

Newtown Creek CAG Steering Committee (SC) Meeting

Tuesday, January 20, 2015

2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Via Conference Call

Attendees

Deb Mesloh

Leah Archibald

Lilli Genovesi

Mike Schade

Paul Pullo

Rich Mazur by proxy to Paul Pullo

Ryan Kuonen

Sean Dixon

Walker Holmes

Notes

1. Discussion about Community Advisory Group's (CAG's) letter to EPA: Comments and Questions from the Newtown Creek CAG Steering Committee for the EPA's Phase II Workplan
 - a. Letter was sent to EPA in early December; elected officials and relevant agency staff copied; posted on CAG website. Wanda Ayala acknowledged receipt of letter; Mike Schade checked in on January 20; EPA is working on a response and plans to send to CAG by end of January.
 - b. Sprit and purpose of the letter was to summarize comments, questions, and recommendations voiced at October CAG meeting.
 - c. Sean Dixon asked if EPA's response will include a presentation. Mike Schade said that a presentation has not yet been requested but the steering committee (SC) can discuss if it would be of interest. Sean proposed that the SC consider this based on what the response is in the letter; suggests that this topic be included on the agenda for Feb. 11 meeting. Mike Schade suggested that the welcome table materials at the Feb. 11 meeting include copies of the letter as well as EPA's response.
 - d. The SC members agreed to address the letter and EPA's response briefly at the February 11 CAG meeting and follow up as necessary afterwards. SC members agreed that it is crucial to maintain momentum on the issue; they acknowledged that waiting until the next quarterly meeting may not be possible, particularly if sampling work is happening now. The SC will reopen the discussion when the response is received. Depending on how robust the response is or how time-sensitive the issues are, the CAG could plan a community dialogue with EPA or a group of key steering committee members could attend a face-to-face meeting. Sean Dixon, Lilli Genovesi, Willis Elkins, and Deb Mesloh volunteered to attend such a face-to-face meeting, were it to take place.
2. CAG Business

- a. Clarifying CAG membership. 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.”* This has not been “enforced” as of yet. At last CAG meeting, there were many questions and commentary that are outside scope of Superfund and the CAG’s focus. Ryan Kuonen suggested that there may be two-fold benefits to enforcing this operating procedure: it would help meetings function at higher/more focused level; it may also encourage people to become CAG members. It is in our best interest to show EPA and others that we have a full, robust CAG with dedicated members.
 - i. Mike Schade supported this idea. He speculates that lots of people attend meetings but don’t consider membership or know what it entails.
 - ii. Proposal made for nametags for members at full CAG meetings and a signup sheet where people can express interest in officially joining the CAG.
 - iii. SC members expressed general support for this proposal. No vote needed because it is already in the operating procedures.
 - iv. Membership committee: currently comprises Ryan Kuonen and Deb Mesloh. Skeo will update Deb’s contact info on website.
3. Developing agenda for Feb. 11 meeting: SC members agreed on the following elements of the upcoming CAG members. An agenda will be developed based on the discussion and will be shared via the blog.
 - a. Welcome and introduction
 - b. Clarifying CAG membership
 - c. Nominate and ratify Mitch Waxman to SC
 - d. Update on letter to EPA: Sean Dixon will explain the process of developing letter to EPA and share the response.
 - e. Vision for the Creek Discussion
 - i. 3-5 key questions for small groups to discuss: Mike Schade, Ryan Kuonen, and Willis Elkins will work on these questions; SC members may email suggestions. Questions should be open-ended to prompt brainstorming. Possible questions considered during the call include:
 1. How do you interact with the Creek now? How do you use it?
 2. Where do you access the Creek?
 3. How do you/your community impact the Creek?
 4. How do you want to use the Creek? (future use desires – this question is important, and different types of stakeholders will likely answer differently. Deb Mesloh pointed out that residents may want the Creek to be fishable and swimmable; business owners, on the other hand, may be looking at the Creek primarily as a mode of transportation for goods. These uses may or may not be at odds with each other.)

- ii. 4-5 small groups, to be formed with a count-off
 1. Steering committee members would facilitate the breakout groups (Willis Elkins, Mike Schade, Ryan Kuonen, and Lilli Genovesi volunteered).
 2. Maps will be on hand so that people can identify access points
 3. Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) report and examples of other sites/remediation efforts may be another useful reference to have on hand.
- iii. Report backs
- iv. If time, the CAG will rank the responses using sticky dots. CAG members will mark the responses that they agree with or that they think are important. The notes and information gathered during the exercise will be passed to the SC, where it will be used to develop a vision statement or short one-pager. This can also help inform future topics for CAG meetings. The SC may form a subcommittee to work on this.
- v. SC members and Skeo will look into developing an online survey through which interested people can participate if they cannot attend the meeting.

Next Steps/CAG Meeting Preparation

1. Skeo to prepare documents for welcome table at Feb. 11 meeting:
 - a. Operating Procedures
 - b. CAG's Dec. 2, 2014 letter to EPA
 - c. EPA response to above letter from CAG (to be received)
 - d. Nametags (indicating CAG membership and leadership)
 - e. CAG member sign-in sheet
 - f. Observer sign-in with option to show interest in joining CAG
2. Willis and Skeo to look for maps that can be used during breakout groups.
3. Skeo to determine feasibility of developing an online survey version of the breakout group questions.
4. After final agenda for Feb. 11 meeting is developed, save the dates to be posted to website (co-chairs and Skeo).