

## MEETING SUMMARY

### RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB) FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION AND MUNITIONS RESPONSE PROGRAM

#### VIEQUES ISLAND, PUERTO RICO

MEETING NUMBER 17- AUGUST 20, 2008

USFWS BUILDING, VIEQUES, PUERTO RICO

*Note: This meeting summary is based on informal notes taken at the meeting. The notes are not intended as a verbatim transcript and everything that was discussed may not have been captured. If comments or additional notes are provided within 30 days of distribution of these minutes, those will be added as an attachment to this summary.*

*Change of Venue: This meeting was originally planned to be held at the Light House but due to a power outage on the whole island of Vieques, the meeting was moved to the FWS offices, which had an emergency power generator. Members were informed by email and phones calls. A sign was also placed at the former meeting location directing attendees to the new meeting location - FWS offices.*

*The Navy would like to thank FWS for accommodating this meeting and welcome the participants. We also want to thank the Municipality of Vieques for letting us know about the outage problem in advance.*

#### CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOMING REMARKS

The meeting began at 6:20 pm (5 RAB members and 2 members of the public participated in the meeting along with Navy, EPA, EQB, FWS and CH2M HILL)

#### I. Vieques RAB – where are we? Path Forward

Jorge Porto Fernandez (RAB member) was given the floor to speak first to present the first item on the agenda following a request at the last meeting.

- ***Jorge indicated he would like to speak when the other community RAB members are present (next meeting or if they arrive). He has the first item on the agenda and would like to defer to next meeting.***
- Susana Struve (CH2M HILL) indicated there are two RAB members that have not come to meetings, is it ok to remove from the list? RAB members approve.
- Susana: We are not currently enforcing the non-attendance clause in the charter. what do you think about it?
- Jorge—there are problems with bringing people to RAB meetings because the process gets affected by new members who have not been involved from the beginning and don't know how much we have accomplished in terms in

communication with the Navy and the agencies. "Old members" know to attend meetings, if they are available and still interested in participating.

- When discussing ways of getting new members, Jorge suggests posting a notice at the post office along with announcements.
- Stacie Notice (RAB member)—suggests that announcements, flyers, and emails are not consistent. She also mentioned that not everyone has a computer. She indicates if the Navy wants more community participation, announcements and notices should be more public.
- Kevin Cloe (Navy Co-chair) "Should we revise the charter to be less restrictive of membership criteria (i.e. < 15% from main island or seasonal) to provide more opportunities for members of the public that may be interested to get involved in the process?" Should we open a new RAB application process?
- Colleen (RAB member) - The charter is not the issue. There aren't enough flyers and they lack in consistency. Behavior of previous meetings has turned people off (lack of respect and circus atmosphere, forum for denouncing the Navy—not the place to do it).
- Colleen suggests placing an ad in *Vieques Events*. The reputation of the meetings keeps people from coming back—any ideas to get back on having useful meetings? Perhaps changing the car announcement to not say "the navy invites you to attend..."
- Colleen adds that in terms of the meeting place, the Multiple Use Center is best place, if time limits and obscenities were enforced during the meetings. People should not use this venue as a forum for their personal agendas.
- Dan Hood (Navy Co-chair) - We use the speaker car, we post the meeting announcement in a monthly flyer, we send e-mails to RAB members, we try to reach every member by phone before RAB meetings—what can we do better?
- Luis (member of the public) - I participate in the meeting and don't wait to get all of those things (announcements, flyers etc). He indicates there is no excuse for the public to not attend if they are interested in getting the information. He indicates that he is interested in what happens in Vieques, so he shows up at meeting and looks for the information. He indicated that he found out about this particular meeting through the speaker announcement and a through the flyer, so the resources are available. He also said, "I get a lot of information from the RAB, information that I wasn't aware of, I want to educate myself and learn the real purpose of the RAB and get updates on the clean up". I suggest that some citizens may be more incline to get involved and participate if instead of the speaker box says "the navy will inform" maybe you change it to "The RAB committee invites you to come to a meeting..."
- Michael Diaz (RAB member) - Indicates that it's not so much a communication issue, but the desire to attend. He added that the history of the Navy and community is 60 years and won't disappear... some people simply don't respect the Navy and live in the past...
- Luis (member of the public) - This is his second time I attend on of these meetings. He saw people coming to start problems and use the meeting to make a political

statement; they have not interest in helping with the clean up. I care to be informed because I live here.

## II. Reaching more community members

Susana leads the meeting with another question/summary. "How do we get the community that cares about what we are doing to come? What about the people that have been deterred by the RAB in the past, how do we solve this?"

- Daniel Rodriguez (EPA)—RAB members with email arrange in advance of the RAB meeting a conference call with the Navy to prepare the agenda and get the community input to plan the next meeting. Danny suggests sending the notes of this call by mail to reach other members.
- Kevin- 2-3 weeks prior, will arrange for the flyer to announce the RAB meeting. Hard copies of the agenda and other materials (i.e. status reports and newsletters) will continue to be mailed to the RAB members who don't have a computer)
- Wilberto (public member) — the Post office is where people go and talk... Whatever is posted there reaches a large number of the community members.
- Dan - We are trying to post more information on the Vieques events. Susana is working with Eli Belendez (Vieques Events editor to arrange that information from the Navy gets published)
- Stacie- It was a big mistake to bring the workers to meetings. Suggests the Centro as a better meeting place, it is bigger and more accommodating.
- Matt Connolly (FWS) - Suggests printing an article announcing the "New RAB" Navy is gone, let's talk about cleanup. We are here to help etc...
- Danny Rodriguez (EPA)—suggested that in the new flyer we solicit new RAB members. In flyer or other means, indicate "if you want to join the RAB contact member XXX"
- Colleen- remember that the RAB membership has been always open.
- Kevin- we continue to distribute monthly flyers, bi-monthly status reports for the RAB, semi-annual newsletters. Let us know what can we do different to enhance the information flow?

## III. Next RAB meeting

- Colleen asked if we all are in agreement to try to use the Multiple Use Center and suggested no table of elites (round table). In the past a smaller venue has been more appropriate, but since now we are going to reinforce some rules of conduct, the large venue may work better.
- Stacie- round table, shows equality, not "special people"
- Colleen- need to change the communities view that the RAB is not "elite"
- Dan - Okay only the person presenting will be up front, we'll change the sitting arrangement.
- Luis - community member - Suggested having some meetings in Esperanza at the elementary school--- switch it up.

#### IV. RAB Document Review

- Stacie- we don't discuss documents among ourselves
- Colleen- Document review should not be taking place at a RAB meeting, there are people that go line by line on a report and delay the meeting.
- Luis (community member) - everything is in English which makes it hard to follow.
- Danny- we have translators but it is still hard.
- Lirio Marquez D'Acunti (RAB member) - - RAB members are not reading the documents, so it is hard to understand them. In the past, when we had a question we were able to talk to the experts on a call and discuss the topic prior to the meeting, have conference calls.....
- Danny- the only downside of a conference call is that simultaneous translation is not possible and the call is mostly in English.
- Wilmarie Rivera (EQB) -- I have no problem with getting comments or questions from the RAB. I can help clarify and answer questions with the help of my contractors.

#### V. TAPP contract

Kevin Cloe gave an update on the TAPP contract. Only two respondents were received. Neither bidder satisfied both criteria (needed MRP and ENV CERCLA expertise)... we aren't sure such a consultant exists.

- Jorge- Talking about the Roads and beaches cleanup- how does the environmental person determine if subsurface clearance to 2 feet is enough or not enough.
- Danny- usually munitions people have zero knowledge on environmental or cleanup process. There is more to gain with the Environmental expertise (i.e. "depth"--- related to activity on the parcel). All these decision are based on the risk, it is important to have people trained to help avoid any munitions.
- Danny 4-5 documents have went out but that RAB missed the opportunity to have people assists them with the review.
- Colleen- We need someone like Jim Pastorick. If it takes two people to fulfill the requirements, then we can't have two people.
- Wilmarie- think about it--- for munitions questions the RAB could meet with EQB – Jim Pastorick.
- Michael- I think we should spend money on cancer research and contaminants that aren't apparent and what they do to the community instead of the munitions risk.
- Kevin- The RAB has access to technical support through EPA and EQBs' Environmental and Munitions Response Program technical consultants. Using these readily available sources does not prevent the RAB from obtaining TAPP support in the future. Also, in addition to TAPP, EPA has the TAG program that also provide technical support to the RAB.
- ***Kevin presents the Bid responses and indicates that RAB members must sign a disclosure and agree not to discuss the bids with anyone who hasn't signed (including other RAB members that have not signed). Kevin continues, if the RAB finds***

*someone they like, then, they can fill out a TAPP Request form with the tasks to be performed and a qualified consultant and submit it to the Navy RAB Co-Chair.*

- Dan- other option is to find a contractor and tell us which contractor you want; or Navy can pick one. We have only two companies bidding.
- Danny (EPA)—you can consider doing what the EPA does, find someone to administer the grant ---- to pay the person manage the money etc.
- Dan Hood- Wilmarie can support the RAB with EQB's technical consultants? EQB works for you—not the NAVY,
- Wilmarie—we can arrange calls or whatever if needed.
- Dan—should we notify the two bidders that we don't want their services. They are waiting for a response.
- *RAB members decided to sign the disclosure and begin reviewing the two bids.*
- *RAB members stated that they would provide a decision on the two TAPP bids by the end of the following week (8/29/08).*

#### **VI. RAB Community Co-Chair**

- *RAB members indicated that they had an internal meeting and decided not elect a new Co-chair. The decisions will be made by committee. The participants thanked Colleen for her work as RAB community co-chair for several years.*
- Jorge- Navy communicate first with community, then, we (RAB) will coordinate and chair by committee instead of one person. Internally will still discuss as a RAB board, and, no co-chair.
- *Consensus- Will work without a co-chair and have individual people selected as topics arise (will have one voice).*

#### **VII. Miscellaneous topics**

##### **Repository**

- Stacie- repository? Is important to have on, know where it is, and it needs to be consistent, dependable
- Danny—who has been to the repository? RAB- none. Danny states that it hasn't worked
- Felicia – mentioned that the computer is working when she checks it. Sometimes there is cable missing but the people attending the library know where the cable is and where it belongs.
- Colleen- How about Camp Garcia? Dan – we'll check if there is a space in Camp Garcia to locate documents for public review
- Matt - FWS does not want to be the curator of documents.

##### **Proposed Burning Public Hearing**

Wilmarie informed the attendees that the Public noticed published this Friday opening the public comment period of 30 days; The documents are available at the Mayors office and will be available at the Multiple Use Center and the public websites of EPA and the Navy. The public hearing is scheduled for Sept 24 starting at 6:00 PM.

- Jorge—one of the most important changes of the burning plan is the reduction of the area for the burning. Why?
- Chris Penny (Navy) - We were able to address most of the area we could; we now are facing the last area with dense vegetation and a lot of dangerous sub-munitions.

### VIII. Closing

The next meeting was planned for October 9, 2008

#### Action Items:

Action Items:	Lead	Status as for Sept 7	Comments
To present more information on the NOAA's underwater findings related to the number and type of munitions	Navy	On going	More information will be added to future underwater munitions discussions
NOAA/Navy – Load NOAA's presentation to public website	Navy	Completed	
Schedule RAB conference to plan the next meetings for 2008	Navy	Completed	Planned for Sept 18, 2008
To provide more details about depleted uranium data related to Vieques	Navy	Completed	Navy distributed bilingual information on this topic at this meeting
Speak with Vieques Events about announcing RAB Meetings	Navy	On going	
Drop off hard copy documents that non longer need at Camp Garcia	Colleen	On going	Need to arrange a follow up call with Dan, Kevin, Madeline Rivera (Site manager at Camp Garcia)
Check if shelving could be available at Camp Garcia for a Hard Copy Document Repository	Navy	On going	Dan to follow up with this getting Madeline's input
Look over Bids for TAPP and have a consensus submitted to Kevin Cloe by 8/29/08.	RAB Members	Completed	RAB members indicated via e-mail that none of the bid had been

			accepted by the RAB
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