

DEP NORTHCENTRAL REGIONAL CITIZENS ROUNDTABLE
Meeting of January 27, 2014
Summary of Meeting Minutes

Chairperson Megan Lehman called the meeting to order at about 7:03 p.m. and had everyone present introduce themselves.

The minutes of the Oct. 21, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved, on a motion by Dave Gilbert, seconded by Nate Campbell.

Dan Spadoni told the members the mileage reimbursement had been reduced effective Jan. 1, 2014, from 56.5 cents per mile to 56 cents per mile. He said if any members had not been paid for past meetings, to please send him an email and he would have DEP's regional business manager follow-up.

Lehman then introduced Andrew Zemba, Director of DEP's Interstate Waters Office, to discuss Chesapeake Bay nutrient and sediment loads and the status of nutrient trading proposed regulations.

Zemba used a PowerPoint to discuss Chesapeake Bay TMDL progress; nitrogen, phosphorus and total suspended solids loads; the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement; outstanding issues; and a development timeline for the new agreement.

Zemba also said that DEP's Nikki Kasi is in charge of the proposed nutrient trading regulations and there is no update to provide at this time.

There was a question-and-answer session with the roundtable members during and after Zemba's PowerPoint presentation.

(Note: A copy of the PowerPoint is attached for your review)

The next item on the agenda was a review of a roundtable survey developed and distributed by Chairperson Lehman in November 2013. Spadoni thanked her for an excellent job in developing and tabulating the results of the survey.

The first question asked, "How many years have you served on the roundtable?" About 65% answered "more than 5 years."

The second question asked, "Has your time on the roundtable been worthwhile?" About 65% agreed strongly that it has, while 35% agreed somewhat that it has.

The third question asked, "Should roundtable members should be required to attend a minimum number of meetings per year in order to remain on the membership roster, and if so, how many?" About 76% said that members should be required to attend one or more meetings per year, while 24% disagreed with any attendance requirement. Of the 76% who favored an attendance requirement, 53% said at least one meeting per year,

while 23% said at least two meetings per year. There was some discussion among the members on this question, and it was finally recommended that if a member misses four consecutive meetings, he/she would be dropped from the roundtable.

The fourth question asked, “Should the roundtable recruit additional members in 2014 to increase participation and representation from the community?” About 44% agreed somewhat to do this, while another 25% agreed strongly. After some discussion, the members agreed this should be done.

The fifth question asked, “What groups or constituencies are missing or under-represented that should be actively recruited?” The gas industry was named by 50%, other environmental organizations by 43%, and business or industry in general by 36%. Suggestions about new members during the discussion included a gas drilling company like Anadarko, which has an office in Williamsport; eco-tourism agency; an MS4 municipality; county conservation districts or planning commissions; watershed associations; and a gas industry support business.

The sixth question asked, “How should additional members be recruited?” About 71% responded that roundtable members should discuss as a group, and then the chairperson sends invitations to a chosen list.

The seventh question asked, “Should roundtable meetings be opened to the general public and/or the news media?” The results showed that some members were neutral or unsure, while there was an even split between those that agreed and those that disagreed. Spadoni noted that members may bring a guest or two to any meeting without asking for permission, just advance notification. After some general discussion among the members, it was decided to not open the meetings to the general public or the media in order to maintain an informal atmosphere conducive to group discussion.

The eighth question asked, “What time of day is convenient to hold roundtable meetings?” While 76% responded that the current time of 7 p.m. was best, further discussion by the members later on resulted in a new starting time of 6:30 p.m. being favored. There was also general discussion about holding meetings on other nights besides Mondays, but no consensus was reached on this topic.

The ninth question asked, “Should the roundtable’s regular meeting location be changed from the DEP’s Williamsport office?” About 94% responded that the current location is convenient and/or central within the region.

The final question asked for other suggestions for the roundtable in 2014. One member said to keep the membership “balanced just like it is now.” Another member said that “some recent meetings seem to have had low attendance, so why not add some members? Don’t see reason to be too rigid about attendance requirement or member affiliation balance.”

Spadoni noted that the original department guidelines for establishing the roundtables mentioned having a balance with different groups in order to promote diverse views and a better discussion of environmental issues. He added that there used to be many more business and industry people on the roundtable but some dropped off in the late 1990s when DEP started a pollution prevention/compliance assistance roundtable. However, that roundtable ceased operating about 7-8 years ago.

After some discussion, the members suggested that Spadoni develop a one page summary of the roundtable that could be sent to prospective new members. Spadoni agreed to do this by modifying the existing summary that has been available for many years.

It was also decided that Lehman would prepare a list of recommendations stemming from the survey and the evening's discussion to present as action items at the next meeting.

Spadoni noted that the April meeting would coincide with the 30th anniversary of the roundtable. He agreed to discuss with Lehman and DEP Regional Director Marcus Kohl, possibilities for observing this anniversary, such as a group photo and media release.

The meeting was adjourned at about 8:50 p.m.