



SRS Citizen's Advisory Board

January 1999 Process Retreat Meeting Minutes

SRS Citizens Advisory Board

January 8-9, 1999 8:30 a.m.
Middleton Inn
Charleston, S.C.

The SRS Citizens Advisory Board held a process retreat on January 8-9, 1999, at the Middleton Inn in Charleston, SC. Mike Schoener facilitated the meeting. The agenda for the retreat is included as Attachment One. The personnel attending the retreat and their break-out session team assignments are listed below:

Red Team

Brendolyn Jenkins
Bill Lawless
Karen Patterson
Beaurine Wilkins
Gary Little/Tom Heenan,
DOE
Jeff Crane, EPA
Ann Clark, SCDHEC
Mary Flora (WSRC
Recorder)

Green Team

Tom Costikyan
Ken Goad
Lola Richardson
Ed Tant
Becky Witter
Lane Parker
Julie Corkran, EPA
Jim Moore (WSRC
Recorder)

Blue Team

Bill Adams
Ann Loadholt
Jimmy Mackey
Maria Reichmanis
P.K. Smith
Wade Waters
Myra Reece, SCDHEC
Dawn Haygood (WSRC
Recorder)

On Friday, January 8, Board members met, had a group dinner and discussed the activities to be accomplished during the retreat. They also completed an anonymous survey related to the CAB. Results of the survey were presented to the group for reference during the retreat and are included as Attachment Two.

Summary of Saturday Morning Session

On Saturday morning the participants separated into their three teams to develop suggestions in the following focus areas:

Red Team: Organizational Structure

Green Team: Membership Involvement

Blue Team: Meetings

The rough notes from the flip charts of each of the breakout sessions are included as Attachment Three for reference. After the completion of the break-out sessions, the entire group met to discuss the recommendations of each of the teams. A summary of the discussions and recommendations for each area are listed below:

Organizational Structure

The Red Team presented a proposed restructuring of the issues-based subcommittees of the CAB. After much discussion regarding the proposed changes, it was decided by all members to hold a working meeting from 3:00 - 5:00 PM on Monday January 25 in Hilton Head, SC. The meeting was scheduled to coincide with the full Board meeting. A majority of the members agreed to participate.

The Red Team suggested that the CAB Administration should be located at an off-site facility. During large group discussion, it was determined that the current practice is most practical.

Membership Involvement

Several items were discussed regarding membership involvement. It was decided that a greater effort was needed to attempt to determine why people were leaving the Board, and that exit interviews should be conducted with all departing members, including those that have served out their terms.

It was also decided that as part of the election process, personal interviews would be conducted with perspective members to make sure they know what's required of them. They will also be encouraged to attend at least one meeting prior to being nominated for election.

Several recommendations to minimize absences were discussed, including publishing member attendance records, providing more detailed guidelines regarding absenteeism, and automatically sending out letters when members are absent. It was decided to make 4 of 6 meetings mandatory, with an appeal process to deal with absences on a case-by-case basis.

Mandatory participation on a subcommittee was discussed, however, it was noted that this is already a requirement. The participants agree that members must not only be on the subcommittee, but they must also actively participate.

Meetings

It was recommended by the Blue Team and agreed to by all participants that the current bimonthly meeting schedule would remain as is. It was also recommended that subcommittee meetings be scheduled on a regular basis (e.g., every second Tuesday of the month), and that a consolidated schedule be issued at least on a quarterly basis that indicated all CAB meetings and related meetings.

Public focus groups were discussed. It was decided that there would not be a limit placed on the number of public focus groups working at a given time. However, it was agreed that public focus groups would be under the cognizance of the full Board. A subcommittee chair could form a public focus group on an interim basis if time constraints required immediate action. However, the subcommittee chair would have to obtain approval at the next full Board meeting to continue operating the public focus group.

It was also agreed to that meetings should be combined when ever possible. This includes both CAB meetings and related meetings (e.g. PEIS public comment meetings). CAB members agreed to work closer with both EPA and SC DHEC to assist them in allocating the proper resources to support CAB activities.

Summary of Saturday Afternoon Session

On Saturday afternoon the participants again separated into their three teams to develop suggestions in the following focus areas:

Red Team: Recommendations
Green Team: Outreach Activities
Blue Team: Agency Interactions

The rough notes from each of the break-out sessions are included as Attachment Three for reference. After the completion of the break-out sessions, the entire group met to discuss the recommendations of each of the teams. A summary of the discussions and recommendations for each area are listed below:

Recommendation Process

It was briefly discussed and agreed that the focus of the CAB was to remain on Environmental Management activities at the site.

The list of Recommendations process improvement suggestions previously provided by the Board Facilitator was reviewed and agreed to in principle with the exception that the CAB would not "reject" responses from EPA, DOE or SCDHEC. If the CAB did not agree with the response received, the status of the Recommendations would remain as "Pending" while discussions were held with the agency providing the response. If the agency did not revise the response in a manner that the CAB could accept, then the Recommendations would be closed with a notation indicating that the response was not acceptable to the CAB.

The CAB will continue to more clearly define specific expectations in their Recommendations, and the Recommendations will only be sent to the agency(s) that the CAB views as being responsible for taking action. Other agencies will receive informational copies of the recommendations. Draft Recommendations will be transmitted electronically and hard copy at least one week in advance of the full Board meeting whenever possible.

Presentation and discussions of recommendations at the full Board meetings was discussed. The issue is that some of the Recommendations are very technical in nature and if Board members do not participate in the subcommittee discussions, they may not sufficiently understand the Recommendations in order to discuss it and vote appropriately. Several suggestions were made to improve this. First, all CAB members agreed that increased participation would increase understanding. Second, supplementary information will be sent to members ahead of time to help in understanding the issue. Third, the presenter of the Recommendations will make a short presentation describing the scope and intent of the Recommendations in their own words. This will be done prior to reading the Recommendations. Writing the Recommendations at an 8th grade reading level was also suggested.

CAB member continuing education was also discussed. It was agreed that new-member orientation would be expanded to provide additional background information to new members. It was also agreed that the Education Subcommittee would explore additional continuing education opportunities for CAB members. An electronic bulletin board that would allow CAB members and the public to submit questions and obtain answers electronically was also discussed.

Outreach Activities

Most of the discussion in this area focused on the need to improve outreach activities of the CAB to inform the public and improve public participation. It was agreed that a detailed Outreach Action Plan would be developed. The plan would have specific goals and would include:

- Improved risk communication
- CAB member participation in outreach activities
- Speaking to the public, civic organizations and churches
- Identifying specific points of contacts within community groups
- Improved media coverage (newspapers, radio and television)
- Issuing letters on speakers/topics
- Conducting surveys on issues/concerns (CAB & public)
- Updating the CAB Internet Web site
- Keep in mind down stream citizens
- Coordinate with agencies/CRESP
- Editorials written by members

Agency Interactions

Several issues were discussed under this area. It was agreed that improved communication with the agencies will lead to better allocation of resources, ensuring that the right people get to the right meetings.

The role of agency personnel and ex-officio members in the recommendation process was discussed. It was agreed by everyone that interaction by agency members in the early drafting of recommendations was beneficial to the CAB. However, there is a point when the agency personnel stop participating and start listening. Generally this is at the point when the recommendation is being finalized in the subcommittee. It was agreed that "Guidance for Agency Interactions" would be drafted for CAB and agency members to review. This would provide more formal guidance on this issue.

Linking personnel to subcommittee meetings and public focus group meetings by conference call will be used when geographic limitations are an issue.

The Issues Matrix that identifies issues/topics for CAB consideration will be updated as necessary, but at a minimum every March and September. It was also requested that agency representatives attending meetings come with a prepared agency position on an issue if the decision-maker is unable to attend.

Agency updates at the full Board meetings will continue to be reviewed to ensure that the time is well utilized and provides the CAB with the information that they need. It was requested that bad news be provided as well as good news, and that "hot" issues such as the NRDC lawsuit should be discussed.

Action Items (in no particular order)

- January 25, 3-5 p.m. special CAB working session to discuss subcommittee restructuring
- Issue SRS CAB meeting attendance tracking chart with general mailing
- Establish fixed meeting dates and times for all subcommittee meetings
- Issues a collective calendar of meetings on a quarterly basis
- Allow for link-in to subcommittees/focus groups by conference call whenever necessary
- Provide the Issues Matrix in March and September (or whenever changed)
- Administrative Committee upgrade attendance guidelines and issue an automatic letter when an individual is absent from a full Board meeting
- Conduct exit interviews with all personnel that leave the Board
- Conduct personal interviews with perspective Board members and encourage them to attend a meeting prior to being nominated
- Direct recommendations to the responsible agencies - with copies to others
- Provide supplemental information with Recommendations and present a simplified presentation of the Background at the full Board meetings
- Develop guidelines on agency interaction
- Distribute all Recommendations electronically and by hard copy at least one week in advance
- Develop and implement an Outreach Plan with specific actions and measurable goals
- Develop and implement a CAB continuing education program
- Upgrade new member orientation
- Develop performance indicators for the Board
- Develop an Action Plan to address the issues identified at Process Retreat