

SCIENCE & TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes

2nd Meeting

Wednesday, December 9, 2015

9:30-11:00 AM

RIDEM Director's Conference Room

In attendance: Peter August, URI, Board Chair
Todd Bianco, PUC
James Boyd, CRMC, Board Secretary
Kelly Knee, RPS/ASA
Jason Osenkowski, DEM
Ronald Pitt, RIC
Timmons Roberts, Brown Univ.
Carol Thornber, URI
Henry Walker, EPA, Board Vice-Chair

Absent: None

Welcome, Peter August

Chair August opened the meeting at 9:30 am and welcomed Board members and public attendees to the second meeting of the Science & Technical Advisory Board (STAB). He noted that the STAB had received from the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) a request to develop a clear and succinct package of Power Point slides concerning the current state of climate change as it pertains to Rhode Island. (Detailed discussion of this matter is provided below under New Business). He indicated that the EC4 request will be an excellent use of the STAB membership capabilities and knowledge base, and expects the STAB to deliver a highly useable educational product for EC4 use and dissemination.

News from EC4 – Elizabeth Stone, RIDEM

The next order of business was an update on EC4 activities to date from Elizabeth (Liz) Stone of the DEM Director's Office. Liz provided details on Executive Order 15-17 issued on December 8, 2015 by Governor Raimondo titled *State Agencies to Lead by Example In Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy*. Essentially the Executive Order establishes a lead by example program within the Office of Energy Resources to coordinate efforts at state agencies to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Liz also provided some background on the November 19 EC4 meeting to be held at the State House. She indicated that Governor Raimondo was planning to join the meeting and remark on progress RI has made to address climate change issues along with the challenges and opportunities facing the state.

Review of September 21, 2015 meeting minutes (For Action)

Next on the agenda was the review of the September 21 STAB meeting minutes. Following brief discussion a motion to approve was offered by Timmons Roberts and seconded by Hal Walker. The Board voted to approve the meeting minutes as read with no dissenting votes.

Old Business

The Board discussed with Liz Stone the appropriate protocol and point of contact within the Governor's office to address high level governance and implementation issues raised by the STAB or EC4. Liz recommended that the STAB Chair would communicate such issues as needed to EC4 Chair Janet Coit

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and EC4 Vice Chair Marion Gold who then would direct the matter to the Governor’s office for a response. The Board concurred with the recommendation. In other business, the Chair August outlined a short-term EC4 priority and the directive from EC4 Chair Coit requesting the STAB to develop a single, definitive, concise, scientifically accurate, and up to date statewide assessment of the current and projected impacts of climate change in Rhode Island as an information resource to the EC4. (This item is detailed under New Business)

New Business – Review of EC4 State of Climate Change request to STAB

Chair August advised the Board that he had created a DropBox document page to manage the multiple documents and PowerPoint files needed to fulfill the assignment to develop a RI State of Climate Change resource as requested by the EC4. The assignment could serve as the basis for the STAB annual report that will be included with the EC4 report due on May 1, 2016 pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-6.2. Chair August noted that there is no state working document on the state of climate change and its impacts on RI. In addition, monitoring needs and data driven sources need to be included in the document to aid in clear communication among the EC4 and its Boards, as well as other state agencies and the general public.

Board members discussed the elements of the assignment while viewing a sample slide presentation on sea level rise. Members agreed that a list of resources would be needed to provide additional scientific papers or web sites for additional information on the specific topics. Scientific knowledge should not be limited to just RI, but include any regional resources to provide the EC4 with the best list of topic researchers. Climate change topics were assigned to STAB member volunteering as follows:

Topic	Primary	Additional
Sea Level Rise	J. Boyd	H. Walker, K. Knee
Warming Air	T. Roberts	T. Bianco
Warming Water	C. Thornber	J. Osenkowski, T. Bianco
Storm Frequency	H. Walker	J. Boyd, K. Knee, R. Pitts
Biodiversity	J. Osenkowski	C. Thornber, R Pitts, P. August
Precipitation	H. Walker	K. Knee, J, Boyd

It became evident that a number of topics were cross-cutting with other implications. For example, warming air has direct effects on public health and heavy precipitation affects inland flooding, etc. The Board decided that an independent peer review would be necessary to ensure the accuracy of information and document content. The Board discussed ways to share and edit slides and document content using online Google Slides to facilitate multiple topic editors. In addition there was much discussion on presentation and how best to communicate the issues within the slides. Suggestion to concentrate on a key point or points to tell a story that can be easily understood. Another discussion point was to ensure that data currently being disseminated by state agencies would not be contradicted by data being set forth by the STAB.

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The Board also discussed the need to examine how climate change impacts affect infrastructure and the built environment, human health and ecosystems. These were the three topic areas for the 2010 Climate Change Commission. It was also suggested that the STAB should address mitigation efforts as a second step following the completion of the current assignment.

Public Comments

Julia Gold (DOH) urged the Board to link human health impacts with climate change, especially with increased temperatures that adversely affect elderly and those folks with respiratory issues. She also indicated that the EC4 Advisory Board has been focusing on the communication issue and there are strong science-based advisors that may be helpful in the STAB assignment.

On a motion by T. Bianco and seconded by R. Pitts the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 am.

Respectfully submitted by STAB Secretary James Boyd

DRAFT