you carry them forward. Once you start doing this you then find out where things might be grossly expensive or something isn't feasible and then you reassess those items.

Vicky Will offered to provide an analysis as a sample which provides reduction costs, co-benefits, etc.

Steve said his question is about the presentation and where there are blanks to fill in will the presenters offer what the CO2 equivalent will be; what the cost effectiveness will be. At this time, where we are is that there is a list of recommendations but we haven't gone into the detail yet and we haven't gotten to the scientific analysis, cost analysis and other items.

Bob said that once Vicky sends Steve the material it go to all the subcommittees so that they can review it before the meeting so the long list can be presented along with the alternatives that have been added.

The presentations could show how the priorities were established and here's how the subcommittees have started to define/describe them.

Don Verdiani asked what process was being used to turn a perceived result into greenhouse gases.

Bob said that the Center for Climate Strategies was very good at this and there are a lot of methods and one of the things they need to begin doing that is an inventory and forecast. This is an inventory of what the emissions are and a forecast of where they're going. There is a lot of literature and a lot of methodologies for calculating how you get reduction.

Don said he is working on the inventory for County operations and DVRPC is working on the inventory for the big picture stuff.

Bob responded that it is inventory and forecast. You have to forecast where the demand is going because you want to look at what your measures look like after you get the increase and demand. What is the population growth in Chester County going to be in 2020, how many more automobiles.

Don said that the DVRPC's regional overview will supposedly do that.

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Bob said that in Montgomery County the inventory was done by the graduate student using Penn State software. In terms of looking at what reductions you would get, it ended up with the County Planning Commission staff doing that because there was no budget.

Steve asked if everyone understood how they could take what they've done so far and put it into a format like this.

Bob said the 250 options would be sent around to look at. Then each subcommittee could say what they've looked in terms of what their options are.

Vicky said that perhaps some of the 250 might be lumped together. There might be a number around building efficiency improvement and maybe ten or twelve could be lumped into that one category. So there would be less than 250 with the building efficiency improvement as one option with all the potential actions out of that.

Russell Rickert said that made sense as the 250 was a too much for any one really to deal with.

Bob said that the list should be looked at by all the participants to decide if there are options that might be applicable that aren't on the list. Then each technical working group should decided which of the options should be designated as priorities for analysis. It's really the priority for analysis which the various groups should be establishing. They may find that some groups weren't working from a longer list or they may not have been doing it as systematically and have some but there are now others that might be appropriate.

Steve said there might also be some that are more specifically oriented towards Chester County that might be on the list but Montgomery County being more urbanized it's not the same for Chester County where the focus might lean towards agriculture.

Bob said the list includes a lot of agriculture because it is used by states across the country. Montgomery County didn't end up looking at a lot of agricultural things because they don't have near as much agriculture.

Steve asked Heath Eddy, Transportation and Real Estate Committee, if there were specific areas and what was their process in moving forward on some of these recommendations.

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Heath said they devised a basic list of areas they wanted to cover and used the main goals to come up with recommendations under each area. They've come up with fairly detailed lists for land use and transit and traffic congestion. He said he was a little concerned that the lists might be too specific because of all the detail. Heath said he would review the Center for Climate Strategies material. The larger concern is trying to quantify their lists in terms of ton reduction and cost effectiveness. A lot of the land use material is going to be harder to quantify.

Bob said a lot of the land use stuff is hard to quantify. There are some techniques to the extent you reduce forest land conversion and there is some literature available. There is a lot of data/methods for transportation and trip reduction measures. The Montco Planning Commission has good data.

Steve asked for any other input as it pertains to the content of their presentations.

Duncan Allison said that from the Agriculture and Forestry side they were planning on giving a brief overview of the segments where either emissions could be reduced, improvements in energy use could therefore result in reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, or changes in soil management would result in increases in soil organic carbon. Sometimes they've been able to quantify the situation in a number of areas. It's very difficult to make a quantification and they would present a recommendation instead with the idea of a target total that they would be looking for if that would be useful.

Steve said ultimately as an overall task force they are going to have to come up with some overall target, a percent reduction by a certain specific date, and then each of the committees will have to make some contribution to it.

Don Verdiani asked if there was any benchmarking data that would allow the County to say "We're already in the top quartile or top deciles so we should set reasonable targets," or, "We're in the bottom so we should set really aggressive ones." Basically is there a footprint for the County.

In response to the mention of the 80% by 2050, Steve said he did not want to legislate this to the committees unless he's told this is feasible.

Bob said the 80% by 2050 comes from two sources. One, worldwide we need to get down to 80% by 2100 on a per capita basis. The U.S. is already five times its per capita so we need to get another 80% in 2050 to 2100. California adopted the 80% originally because it scaled up some of things it was already doing and they determined that they thought they could reach an 80% reduction by a 2050 goal.

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California has a much lower incident of coal, has a relatively low per capita emissions rate compared to other areas, probably not that different from Chester County. It also has a higher percentage of emissions from automobiles as compared to industrial sources. Pennsylvania itself tends to have less from transportation and it's lower because of the good transportation system in the Philadelphia area, not as good as New York. You can get the actual per capita by state and the growth rates and Pennsylvania has a relatively low growth rate but Chester County has a high growth rate.

The question was raised if anyone was looking at the Volcan Satellite Project that Perdue is doing that has solid numbers for CO₂ for 2002. They have ten kilometer by ten kilometer resolutions for the entire country for CO₂ emissions and they might be very useful here in Chester County to arrive at CO₂ number for the County as a starting point if we don't have anything else. Then we would only need to enter into that is the electrical per capita.

Steve returned to the issue of stating the goal, then this is what we're going to ask the County to subscribe to, and then everything else is how we're going to do it.

Bob said there are two goals perhaps. The goal in the governor's plan is to get a 25% reduction by 2025. That's pretty consistent with other goals. Montco had a pretty close similarity to that goal. A group in Philadelphia endorsed the 80% by 2050. The co-chair of Montco didn't like the 80% by 2050 but most of their committee did. It's probably a good idea to keep the long term goal of what we need to do out there because you're not actually going to plan for 2050. You plan for 2020 or 2025. Bob said he would actually suggest the proposed governor's goal. That should be a whole group discussion.

Bob asked if this should be looked at after the group's done or should it be determined at the beginning.

Steve responded that he thought that ultimately that this should be agreed on once all the work is done and there's real good handle on what we think we can do. It would make sense, he believes, that it be finalized at some meeting just prior to the meeting with the Commissioners. It makes sense to start the discussion at the June 27 meeting after the presentations have been made.

Bob said he thought there were two ways to do it. You can get the goal out of your plan. He believes it is easier to set the goal and that allows you something to shoot for. On the other hand maybe establishing an interim goal would make sense because it may be that the analysis is done and it shows we're way below it so let's recommend a lower goal.

Steve said that this should definitely be a topic for discussion on June 27. It can be done after the initial presentations.

Steve asked if anyone was not comfortable presenting something so substantial because of their material's current condition or status.

Don Verdiani said they've made some progress toward the inventory and Tom O'Donnell believes he has someone to crunch data for them because not all of the data is available electronically.

Tom said they actually need two types of inventory. The inventory for the county operations is really good because it's a different process. With DVRPC hiring ICF to do the traffic, etc. it made sense for their committee to not address that. The inventory for things that the Commissioners can directly impact is a great place to start while the DVRPC study goes on.

Don said the information from the County has been coming but they still have to get the Prison, Pocopson Home and the Library which have different accounting systems. Randy Price has been able to help with some information. PECO has agreed that they can provide gas and electricity up to October 2006. That means the committee will have to transcribe paper from January 2005 to October 2006.

Steve said the basic agenda then would be committee report outs. He also asked Bob Watts if the Solid Waste/Recycling Committee was okay. Bob said he felt they were ready.

So there would be the committee reports outs keeping in the mind the issues of carbon dioxide equivalents, the cost effectiveness, the feasibility and the recommendations. Steve said he'd like to hear from the groups also.

Mike Bullard said they will have a presentation. They basically have been looking at other plans out there and the approaches to getting information across. They need to look at how to frame it; how to get it to people. They have a sample and they're trying to determine what makes a really good plan look like a good plan. They are also looking at higher field temperature figures now available for Chester County. They need to start looking at the various impacts of the new higher temperature predictions for the area and the implications of that. They are now talking 11 to 14 degrees Fahrenheit increases in Chester County, business as usual. There is other material they need to review because of variations in information.

Bob asked if the group was trying to do anything in the way of economic impacts or specific impacts. Mike said that was too large a project for them.

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Steve said that the focus should be what committees/groups have been doing, where we are now, and, obviously, what still needs to be done. Each presentation should incorporate these three elements.

The question was asked if the Commissioners want recommendations on adaptation recommendations, like amending the 100-year flood; various things they could do to help us adapt to the climate changes that will definitely occur.

Steve said he didn't have an answer but that his sense was that the Commissioners don't know what they don't know.

It was suggested that these might be things to eventually speak to. Steve added that thought should be given in terms of the adaptation as to what would be recommended to the citizenry through the municipalities in terms of their thought process going forward. Should they be thinking of more geothermal or should they be thinking of alternative fuel sources on a local basis.

Steve said he believes he has enough information for the agenda and upon review of information and the minutes of the meeting, may make some suggestions on what should be included in everyone's presentations.

Steve asked if there were any specific issues with their committees, concerns, any help they need. Hearing none, Steve thanked everyone and said he would see them all on June 27.

Prepared and submitted by: Nancy Seltzer
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