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U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
HUDSON RIVER PCB REASSESSMENT
COMMUNITY INTERACTION PROGRAM

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1997
7:30 P.M.
LATHAM, NEW YORK

M I N U T E S

The meeting was opened at 7:30 by Steering Committee Chair, Ann Rychlenski. Ms. Rychlenski introduced Ms. Susan Arbetter of WAMC Radio (NPR Northeast) who had previously asked to attend the meeting and record portions of it for a radio show she was producing on the Hudson River PCB issue. Ms. Arbetter recorded the meeting and conducted taped interviews with many of the Liaison Group officers.

Those Steering Committee members present were:

Katie DeGroot - Co-Chair, Citizens LG
Judy Dean - Chair, Citizens LG
Merrilyn Pulver, Co-Chair, Agricultural LG
Darryl Decker, Chair, Governmental LG
Doug Tomchuk, Project Manager, USEPA
Al DiBernardo, Project Manager, TAMS, Inc.
Josh Cleland, Co-Chair, Environmental LG
Carl Deppe, Co-Chair, Environmental LG
John Santacrose, Chair, Environmental LG
Ann Rychlenski, USEPA, Chair, Steering Committee
Bill Ports, NYSDEC
Bruce Bentley, NYSDEC

In addition, there were a number of observers present, including representatives of GE and Congressman Gerald Solomon's office.

After going over the evening's agenda, Ms. Rychlenski discussed the recent remarks by some members of the Liaison Group membership which indicated dissatisfaction with the Community Interaction Program. The discussion was picked up on by the Liaison Group Chairs and Co-Chairs. Some of the main points made

were as follows:

Darryl Decker, Governmental LG Chair, expressed that meetings are not held regularly enough and that the individual committees meet seldom. He suggested that we meet more often.
Merrilyn Pulver, Agricultural LG Co-Chair, expressed her disappointment in statements made by EPA in the press recently and characterized some of those statements as "scare tactics."

Katie De Groot, Citizen LG Group Co-Chair, discussed her frustration in trying to comprehend the "huge differences" in opinion between GE and EPA with regard to the reassessment. Stated that it is becoming more difficult to figure out who to believe. She also indicated that some public discussion between GE and EPA on those differences would be beneficial overall to the public. In addition, Ms. DeGroot stated that economic developments in the area adjacent to Site 10 add to the confusion; this along with the recent grants of HUD funding to various towns along the upper Hudson for the development of the river front is perceived as sending mixed signals as to the future of the upper Hudson. She reiterated the confusion felt by many members of the public because of the avalanche of press on the Hudson River PCB issue itself and "side issues" such as volatilization and the tree swallow study.

Judy Dean, Citizen LG Chair, echoed Ms. DeGroot's frustration and enumerated the amount of HUD monies allocated for upper Hudson River towns for development. She also spoke about the business boom along the river this past summer, and how beneficial this new commerce is to the community. She also expressed her feelings that this new commercial opportunity is in opposition to any remedy to the river that would involve dredging.

The discussion then shifted to the subject of the TAG grant awarded last year to Scenic Hudson. John Santacrose, Environmental LG Chair, talked about concerns he has that the TAG be used for the benefit of the entire Liaison Group membership. He also stated that in his opinion, the TAG should've been granted to the Liaison Group members.

Ann Rychlenski responded that the TAG program cannot issue a grant to the Liaison Groups since they are part of an EPA program, and are therefore ineligible for a grant.

Each group then gave a brief report on happenings on and around the Hudson. Josh Cleland, Environmental LG Co-Chair, spoke about recent Superfund bills in Congress and an update on the GE/Pittsfield site.

Merrilyn Pulver, Agricultural LG Co-Chair, gave a brief presentation on the 54 "no-landfill" resolutions passed by various towns in Washington, Saratoga, Warren and Rensselaer counties. Ms. Pulver then opened a discussion centering on a piece of correspondence which she received from an unnamed party, which briefly outlined EPA's task order to TAMS, Inc. to conduct a preliminary screening survey for possible landfill sites in Rensselaer, Washington and Saratoga Counties. She asked Mr. Tomchuk if this survey had been completed. Mr. Tomchuk responded that the work was done in part, that EPA had a verbal report from TAMS, and that this survey was part of the Feasibility Study. He reiterated that this is a screening level survey, a quick screen of what work had been done before, and what the land looks like now. While angered by most of the task order itself, Ms. Pulver did state that the caveat in the task order advising the surveyors to try to keep to areas **not adjacent to agricultural land** made her "feel better".

This news generated a significant amount of anger from many of the Liaison Group members, especially Carl Deppe, Environmental LG Co-Chair, who felt that EPA should have been up front with the public and should not have hidden the work. Mr. Tomchuk admitted that not to have told the public of the survey was a mistake. After discussion of the landfill study, a 15 minute break was taken.

When the meeting was reconvened, Al DiBernardo and Doug Tomchuk then moved on to discuss the Data Evaluation and Interpretation Report - going through the four major findings and taking questions and comments.

After this discussion, Ms. Rychlenski stated that there would be a Hudson River Oversight Committee meeting on October 8, 1997 in Latham, New York; and that action items from this Steering Committee meeting would be discussed at HROC.

The meeting ended at 10:40 p.m.