

Newtown Creek CAG Steering Committee Meeting

Monday, November 17, 2014

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Green Desk co-working space, Conference Room
67 West Street
Greenpoint, Brooklyn

Attendees

Deb Mesloh
Kirby Webster
Leah Archibald
Lillit Genovesi
Mike Schade
Paul Pullo
Phillip Musegaas
Rich Mazur
Sarah Durand
Sean Dixon
Walker Holmes
Willis Elkins

Agenda

1. CAG Business
 - a. CAG letter to EPA:
 - i. Riverkeeper has prepared a draft letter on behalf of the CAG Steering Committee summarizing the CAG's responses, questions, and requests to EPA following the last CAG meeting, at which EPA presented on the Phase I results and the Phase II plan. Steering committee members discussed the content of the letter and made suggestions for additions and revisions.
 - ii. The letter will be revised by Sean Dixon of Riverkeeper; the letter will be sent to EPA from the CAG co-chairs after revisions have been made and the Steering Committee had a chance to review one more time. The final letter will be posted on the CAG website after it is sent.
 - b. Upcoming EPA Superfund Symposium
 - i. EPA has requested that a Newtown Creek CAG representative speak at the conference on November 20. Neither Mike or Ryan could attend due to other conflicts and Phillip Musegaas volunteered to do so. Key discussion items will include the CAG's vision, its experience working with EPA, and how the Superfund process has gone so far.
 - ii. An update on the symposium will be posted on the CAG's website after the event.
 - c. Steering committee membership

- i. All current steering committee members are interested in continuing to serve on the steering committee. The group discussed the idea that members who represent organizations may send a proxy if the primary organizational representative is not available for a particular meeting.
 - ii. Mitch Waxman has expressed interest in joining the steering committee. The steering committee agreed to put his nomination to the full CAG at the next meeting.
 - iii. Deb Mesloh reported that she now works with the Business Outreach Center and represents many businesses adjacent to the creek. The Business Outreach Center has many programs throughout New York City and northern New Jersey; Deb will still work in Maspeth, Long Island City area
 - d. Topic and approximate date for next full CAG meeting (in Queens)
 - i. Steering committee members present agreed that a number of CAG housekeeping items need to be addressed and that this may make a good topic for a winter meeting, including: updating operating procedures, CAG visioning, TASC assistance brainstorming.
 - ii. Proposed meeting logistics: Winter in Long Island City (Queens), likely early February. Sarah Durand will check availability at LaGuardia Community College for the first or second week of February on a Wednesday or Thursday night.
 - iii. The steering committee will meet via conference call in early January to further plan the agenda and the goals for the meeting.
 - iv. Newtown Creek Group has asked a number of CAG members what is the CAG's vision for the Creek on two boat trips. Fishable, swimmable water and functional wetlands have been cited by individuals; it would be beneficial for the CAG to develop a unified, member-developed answer to this so we can articulate our vision for the Creek. The question could be the visioning component to the winter meeting agenda.
 - v. Sean Dixon shared that Roux Associates, Inc. is organizing a wetlands piece for Exxon or the Newtown Creek Group. He will check to see if a presentation is possible at the next or future meeting.
 - e. Announcements: Rich Mazur shared a Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund (GCEF) flyer for the voting events and encouraged people to visit GCEfund.org to learn more.
2. Technical Assistance Discussion with Kirby Webster from Skeo Solutions: Kirby Webster explained how EPA's Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) contract can help the CAG with technical assistance. The notes below summarize her explanation and the questions that followed.
 - a. If the CAG is looking for a document review or research done, TASC is an excellent resource. There is no administrative aspect. A TASC technical advisor would work directly with the CAG to understand the CAG's specific questions and interests. Some CAGs assign a subcommittee to work with the TASC advisor. In the past, TASC assistance has been used for: education, document "translation"

- (understanding what a technical document really says), technical reviews, and fact sheets.
- b. TASC provides independent, non-advocacy technical assistance. Skeo tailors the work to meet the exact needs of the group that has requested the assistance.
 - c. Steering committee members in attendance asked about a number of options for types of technical assistance requests:
 - i. Technical experts: Would TASC be able to put us in touch with specific technical people who have done this type of sampling and remediation work, so that we can better judge what is before us?
 - ii. Information needs: The CAG is essentially interested in getting more information and understanding that information. Could TASC assistance review all Phase I data and Phase II as it comes in? A common question is: What do we know about the contamination in the Creek based on the testing done to date? At this point, we do not have a summary; we have some data, but it is hard to summarize.
 - iii. Mapping: could contaminant hot spots be mapped?
 - iv. Monthly fact sheet about activities at the site? Regular information updates are key – the CAG wants to be in the loop before the work is done.
 - v. Assistance reviewing the final CSO sampling plan?
 - vi. All of the above may be possible requests of TASC services. The CAG should contact Wanda Ayala, the Community Involvement Coordinator for the Newtown Creek site, with a request.
 - d. Steering committee members in attendance agreed that some form of fact sheet/information conveyance would be useful. Attendees proposed that the CAG make a request to EPA to use TASC to review Phase I data and the Phase II sampling plan to create a series of fact sheets that can educate CAG members about what is happening at the site. The scope of fact sheets might depend on the data available; mapping would be included in the request, as would a presentation by TASC providers to the CAG to explain the information. Additionally:
 - i. Steering committee members discussed the possibility of having the assistance be delivered via an interactive website that shows sampling work, property lists, etc. which we'd also like to explore
 - ii. The steering committee nominated Mike Schade, Willis Elkins (Newtown Creek Alliance), Sean Dixon and/or Phillip Musegaas (Riverkeeper), and Mitch Waxman (assuming his election to the steering committee) to serve as point people for the TASC assistance.
3. Additional Business: Tabled for discussion at the next meeting; may consider via committee discussion/email/polling/etc.
- a. CAG membership – Should an effort be made to clarify CAG membership? Does the steering committee want to change sign-in procedures so that CAG members "check off" their names on the list and guests sign in on a separate sheet?
 - b. Meeting procedure - CAG members vs. non-members. Operating procedures currently state, "*All persons attending meetings who are not CAG members are*

considered observers. Observers may speak only at times designated for observer comments on the meeting agenda. Members of the public may also offer written comments to the CAG by submitting comments to the co-chairs. The CAG may schedule special meetings for extended interaction with interested members of the public.” Do steering committee members want to start “carrying out” this procedure? Doing so would give CAG members first priority for questions at meetings. This may keep discussion more on track, though could be challenging to pull off logistically.

Next Steps

1. Riverkeeper (Sean Dixon) to revise CAG letter; co-chairs to send final version to EPA.
2. Skeo: Review steering committee member affiliations and then update website as needed. For organizational representatives, determine primary representatives and alternates.
3. Next CAG meeting: Sarah Durand to check availability at LaGuardia Community College for an early February CAG meeting.
4. Mike will follow up with committee folks and EPA to move the TASC technical assistance work forward.
5. Next steering committee meeting: Skeo to send out a Doodle poll for a January steering committee call to plan the agenda and goals for the winter meeting. Poll to be sent out in mid-December.