

**ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**Lansing, Michigan**  
**Thursday, April 17, 2008, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

Members in attendance: Jon Allan, Steve Chester, David Gard, Larry Merritt, Rick Plewa, Richard Rediske, Lee Schwartz, Donna Stine, Guy Williams, Paul Zuger.

DEQ staff in attendance: Elizabeth Browne, Kimberly Fish, Linda Albro Sparks, JoAnn Merrick, Frank Ruswick, Jim Sygo

Leadership Academy members: Lois Graham, Lois Marangeli, Mike Masterson, Bill Yocum

**OPENING**

Frank Ruswick welcomed the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) members to the meeting and asked the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)/Department of Natural Resources (DNR)/Agriculture Leadership Academy (LA) members to introduce themselves. The LA normally starts in March and ends in January; meets four to five times per year for two-day sessions; and forms different teams to work on various projects. They also meet with panels of outside parties such as stakeholders and legislators. The LA projects have all been vetted by the management team from the various departments, and each academy member has a department mentor assigned to work with them. Director Chester mentioned that Senator Cropsey paid the LA a compliment after members of the first LA met with him and he thought it was a very worthwhile exchange.

**CURRENT ISSUES**

Director Chester updated EAC members on the DEQ FY 09 budget which has not been approved at this time. The DEQ is the only department whose FY 09 budget was not reported by its appropriation subcommittee. Director Chester met with various legislators on April 16, 2008, to discuss a number of issues.

Director Chester along with an EAC member, and others participated in a Climate Change Forum held at Central Michigan University last week. Director Chester indicated that it was a good forum and it was well attended.

Director Chester talked about the various stakeholder meetings that have been held regarding DEQ cleanup program funding. He plans to schedule a meeting with the various stakeholders to develop an actual straw bond proposal. At this meeting Great Lakes water quality protection, clean up and brownfield redevelopment program, and farmland stewardship will be discussed.

Director Chester discussed meeting with J.P. Morgan about a set of carbon principles developed by the financial industry. The principles provide a vehicle for investors to do due diligence about the regulatory uncertainties affecting the development of coal-fired power plants.

A member added that the principles are not a commitment not to finance coal-fired plants, rather it involves an extensive dialogue with the various stakeholders to go through due diligence with plant financial applications. The principles were developed by the four largest U.S. banks;

Citigroup, Bank of America, Wachovia, J.P. Morgan. This involves a fairly high level of expectation to mitigate climate change risk and requires more transparency by the underwriting agents.

A member announced a major partnership between Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and DEQ about providing rebates to customers replacing old inefficient woodstoves.

A member had some questions about bonds and the connection with Part 201 currently under consideration. Director Chester advised that members having questions talk directly with Lynelle Marolf, Acting Chief, Remediation and Redevelopment Division, DEQ, regarding Part 201.

## **DISCUSSION**

Frank Ruswick distributed a document from Land and Water Management Division (LWMD) entitled “Realigning Work with Available Resources in the Land and Water Management Division, DEQ”, dated April 15, 2008. This document begins to implement the recommendations the EAC has been developing.

Frank Ruswick began discussing the latest version of possible recommendations on LWMD Programs. Frank asked for member comments and members provided the following:

- A suggestion on page 1, the second to last paragraph sentence under Summary of Findings and Recommendations the language could be changed to say supplement LWMD capabilities without talking about diminishment. Other members voiced that they liked the term diminishment better. Frank Ruswick will review the language.
- There were some questions voiced about the first sentence in Recommendation No. 4 about assumption of the federal 404 Program. There was an agreement among the EAC members that LWMD should not return the 404 program to the federal government, but this position may need to be re-evaluated if there is further erosion of the LWMD budget.
- There was a discussion regarding the last bullet on page 3 under Finding No. 5 having too much focus on the budget and a suggestion was made to soften the language. Frank Ruswick will reword this section.
- A discussion occurred about Page 6, Recommendation Nos. 2 and 3 that the DEQ should undertake a broad participation process.
- Liz Browne suggested that ideally it would be good to have a long-term process about all DEQ programs and funding. A member stated an organizational commitment to developing funding for all natural and environmental programs.
- Liz Browne expressed concern about the tone in Recommendation No. 2 and about the possibility that the recommendations leave it up to the department to make future wetland decisions based on overall funding. Another member suggested inserting more language about risk assessment and protecting natural resources at the greatest risk. Director Chester wanted to ensure that the language reflects not only stakeholder involvement, but that there are some decisions that the department can make. Frank Ruswick suggested that we attach the realigning document to the final recommendations.

Frank Ruswick suggested that he finalize the recommendations and send the document out to the entire group within a few days for last review and comment. EAC members agreed with this suggestion.

## **FUTURE OPERATION OF EAC**

Frank Ruswick invited the members to suggest and discuss topics for future consideration by the EAC. A member suggested discussing means of providing long-term funding for the DEQ.

Director Chester talked about the DEQ being criticized for the use of internal guidance documents, and suggested that the EAC review current DEQ practices. This might change how the DEQ utilizes guidance documents.

Another member commented that they hoped that this type of discussion would only last for a few meetings, as there are other topics such as fostering a holistic approach to environmental issues that would be much more interesting for the members.

Another member suggested that we steer away from the cleanup program issue, and wondered if the EAC has the expertise around the table to tackle the guidance documents issues.

A member asked whether the DEQ has any formal operation memorandum development guidelines. Frank Ruswick indicated that the DEQ has a policy on policies. Another member indicated that they were most familiar with the policies surrounding the Part 201 Program and wondered if reviewing other policies would require more department specific information to make sound recommendations.

Director Chester indicated that Senator Garcia wanted to set up some committees to review the various DEQ operational memorandums. Director Chester thought that the EAC might be an appropriate group to discuss these policies.

Director Chester announced that the DEQ supplemental budget was passed by the House and the Senate and that it will now go to the Governor for signature. This prevents the need to send out layoff notices to staff.

Some members suggested that a subcommittee be formed to assist with the topic of a holistic environmental approach. Frank Ruswick thought we could develop guidance document recommendations in approximately six months.

Frank Ruswick thought that more time would be needed to properly structure the guidance documents discussion and suggested that the May EAC meeting be canceled. The EAC should plan to meet on June 19, 2008, and to anticipate a four to six month effort to complete this charge. Frank Ruswick asked that a subcommittee be formed to assist with the subsequent project of developing a holistic environmental perspective. Three members volunteered and another member was recommended, subject to her agreement.

Meeting summary by Linda Albro Sparks.