

**The Fourth Joint Meeting of the NJ Commission on Environmental Education
and the Inter-agency Work Group
Tuesday, April 28, 1998**

9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Public Hearing Room, First Floor, DEP Headquarters, Trenton, NJ

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| 8:45 a.m. | Coffee and tea provided
Pick up "missing" handouts and materials from past meetings | |
| 9:00 a.m. | Welcome and introductions
Introduction of new designees & observers
Review agenda - additions or changes
Review 2/24 meeting notes, approve | John Kirk |
| 9:30 a.m. | Group discussions and updates:
Environmental education homepage
Open space funding/NJOC activities
Summary of Earth Day '98 activities
NJ Dept. of Ed. activities update
Communications Committee: Discussion on
the NJCEE fact sheet and stationary | Frank Gallagher
Frank Gallagher
Tanya Oznowich
Bruce Marganoff
Karen Wintress,
Anne Galli and others |
| 10:00 a.m. | Group discussion: Legal and financial
responsibilities and aspects of the NJCEE
and work group - Panel discussion and Q/A:
• Richard J. McManus, Director, Legal Affairs
• Peter F. Daly, Controller, Financial Operations | Tanya Oznowich |
| 10:45 a.m. | BREAK | |
| 11:00 a.m. | Presentation and discussion: An Introduction to
the NJ Future Sustainable State Project
• Summary of project
• Educational goals and interests
• Potential roles for NJCEE and IWG members | Randy Solomon,
Project Director |
| 11:45 a.m. | Con't discussion: Legislative responsibilities . . .
• Mary T. Sheil, Director, Legislative Affairs | Tanya Oznowich |
| 12:00 noon | Committee break-outs: Today's charge
and things to accomplish/WORKING LUNCH | Committee Rep's |
| 1:30 p.m. | Committee reports and group discussion
Summary of today's accomplishments
Agenda items and logistics for next meeting | Committee Rep's
Tanya Oznowich |
| 2:30 p.m. | Departure | |

**Joint Meeting of the New Jersey Commission on Environmental Education
and Inter-Agency Work Group**

Tuesday, April 28, 1998 - *Meeting Notes*

DEP Headquarters, Public Hearing Room, Trenton, New Jersey

Attendees: Mimi Dunne, Frank Gallagher, Anne Galli, Toni Hendricksen, Paul Kaleda, Pat Kane, Christine Keresztury, John Kirk, Raymond Mueller, Tanya Oznowich, James Shissias, Helen Skerratt, Barbara Solem, Suzanne Willis, Karen Wintress

Observers: Donald Haberstroh (Partners for Environmental Quality), Dolly Tedder (DEP Office of Communications), Kelly Owens (Student)

- Introductions were made around the room. New Commission designee Barbara Solem (NJ Department of Human Services) shared some information about her programs. Observer Donald Haberstroh (Partners for Environmental Quality) may become an appointed member of the commission and shared some information about PEQ.
- Reviewed the agenda; no changes made. John Kirk spoke briefly about the history and status of the group and welcomed everyone.
- **Update: *The Environmental Education Homepage - Frank Gallagher***
The homepage is now active at the Center for Environmental and Agricultural Education at Cook College, Rutgers University. Since it has been funded and supported by three different entities (The Center, the Commission, and ANJEE), each organization will be introduced as part of the homepage. The recently approved commission "fact sheet" will be the primary piece of information at the homepage that features the commission. Pat Kane offered to generate a list of "highlights" in the Plan of Action, which will also be posted. Tanya offered to generate the lists of "knowledge, attitudes and values, behaviors and skills." Christine Keresztury offered to have her library staff regularly scan the hot links for currency. There is a need for knowledgeable persons to maintain the site. Suggestions focused on the high school vo-tech programs or high school computer clubs. New pieces of information can be added to the site as they are generated - we don't want to create a lot of text that needs high maintenance until we have someone able to do so. Equipment and software purchases by the center have been completed - the monies will not be reimbursed to the center from the commission account though, until July 1st. (The state fiscal year ends June 30th and the center does not want to risk losing this money during this fiscal year.)
- **Update: *Open Space Funding and Related Issues - Frank Gallagher***
Frank is monitoring how the commission can achieve stable funding through the various interests and bills being proposed in support of the Governor's interests in open space

preservation. Education is mentioned a lot at the public hearings statewide yet it is not a strong component of any of the bills. The group agreed that the commission should take some type of legislative action in support of environmental education and related funding - the question of strategy would be asked to Mary Shiel later in the meeting agenda. Jim Shissias agreed that since we're trying to "get our foot in the door" early we should be able to get some of the \$2 million dollars earmarked for environmental education. Frank also shared copies of the various bills being proposed and of a resolution that many organizations, local government entities and corporations have adopted, in support of open space funding. The Stockton Alliance is collecting the resolutions. The group briefly discussed whether the commission should submit the resolution. Finally, Lou's letter to former Assemblywoman Maureen Ogden, Chair of the New Jersey Outdoors Council, was submitted to the meeting minutes to re-affirm the commission's stance on this and to encourage commission members to draft their own support via their own organizations and affiliations.

- ***Funding Presentation/Q/A: Peter F. Daly, Controller, Financial Operations, DEP***
 - The commission is a sub-group of state government. The state constitution recognizes these smaller groups and there exist numerous such groups attached to all branches of state government. While the commission has administrative independence, it is still considered part of government's "table of organization."
 - The commission's funds are private funds deposited in an account within DEP. This account is a separate, identifiable account within the state system and noted for DEP use only (which means that monies cannot be taken from the account except when approved by the commission). DEP has other council and commission accounts like this - some almost 20 years old and having over 200. It is a revolving and ongoing account - the monies are passed on each fiscal year until fully expended. At the end of each fiscal year the account is credited with the interest for that account, at whatever the current rate is (between %5.5 - %6). Peter and his staff administer account funds for the commission. His staff can also provide reports to the commission on account status, this can be done quarterly or whenever deemed necessary. There is no cost to the commission for use of Peter and his staff.
 - Because of being within the state system, monies may be subject to the bidding process, depending upon the amount being spent. (The current threshold is \$11,500.00.) However, most of our work is unique and will be done by sole source providers, requiring no bids. Because the funds are private, a waiver can be used should the commission need to hire a consultant during a state hiring freeze.
 - There seem to be no potential barriers to having the commission approach a member of DEP's regulated community. Legally, the state can accept financial gifts. However, the commission members cannot accept personal benefits (ie. free tickets, free housing on an island resort, etc.). There is no problem with having a commission

member approach a corporation or other entity regulated by DEP, as long as the commission has approved of this action and it is reflected in the minutes. Commission members are then allowed to solicit funds from the regulated community on a 1 - 1 basis. The only ethical consideration is if a commission member is seeking funds for or from their own corporation. DEP legal staff are available to provide advice (not prescribed actions) on such ethical considerations. Jim Shissias pointed out that many corporations may not want to fund the commission once they realize that their monies are being placed in a state account. This could be an obstacle - how can we better structure this? This also presents an awkward perspective to environmental groups - having corporate funds go into an account housed in DEP.

- Earned income by the commission itself, to be administered by the commission, must be placed in the trust fund. This includes grant monies, donations, federal funds, etc. Since the commission is separate from the department, DEP staff would not need to review any grant proposals, etc. If the commission works in partnership with a nonprofit organization (like ANJEE, the Commonwealth of NJ, the Stockton Alliance, etc.), then the partners must determine which organization will receive and administer the funds. It is possible to have the commission partner with a nonprofit and have corporate funds or grants be given to the nonprofit, which will administer the funds. The commission can receive funds from this amount, as long as this arrangement and expenditure is documented in the grant. The commission can also apply for grants in partnership with others, which will administer the grant; otherwise, the funds must go into the trust fund.

- ***Legal Presentation/Q/A: Richard J. McManus, Director of Legal Affairs, DEP***

- Our commission is typically one of many listed in the state's legislative manual and periodic directories created for such groups. The group must abide by "The Sunshine Law," which basically requires three actions: Adequate notice must be given to the public about the meetings; minutes must be available; and, the meetings must be open to the public, with the exception of private discussions on litigation or personnel issues. (Private sessions must also be announced with a statement to the public about why they are closed.) Meetings having less than a working majority (ie. a committee meeting) need not be publicized since a vote cannot take place.
- The commission should adopt its own set of rules of conduct, since they are not detailed in the bill. What kind of a vote is needed? Bi-laws should be developed, as well as committees and committee rules.

- * ***Presentation: The New Jersey Future Sustainable State Project, Randy Solomon, Project Director, New Jersey Future, Inc.***

This model project is being spearheaded by NJ Future, Inc., and is modeled after the Netherlands Green Plan. Its goal is to achieve sustainable development within one generation. (Randy was invited to present at this commission meeting because

His organization is currently hosting public meetings on various topics. One such meeting held earlier this week focused on "education." While quite a few commission members were invited, many could not attend due to other conflicts. We thought it was beneficial for him to become more aware of the commission's work and charge and to share his project with the group at a time when most of us are together.) This process and the state's interest in sustainable development started in 1994 when David Moore led a cabinet level trip to the Netherlands to learn more about their Green Plan. The state's first sustainable development conference was held in 1995; roundtables were held in 1996 on how to proceed; the second state conference was convened in 1997, announcing the need for goals and indicators; and, these are currently under development. The third statewide conference is occurring in May (now). Smaller forums will be held in May and June.

- Currently, the definition of sustainable development varies between people, along with people's ideas on its goals. The project has adopted the definition developed by the Brundtland Commission. There is also the need to develop goals, indicators and benchmarks, along with clear tracking methods, in order to determine if we as a state are making progress. A GOAL is thing to be achieved and cannot be measured; an INDICATOR is measurable and specific and is used for monitoring and assessment purposes; a BENCHMARK is a target or deadline and is used to track progress within the process, these are usually attached to indicators.
- Currently the group needs data sources and types, to see 'what's out there" in a # of areas related to sustainable development. Once these are known, the data gaps can be identified and a # of research facilities are committed to helping to fill these gaps.
- Commission members asked how "population" is being addressed by NJ Future, Inc. The topic is being reviewed and may be addressed and included. It was also asked if their perspective on sustainable development is a truly global concept and a global plan or are they attempting to try to do something substantial (and successful?) within state boundaries. Response to this was vague. The state development and redevelopment plan was brought up. Randy's organization is extremely involved with this plan's implementation but though the 2 efforts have overlap, they are being implemented separately and are viewed as different. The state plan primarily deals with land use and infrastructure issues. Finally, Randy was asked what they are doing to assure long-term (into the next administration) 'sustainability' of this effort, knowing that it is political and cannot be truly implemented and measured for another 3 - 4 years. He feels that NJ Future, Inc. will continue to play a strong lead with this initiative into the next administration. Marketing also plays a strong role and they are trying to get legislation passed or an executive order signed.
- *Commission members are welcome to get involved with the process in the following ways - provide input on their goal; attend the statewide conference on*

- ***May 30 and future events; and, help identify the data that already exists, based upon what they are looking for in "education."*** (Extra copies of his handouts will be available at the next commission meeting - call Tanya if you would like to reach Randy directly).
- ***Legislative Presentation, Q/A: Mary Sheil, Director of Legislative Affairs, DEP***
 - If the commission has specific comments on a bill they should feel free to contact the bill's sponsor(s) directly with comments. The committee chairs and the legislative aides should always be copied. Always keep the aides informed since they do a lot of the research and legwork for a bill. They are also non-partisan and work out of the Office of Legislative Services. They draft the bulk of each bill and are paid state government workers.
 - The open space issue is very controversial. Also, the Republicans have the majority in both houses. If a new tax is proposed, the Republicans will seek out Democratic co-sponsors to minimize controversy, since it is a popular issue in both parties. Open space is highly valued in the state regardless, signified by continuous passage of the Green Acres bond. Multiple sources of funding seems to be the most acceptable idea for open space preservation. One idea is a water tax, which places a tax on a necessary commodity - residents may support this in a limited fashion, since open space protects water quality and quantity. Realty transfer tax is another source - there will many public hearings on these. The bills will most likely be consolidated. It is good for the commission to "get their foot in the door" now. It is not known if these bills will be heard this spring or in the autumn session. The commission should be ready to respond.
 - ***Regarding open space bills, the commission should:***
 - a. Review the contents of each proposed bill.
 - b. Determine how environmental education should be represented in the bill.
 - c. Submit this text in letter form as a recommendation, to the bill sponsor(s), aides and committee chairs. Include such language as "we've reviewed . . . we've commend you for . . . We support . . . We suggest . . ."
 - d. Sign the letter from the Commission chairman.
 - e. Send copies of the letter and support materials to environmental organizations, educational organizations, business groups, etc., for their potential support.
 - f. Send copies of the letter to your own legislators.
 - g. Set up a network to inform commission members quickly about when these bills are being posted to be heard in committee.
 - h. When a bill is being heard, call the legislative aide to be placed on a list to testify.
 - The commission's annual report should be accompanied by a cover letter from the commission chair. It should be sent at minimum to the legislative leadership and

appropriate committee chairs. If copies are available, it can go to all committee members or the entire legislature.

- The commission is allowed to sponsor or support a resolution. They should also consider doing a mailing to the legislature announcing their existence, purpose, responsibilities, etc., as per the law. The mailing should also go to OLS staff. Arranging meetings with committee members or chairs (ie. environmental, agricultural, solid and hazardous waste, education) is also a common activity.
- Mary also went through the legislative list to identify environmental interests of various legislators. Her comments were too lengthy to note. Her handouts which will be available at the next commission meeting.
- *The New Jersey Legislature Home Page: <http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/>*
- *For legislative information, call 1800-792-8630 or 609-292-4840*

* *Brief LUNCH BREAK*

* *Communications Committee Work Discussion:*

- *Karen Wintress briefly summarized the contents of the commission fact sheet.* (Its purpose is to provide people with current and summarized information about the commission, their statutory charge, the Plan of Action, and their specific responsibilities.) Text change on 3rd bullet from "developed" to "launched." The graphics strip was also to be screened down to a light gray or fade.

- *The group reviewed the draft stationary.* They decided to add the commission membership to the left border instead of the full graphic strip. The Inter-agency Work Group will be recognized at the bottom, either in one line or by listing each of the agencies in the work group (dependent upon space). The commission must still determine the use of the stationary, which would help to determine if its copied or printed and what the quantity should be.

- *The purpose of the fact sheet and stationary* is to prepare for a mailing to the Legislature involving a letter from the Chair, the fact sheet, information about the commission's work and statutory existence, and the availability of the Plan of Action.

• * *Actions Towards the Legislature:*

- The commission will send a mailing to the Legislature to introduce the commission and its work to them. The letter will be signed by Lou and will make available copies of the Plan of Action, using Tanya Oznowich as the contact given in the letter. The mailing will go to all members of the Legislature and OLS staff (about 230 letters).

