



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

Approved November 12, 2014 Minutes

The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) held a work session on Wednesday, November 12, 2014, at Olive Garden Restaurant, 7206 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, Tenn., beginning at 6 p.m.

Members Present

Jimmy Bell
Noel Berry
Alfreda Cook
Lisa Hagy, Secretary
Bob Hatcher
David Hemelright, Chair

Jennifer Kasten
Jan Lyons, Vice Chair
Fay Martin
Donald Mei
Greg Paulus
Belinda Price

Mary Smalling
Coralie Staley
Scott Stout

Members Absent

Howard Holmes
Wanda Smith
Wanfang Zhou

Liaisons, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, and Federal Coordinator Present

Susan Cange, Acting Manager for Environmental Management (EM) and ORSSAB Deputy Designated Federal Officer

Melyssa Noe, ORSSAB Federal Coordinator, Department of Energy – Oak Ridge Office (DOE-ORO)

Others Present

Jenny Freeman, facilitator
Spencer Gross, ORSSAB Support Office
Pete Osborne, ORSSAB Support Office

Four members of the public were present.

Facilitated Discussion on Board Processes

The purpose of this meeting was an open, facilitated discussion about ways to improve how the board meetings are conducted, how to increase board member participation, and how to improve membership diversity through recruitment.

Four principal topics were discussed:

- Membership
- Voting
- Frequency of meetings

- Format of meetings

Membership

Facilitator Freeman asked if there are enough members for the board to function optimally. The board can have as many as 22 members; current membership is 18.

Mr. Hemelright said under the current bylaws for voting on recommendations it has been difficult in recent months to have enough members at a meeting to vote on recommendations.

Ms. Cange said another challenge has been eliciting interest in enough people to apply for membership. Ms. Cook said it would be helpful for members to know what the requirements are for membership so they can talk to others about applying. Ms. Noe said candidates cannot be DOE employees or employees of DOE contractors. Retirees from DOE or contractors are OK.

Ms. Cange noted that DOE wants to have a diverse mix of people on the board regarding education, backgrounds, geographic representation, ethnicity, and gender.

Mr. Paulus said he thought former member David Martin was as an enthusiastic member, but was term-limited. He asked about re-instating former members who were term-limited. Ms. Cange said the topic was discussed at a recent DOE field managers meeting, and she also talked with DOE Headquarters personnel at the Spring EM SSAB Chairs' meeting in Idaho. She said they didn't embrace the idea whole-heartedly, but there is a possibility of exemptions, such as when there is difficulty in fulfilling an ethnicity.

Mr. Paulus asked if other boards have problems with membership. Ms. Noe said she didn't know, but exemptions have to be done on a case-by-case basis, and DOE Oak Ridge EM was willing to try that if necessary. She said there is a recruitment campaign underway and Hispanic communities and colleges are targeted as well as communities impacted by past or current EM issues.

Mr. Berry said when he first applied he was denied membership. Considering the numbers of blacks on the board he wondered why he had been turned down initially. Ms. Noe said she wasn't Federal Coordinator at the time, but there had been a concern of too many members with advanced degrees, and DOE wants a wide range of educational backgrounds. Mr. Berry asked if statistics are available to show what categories are needed. Ms. Noe there is a matrix that shows experience, education, ethnicity, gender, and geographic location.

Ms. Cook said when she applied the only reason she knew about the board was through her work. She didn't think most people in the community knew about the board. She asked if there was a succinct description of what the board does and what it has accomplished.

Ms. Price said the board needs more public relations and advertising, and the board needs to determine its audience and how to reach it. She asked what organizations are targeted. Ms. Noe said letters are sent every year to professional organizations and public officials. About 250 letters were sent resulting in only four responses. Ms. Kasten said she received an email from the American Nuclear Society.

Ms. Freeman asked again if 22 members are enough. Mr. Paulus said 15 of the 18 members were at this meeting. He said DOE should try to get the membership back to 22 and hope for an average attendance of 18.

Ms. Freeman agreed with Paulus to get four more members on the board, but she encouraged the members present to help recruit. She said a thumbnail sketch of the board would be helpful as a recruitment tool.

Voting

Ms. Freeman asked if the bylaws should be changed to make it easier to pass recommendations.

Currently a quorum to vote on a recommendation is three-quarters of members present, and two-thirds of those present, with a minimum of a simple majority of the total membership, must vote to approve a recommendation. For example, with a board membership of 18, 14 must be present to vote on a recommendation. Of the 14, two-thirds, or 10, must vote for a recommendation to approve it. Ten is also a majority of board membership of 18 members.

Mr. Hemelright said members are advised in advance of meetings when a recommendation is on the agenda, but in recent months it has been difficult to get the proper number of members in attendance.

Ms. Lyons asked if voting could be done absentee. Mr. Osborne said provision for absentee voting is not in the bylaws, and anything not in the bylaws defaults to Robert's Rules of Order, which states a basic tenet of voting is to be present.

Ms. Staley said there is already an issue with attendance and allowing absentee voting could make the situation worse.

Mr. Berry said perhaps recommendations should be scheduled for a certain month or months so members would know it is important for them to be present.

Ms. Cook said since there is an issue of participation she asked what could be done to improve attendance. Ms. Martin asked if there isn't a rule about missing two or more meetings in a row. Ms. Noe said if a member has two consecutive absences, it is placed on the next agenda, and the board could potentially ask DOE to remove a member for non-participation. But members usually come to the third meeting or they have good reasons for missing (illness, work related, etc.). Mr. Hemelright said since this is a volunteer board it would be problematic for DOE to remove members for non-attendance.

Ms. Freeman returned the discussion to the number needed for a quorum. She said there are two options:

1. Reduce the number needed for a quorum
2. Revise the bylaws to allow absentee voting.

Ms. Cange suggested a quorum could be one half of the membership plus one.

Mr. Paulus suggested a quorum of two-thirds of members present on any vote.

Ms. Cange suggested the Executive Committee should discuss the ideas presented at this meeting and make a recommendation to the full board on changing the bylaws.

Frequency of meetings

Ms. Freeman asked if the board should continue to plan for 10 meetings a year.

Ms. Staley thought 10 meetings was a good number since sometimes a meeting is cancelled because of inclement weather. Mr. Osborne noted the board doesn't usually meet in December and July is a new member training meeting.

Ms. Lyons thought every other month was sufficient since the EM & Stewardship Committee meets every month.

Ms. Hagy said the board has a lot of work to do for an every other month schedule, and it would also make for longer meetings. Ms. Staley agreed and said the EM & Stewardship Committee talks about things that should be discussed at board meetings and two months is a long time to wait to bring those discussions to the board. Mr. Hatcher agreed with staying with 10 meetings.

Ms. Noe asked when scheduling topics if they should be evaluated as important enough for board consideration. The proposed topics for FY 2015 are:

- Zone 1 Soils Proposed Plan and Record of Decision for East Tennessee Technology Park
- Sufficient Waste Disposal Capacity for the Oak Ridge Reservation
- DOE EM Budget and Prioritization
- Mercury Cleanup at Y-12 National Security Complex
- Selection of a Remediation Strategy for Trench 13 in Melton Valley
- Groundwater Strategic Plan for the Oak Ridge Reservation

Ms. Staley said most of the topics are related to the EM & Stewardship Committee, but she said it was important for all board members to understand them, especially stewardship. She thought all of the topics were important.

Ms. Lyons said not all of the topics are of interest to everyone, which would affect attendance. Ms. Price said sometimes people don't attend, not because they are not interested, but because they have other things to do.

Ms. Noe said one of the things that's being done is to schedule field trips and tours, which might be of greater interest than listening to presentations. Ms. Cange agreed that tours, meetings with project managers, and other activities will be tried and then evaluated at the annual meeting to consider changes. Mr. Hemelright mentioned there has been discussion about changing the annual meeting from August to September or October.

The general agreement was to stay with the planned topics and activities and schedule 10 meetings a year.

Format of meetings

Ms. Freeman asked if there were any suggestions for changing the way the board meetings are conducted.

Mr. Hemelright asked if the presence of television cameras recording the meeting was intimidating and preventing members from asking questions or participating in discussions.

There was no comment noted about the cameras being a hindrance. Mr. Hemelright suggested the cameras could be turned off after the break.

Ms. Cook said she didn't think the lack of questions was a function of cameras being present, but because information presented is new and people haven't had an opportunity to digest the information and formulate questions. Mr. Hatcher asked how people can be better prepared for asking questions. Ms. Noe said that is one of the reasons for having tours and field trips so they can have a briefing ahead of time.

Ms. Price asked if there is a problem of tours not being open to the public. Ms. Noe said since tours are not board meetings there should not be a problem. Ms. Cange said the tours are for board members to have a better understanding of the topics they are considering and to open the tours to public would change the focus of the tour.

Conclusion

With the discussion of all the points concluded, Ms. Cange thanked everyone for coming and providing ideas for consideration. She said she was excited by having this type of discussion and developing ways for the board to make more informed decisions.

Ms. Cange said in Spring 2014 DOE hosted an interactive community workshop on DOE's budget and project prioritization. From that workshop DOE indentified some themes to reach out to the community. One of those was on contracting and subcontracting practices. The East Tennessee Environmental Business Alliance has been working with DOE on ideas about procurement and acquisitions practices.

Another is what happens after cleanup is completed. What areas of the reservation will undergo reindustrialization? DOE will be working closely with the Community Reuse Organization of East Tennessee in that area.

A third area is the DOE Oak Ridge EM budget and prioritization of work. While that information is presented to the public each year, DOE is working to make feedback more meaningful for DOE and ORSSAB. She wants the board to work more on prioritization and work activities.

Public Comment

None.

Announcements and Other Board Business

ORSSAB's next scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, January 14, 2015 at the DOE Information Center. The ETTP Zone 1 proposed plan is the topic of discussion.

Additions to the Agenda

None.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Action items

1. Mr. McMillan will get information on tritium levels in water leaking from the Research Reactor pool. *From the October 8, 2014 meeting.*

I certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the November 12, 2014, meeting of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board.

Dave Hemelright

Dave Hemelright, Chair
Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board
DH/rsg

January 15, 2015