

Meeting Minutes

Valley AIRNow Air Quality Outreach Program
Winchester-Frederick County
June 6, 2007
Northern Shenandoah Valley Air Quality Improvement Task Force
9:30 – 10:30 AM
Winchester-Frederick County Economic Development Commission
45 East Boscawen Street, Winchester VA 22601

Attendees

Moderator: Tiffany Tumer

Task Force Members: Patrick Barker, Terry Hargrove (ALA), Laurie Henley (VDOT), Ken Jones, Bob Claytor, Jim Giraytys, Dan Salkovitz (DEQ)

Meeting began at 9:32 am.

1. Past Events

- Clean Air Champions report. Tiffany Tumer summarized Valley AIRNow's recent involvement in the VDEQ/ALA Clean Air Champions (CAC) evaluation phase. A final report of the overall campaign was submitted by VDEQ to the Environmental Protection Agency on May 10, 2007. A section devoted to Valley AIRNow's CAC activities (e.g. James Wood High Drivers Education presentations and focus groups) was included in this final report.
- Idle reduction sign installation and delivery. Refer to *Outreach Output*.

2. News

- DEQcast – Info on Demand. VDEQ recently submitted a press release to the public announcing its newest notification tool called DEQcast – Info on Demand. DEQcast is a subscription-only service to receive daily air quality forecasts and/or health alerts via email. Any Task Force members currently receiving daily forecasts must sign-up for DEQcast by June 18, 2007 to continue to receive these notifications.

Patrick Barker posed a question to Dan Salkovitz on why VDEQ initiated this new service. Mr. Salkovitz responded that 1) it was increasingly becoming difficult for the DEQ meteorologists (a mere two person team) to manually maintain the forecast email distribution list, and 2) it ties in nicely with VDEQ's Public Affairs notification system for general press releases.

Bob Claytor next asked if DEQcast was only a notification system for air quality forecasts, or if it would include other general information, updates, and mandates. Mr. Salkovitz answered that it is the choice of the subscriber. One can sign up to receive *all* VDEQ press releases (air, water, and waste issues for example), the daily air quality forecast, or health alerts (e.g. alerting the public when a monitor actually exceeds, or is likely to exceed, the healthy standard at a particular time during the day).

Mr. Claytor expressed that his company is very interested in any information on air quality and in-ground/above-ground storage tank news, which has in the past been very difficult to obtain on the VDEQ website due to the sheer amount of information on the site. He implied that he would like to be able to choose specific topics on which to receive VDEQ press releases. Mr. Salkovitz responded by stating his uncertainty of whether or not this capability exists with DEQcast.

3. Outreach Output

- Valley AIRCorps program. Recruitment for AIRCorps continues to be an ongoing process via the Chamber of Commerce recruitment fax.
- City AQAD Memo. Ms. Tumer expressed that her efforts to reach Perry Eisenach, the supposed City Clean Air Coordinator, have been unsuccessful.
- TV-3 News. Earlier this year, Ms. Tumer had been working with Lauryn Ricketts, meteorologist for TV-3 Winchester, to implement ozone forecasts into Ms. Ricketts daily weathercasts. Originally, Ms. Ricketts was only interested in incorporating Code Orange alerts due to a lack of time. However, Ms. Ricketts has recently been in contact with Valley AIRNow to possibly implement daily forecasts due to the warm weather the area has been experiencing. She also inquired into the tools that were available for weathercasters to communicate ozone information to the public. Ms. Tumer referred Ms. Ricketts to the AIRNow website (airnow.gov) on which she can access information to obtain animated ozone maps.

Mr. Salkovitz noted that he was very pleased to hear that Valley AIRNow was working with TV-3 to implement daily ozone forecasts. He mentioned that Ms. Ricketts is welcome to contact either himself or Mike Kiss with any meteorological questions or any other questions on how to obtain ozone information for her station.

Mr. Salkovitz next asked if Ms. Tumer if she knew which weather data service provider TV-3 Winchester uses. For example, WSI is the most popular but there are others such as Baron's, Accuweather, and Weather Central. These companies would be able to 'spoon-feed' TV-3 with ozone maps at Ms. Ricketts request. Consequently, the maps would be uploaded to the station's computer automatically. Tiffany agreed that she would pass along this information.

- Semi-Annual Status Report. Ms. Tumer noted that the June Semi-annual status report to the EPA is due on June 30th. The draft report is scheduled to be distributed to the Task Force for review on June 20th. To date, information has been received from VDOT, VCAP, MPO, and the Telecommute Center. Information is still needed from the Frederick County Easement Authority, Frederick County Planning & Development, and the Winchester Green Circle. Mr. Barker asked if these departments have acknowledged the Valley AIRNow emails. Ms. Tumer responded no, but that they have been very dependable in the past. Mr. Barker offered to help if no responses were received over the next few days.

Ms. Tumer next asked the Task Force if there were any projects addressing traffic congestion, green space preservation, and/or mixed use development that should be

identified in the report. Mr. Claytor stated that he heard a radio announcement about traffic improvements on Valley Avenue which would include the addition of bicycle lanes. Mr. Barker next mentioned that the County is trying to visit its mixed use ordinance and the Winchester Circle should provide Ms. Tumer with green space preservation.

4. Task Force Input

COC Business Agenda Articles. Due to a lack of space, the Chamber of Commerce is no longer guaranteeing the inclusion of Valley AIRNow informational articles. Mr. Barker recently contacted Charlie Weiss, the Chamber of Commerce President, to discuss this issue. From this conversation, Mr. Weiss suggested that Valley AIRNow provide the Chamber with seasonal, non-time sensitive ads that could be printed when space allows.

Ms. Tumer next presented to the Task Force several of these non-time sensitive ads that had been developed for the Chamber of Commerce Business Agenda (refer to PowerPoint presentation). Mr. Barker suggested that the AIRCorps ad color should be modified from black to perhaps blue.

Looking at the AQI advertisement, Mr. Claytor wondered what percentage of days in the Winchester-Frederick County area fell beneath the various index color-coding (e.g. green, yellow, orange). Jim Giraytys asked Mr. Salkovitz if VDEQ tracked this information and released it to the public. Mr. Salkovitz responded with 'yes'. Mr. Claytor mentioned that in previous meetings, the number of orange days has been discussed but we often fail to mention the frequency of green days. For example, if WinFred is green 85% and yellow only 10% of the time, this is very meaningful information to the community. People want to be part of a winning team and if Valley AIRNow can say that past efforts have been successful (e.g. "here are our percentages—help us stay there!"), that is a much better message than saying we had one orange day.

Mr. Barker concurred with Mr. Claytor's comments and suggested that the AQI advertisement be modified with some type of "winning team" message. This will help convey the message that WinFred is green a majority of the time and hopefully cause people to jump on board with the air quality campaign. Mr. Claytor stated that industry typically looks at messages such as the AQI ad and perceives a regulatory undertone. Instead, if we can get the message across that our air is in good shape and we need to stay that way, industry will generally respond better. Mr. Claytor stated that "we have a great story to tell and we ought to tell it!"

Mr. Barker stated that we can use these advertisements to recruit new AIRCorps members and the more positive message we can portray while maintaining some educational value, the more long term benefit we will see. Ms. Tumer stated that she would try to find a way to incorporate these ideas into the AQI advertisement. Once the final versions of the ads were complete, Ms. Tumer agreed to send to Mr. Barker for submission to Mr. Weiss.

Mr. Claytor stated that he would like to see an advertisement created that looks into the future—for example, the development of an ad that says “Winchester-Frederick County welcomes clean businesses.” The message will tell our business bureaucrats that we welcome new businesses but only those that are environmentally conscious. This idea arose from an issue in the area several years ago when Cardinal Glass attempted to open a facility in WinFred but was denied. Mr. Claytor stated that if this company had been successful, we would not be seeing the air quality data we are today. Consequently, this was a good business decision for our community although it was a negative business decision for that particular business. In summary, Mr. Claytor stated that the Task Force should look at promoting Valley AIRNow futuristically.

Next, Mr. Claytor initiated discussion on the distinction between SHENAIR and Valley AIRNow as it was “very confusing”. Mr. Barker responded that SHENAIR is purely the administrative aspect of Valley AIRNow. Mr. Giraytys stated that he would speak to this at the end of the meeting.

- **Idle Reduction Signs.** Ms. Tumer reported that all 100 signs were printed and allowed the Task Force to review the final product. To date, a handful of signs were delivered to several schools, daycare centers, and other businesses in the area. Twenty-four signs were delivered to Frederick County Public Schools on May 11, 2007 with installation occurring over the summer months. One sign was delivered to Mr. Claytor for distribution to the Winchester Academy. Also, Mr. Barker communicated with Dennis Kellison, the Winchester Public Schools Superintendent, who agreed to participate. Ms. Tumer stated she was currently working with Kevin McKew of WPS Director of Operations to display the signage. She also reported that WPS is interested in displaying a total of 10 signs—one at each school in the district (8), one at the bus garage, and one at the middle school bus loop.

Next, Ms. Tumer reported on the issues surrounding sign installation at area daycare centers. Originally, it was assumed that JMU would be able to handle installation; however, it was recently discovered that this was not an option due to liability issues. Consequently, Mr. Barker approached Dave Kollar of DK Industrial Services. Mr. Kollar agreed to handle the sign installation at these daycare centers that lacked facilities management. To date, a total of seven signs require installation at daycares. Ms. Tumer also stated that there are approximately 12 daycare centers that have yet to be approached for participation in the campaign. And of the original 100 signs ordered, 26 signs are left for distribution.

Mr. Giraytys asked if there was some type of educational program to accompany the idle reduction sign campaign. Mr. Barker responded that once the signs are installed, Valley AIRNow will coordinate with local media (radio, newspaper, television) after school starts in September. Additionally, he stated that Ms. Tumer planned to develop some type of material to provide to teachers and daycare providers that will raise awareness of the signs and the effects of engine idling. Ms. Tumer responded that she had developed an article that can be placed in

school/daycare newsletters and she would be willing to give educational presentations to any business that may be interested.

Idle reduction signs were recently distributed to other businesses, including H.N. Funkhouser, Morgan Oil, and Emmart Oil. In addition to the metal signage, Emmart Oil also agreed to display 12 posters of the sign in convenience store windows. Also, Virginia Inland Port agreed to display two signs around its facility.

Mr. Barker asked if Ms. Tumer was planning to somehow ensure that these businesses do indeed install the signs. Mr. Claytor stated that H.N. Funkhouser will certainly follow through with installation and also wondered if the city Parking Garage would be interested in displaying a sign outside of their entrance. Mr. Barker responded that this would be a good idea for visibility purposes if any signs were left over. Mr. Barker volunteered to speak to a local businessman to see if there would be any interest in this. He also suggested displaying signs outside of banks in the area.

Mr. Barker next asked if any other group around was doing something similar to this idle reduction signage campaign. Ms. Tumer responded that yes, other air quality organizations have implemented similar programs (e.g. Canada, Michigan) with good success.

Next, Ms. Tumer initiated discussion of an idle reduction sign public relations campaign. Originally, she was hoping the PR campaign would be launched in May to coincide with the beginning of ozone season. However, due to the issues encountered with installation at daycare centers and late WPS participation, the date was forced to be pushed back. September was suggested as a new target date, as this is the time when schools reopen from summer break. The Task Force agreed with September. The body suggested that the PR campaign be held a week prior to schools reopening and on a Friday so that coverage would begin on Saturday, which is a big readership day in terms of print media. The best date for the PR campaign was identified as September 7, 14, or 21.

- GLOBE/GIS Teacher Training Workshop. Ms. Tumer announced that SHENAIR was hosting a teacher training workshop at JMU from June 25 – 29 on GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment), GIS (Geographic Information Systems), and Science on a Sphere (SOS). During the GLOBE mini-workshop, Ms. Tumer stated that she would be leading the surface ozone protocol.

Next, Ms. Tumer summarized Science on a Sphere (SOS) for the Task Force. SOS is an educational tool currently housed at JMU—the only university in the world to have one to date. It is a six-foot diameter carbon fiber sphere that is suspended in the middle of a large room. Four projectors in each corner of the room project dynamic, animated images onto the surface of the sphere. The images range from hurricane systems, worldwide smog transport, ocean surface temperatures, and more. SOS can then be used by K-12 teachers and students to display local data onto the sphere. For example, GLOBE surface ozone data that is collected by an

individual school or class can be projected onto the sphere, along with other GLOBE data from around the world. The students are then able to see their data which they personally collected from a global perspective.

Mr. Claytor asked if SOS could project real data. Ms. Tumer responded that SOS certainly has this capability. Projections exist for SOS that use historical and real-time data. Through an internet connection, real-time data can be downloaded to the SOS computer on a daily basis. Mr. Giraytys invited the Task Force members to view the Sphere at their convenience.

5. Upcoming Events

- Next Task Force meeting: The first Wednesday of July is July 4th. Consequently, the next meeting was postponed to August 1st at the Economic Development Commission Office.
- GLOBE/GIS Teacher Training Workshop: June 25 – 29, 2007
- EAC Progress Report: June 30, 2007
- EAC Progress Report: due June 30.

6. General Comments/Input

Mr. Claytor suggested hosting a reunion event for the players who were very active early on with the Early Action Program development. The rest of the Task Force agreed that this would be a good opportunity to show others how far the program has come in terms of air quality today, outreach programs and progress, etc. Ms. Tumer asked if DEQ would be willing to provide attendees with a short presentation on the status of air quality in the state. Mr. Salkovitz stated that he expected Tom Ballou would be interested in presenting something like this.

Mr. Barker suggested partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and its Business After Hours program to increase attendance. This would also serve then as an opportunity to recruit new members for the AIRCorps business program. Mr. Barker stated he would speak to Charlie Weiss about this idea.

To wrap-up the meeting, discussion of the SHENAIR program by Mr. Giraytys ensued.

Meeting adjourned at 10:37 am.