

Meeting Notes

Round Table on Environment and Sustainable Prosperity

June 18, 2008

Maritime Museum of the Atlantic,
1675 Lower Water Street, Halifax
10am – 2pm

Meeting Title	RTESP	Time Started	am 10:10
		Time Ended	pm 2:15
Date	June 18, 2008	Place	Maritime Museum

PERSONS ATTENDING

1	Ray Côté, Resource & Environment	2	Martin Janowitz, Jacques Whitford
3	Mark Butler, Ecology Action Centre	4	Dr. Edith Callaghan Acadia University
5	Gordon Dickie Mining Association of NS	6	Robert Grant Stewart MacKelvie
7	Leanne Hachey Can Fed. of Independent Business	8	Stephen Hawboldt Clean Annapolis River Project
9	Tamara Lorincz NS Environmental Network	10	Peter Lund AMEC Earth & Environment Ltd
11	William Simpkins Can. Petroleum Products Inst.	12	Stephen Talbot NS Forest Products Assoc.
13	Paul Taylor DM, NS Economic Development	14	Kim MacNeil (for Nancy Vanstone) Exec. Director, NS Environment
15	Peggy Crawford Union of NS Municipalities	16	Dr. Meinhard Doelle Dalhousie Law
17	Judy McMullen Clean Nova Scotia	18	Ann Janega Can. Manufacturers & Exporters
19	Laurence Nason NS Fed. of Agriculture	20	Dwight Whynot VP Minas Basin Pulp and Power

Guest: Dr. Ron Colman, GPI Atlantic

Regrets: Nancy Vanstone, NS Environment

Did not Attend: Mr. Michael Cox – Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

Secretariat: Pat Littlewood
Bruce Findlay
Michael Langman

MEETING NOTES

1.1 Opening Remarks and Review of Agenda

Chairman Côté welcomed Members of the Round Table who were then asked to introduce themselves. Mr. Côté then asked that an adjustment be made to the Agenda to make the item “Announcements” read “Announcements and Items Raised by Members” This was approved. A member asked about the recent government budget and if Mr. Taylor could talk about the budget in his Green Forum update.

2.0 Approval of Meeting Notes, March 26, 2008

The Round Table was asked to approve the meeting notes of March 26, 2008 – and it was requested that the note-taker be identified in the meeting notes. Meeting notes of March 26, 2008 were approved.

Moved: Peggy Crawford

Seconded: Dwight Whynot

3.0 Business Arising from the Meeting Notes

Chairman Côté reviewed the “actions” arising from the meeting notes of March 26, 2008.

- The question of affiliation in the minutes was brought up and discussion ensued. It was proposed that members’ affiliation be noted once under “Persons Attending”. Agreed.
- Staff was asked if the minutes would be on the web-site. Staff responded that this was the intention.
- The issue of tracking the carbon footprint of our meetings was briefly discussed. Impacts such as the use of paper and traveling to and from the meeting were mentioned. It was decided that an estimate be prepared for the next meeting. **Action: Staff will follow up with M. Janowitz and E. Callaghan to prepare draft footprint for next meeting.**
- A member reminded the group that at an earlier meeting it was suggested meetings could provide an opportunity to learn what each of the members are doing and it suggested to follow up on how this could be done. It was felt that the Round Table could come up with a collective definition of sustainability to form a framework. It was suggested that we should make an effort to do this as it would grow trust as we learn more about what each member is doing. One member reminded the group that the RT mandate was defined and that it is to respond to the Minister. It was suggested by a member that we visit the

Round Table's mandate every few meetings to keep our focus. It was also suggested members add the Round Table mailing list to their circulation list to keep members up to date with the various activities being conducted by members.

Action: Chairman Côté felt that fostering a good working relationship is important to do and he would consider how this could be done and report back to the Round Table at its next meeting.

4.0 Deputy Minister's Green Forum Update

Chairman Côté asked Paul Taylor, to give the update for the Green Forum. Mr. Taylor circulated a presentation to members.

- Mr. Taylor informed the meeting that the Green Forum continues to be an invigorating part of his personal Agenda. He stated that many departments have no direct control of the issues presented but bring the resources of their departments to the issues with input and advice. For example, discussions pertaining to the greening government-owned buildings-benefit from having the involvement of Deputies from departments with substantial property holdings.
- The EGSPA report has been distributed and it was felt that it shows progress but that there are still some challenges to overcome.
- There is a running overview of where Government stands and how it is monitoring each of these targets. There are however, areas where Government has limited control, such as greenhouse gas, vehicle emissions and land protection. There has to be a collaborative effort to meet that challenge, but that government is committed and will try to meet that challenge. The EGSPA report contains both very positive and less positive positions. However, progress is being made.
- The current significantly rising fuel cost environment has provided increased incentive for exploring alternatives and people are changing habits. .
- Government is working on a Climate Change action plan and an Energy Strategy along with Water Strategy and Wetlands Strategy, all of which are expected in the Fall. It will be important to have a means in place where we can measure progress, and this is where a reporting structure such as GPI may be useful.
- The Department of Finance has initiated a comprehensive Tax Review process. A member suggested that maybe some environmental offsetting measures could be implemented as a result of the tax review. There is some interest in taxing things we do not want such as pollution.
- Another member informed the meeting that there is a tax review going on in New Brunswick where everything is on the table and that we could learn from them.
- Mr. Taylor reiterated the importance of the Round Table as an advisor to Government.
- A member reported that "Self sufficiency" is used in New Brunswick as a call to action, the concept of self-sufficiency could be explored in Nova Scotia.

- It was suggested that government may want to wait until the tax review process is completed before launching the proposed communications strategy.
- With respect to environmental sustainability It was felt that there is a need to educate the young, Mr. Taylor agreed that education is the lynch pin. It was suggested that the Department of Education should be part of the Green Deputies Forum. Mr. Taylor agreed that Education will continue to be brought into the process both directly and indirectly.
- A member suggested that increased public engagement is needed around the Environmental Trust Fund. Providing access to funding for community groups would help spread the Trust Fund message and benefits. In the budget Plan for 2008/2009 there was no budget for sustainable development. It was suggested that there are not enough resources to reach real environmental issues. **Action: Kim MacNeil agreed to provide information on the government budget related to questions raised by the Round Table.**

5.0 Presentation on Genuine Progress Index (GPI) Ron Colman, Executive Director, GPI Atlantic

- Chairman Côté introduced Dr. Ron Colman from GPI Atlantic who gave a presentation on the work being done by GPI. Dr. Colman had a handout of the slides in his presentation which was distributed to the members.
- Chairman Côté informed the meeting that there were other economic indices out there and he had circulated three papers to members prior to the meeting which described the GPI as well as:
 1. Environmental Sustainability Index
 2. The Wellbeing of Nations at a Glance
- Dr. Colman spoke on how GPI measured economic value and the costs of not taking action. GPI measures progress of physical indicators but also the benefits and costs of actions/non-actions measure of sustainable prosperity. We would enhance prosperity by improving integration and can calculate by using incentives/penalties using full cost accounting system.
- GPI acknowledged help from the Education Dept, Conserve Nova Scotia and others who have assisted with the last of the data needed to complete 12 years of work the GPI Final Report will be ready in October.
- A member asked if exports were part of the measurements, and requested, for the record, to have export value reported as an indicator of economic growth included in the study.
- Mr. Taylor acknowledged that it is a key indicator of economic health, but that we are still working on how to measure progress.
- Dr. Colman informed the meeting that GDP is not an indicator, it is an accounting system. GDP does not measure prosperity or well being. Indicators alone will not help us move towards sustainability.
- EGSPA needs outcome indicators for the economy, social and environment to assess progress towards targets. Price structures will change behaviour.

- Members commented on the value of one number indicators such as GDP and asked whether GPI can be reported in this manner.
- Dr. Colman answered by saying that there will not be one number, but people do understand when it is broken down, that although it is complex there have been 20-30 newspaper reports this year and getting the message across has not been a problem. People seem to get it. Social, economic and environmental aspects will be included in the final report in October.
- Chairman Côté thanked Dr. Colman for his presentation and suggested that Dr. Colman be invited back in the Fall, to coincide with the release of the GPI final report.

Lunch

The meeting resumed at 12:50pm

- It was agreed that we need to measure in order to see what progress is being made, but it was felt that we need to be cautious about what we are measuring. How to use these measures is important. There are possibly too many gaps in our information.
- Dr. Colman felt that the various problems might be looked at on a rotating basis – i.e. forests, water etc., every 4 or 5 years. We have to strive for deeper issues and not settle for superficial figures. The work is new and Dr. Colman stated that he would hate to see it collapse because people are focusing on the gaps.
- One member felt that he did not want to jeopardize our industry today to take care of the future but Dr. Colman stated that this is where Government can use incentives/penalties until behaviour is learned – this is a long term outlook. We are not living sustainably and we have to pay our ecological debt. Another member stated that more and more businesses are becoming Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified, however, we have to keep in mind that FSC is not the only certification out there.

6.0 Feedback on the First Annual EGSPA Report

- Chairman Côté noted that the letter from the Round Table to the Department of Environment Minister was not actually in the hard copy report, although it is on the web-site. The letter was written with the expectation of it being in the report.
- It was felt that in the future, changes to the draft report could be recommended to the Department at an earlier stage in the process. Because it could be a year before the public sees the government's response. The government could respond to the letter in the "Looking Forward" section of the report.
- A member stated that if the Round Table is going to serve Government as best we can, we should be flagging things, regarding specific goals to be met.

- **Action: It was suggested that the Round Table members look over the final progress report document once again and offer comments on areas which they feel need specific attention in the coming year.**
- Members also suggested that there should be a report on EGSPA progress being made on activities outside of direct government actions.
- The more proactive the Round Table presents itself to be, the better we can support Government's efforts.
- It was asked if there is a method of tracking hits on the web-site to find out how interested the public is in the environment. Environment can track public hits on its website. It was explained that government is in the process to hiring staff to do this sort of tracking.
- A member hoped that Government will use the Round Table to advise on strategies and asked to have the Environmental Trust Fund on a future Agenda, as it was part of the mandate.

It was asked if a draft EGSPA Progress Report will be available in the Fall.

7.0 Power of Green Conference Update

Chairman Côté introduced Elizabeth Beck and Chantal Pelham from Economic Development, who are heading up the planning process for the 2008 Power of Green Conference. They were asked to update Round Table Members on the status of the Conference planning process and provide RT members with an opportunity for input.

- Chantal Pelham informed the meeting that this was the second year of Conference and will be held October 20, 2008 at the Cunard Centre. Last year was a two day event, but it has been adjusted to a one day event, and that this year's focus is on the business sector. There had been good feed-back suggesting that people wanted it to happen again and that the key objective was to demonstrate to business the case for green, with a view to increasing participation on the part of business.
- Elizabeth Beck reported that the final agenda and list of Conference speakers was close to being finalized.
- A member suggested that opportunities be investigated to allow speakers to do additional presentations etc. while they were in the province, maybe to reach the youth, possibly at Acadia or other venues outside of Halifax.
- Another member suggested a special student rate to get young people involved. It was further proposed that the organizers consider a break session focused on "business students".

8.0 Items Raised by Members and Announcements

- Chairman confirmed that the Environmental Trust will be put on the agenda for next time.
- A member passed around an Upcoming Events for the Nova Scotia Environmental Network so that members could see what her organization is doing.

- ***Action: It was agreed that member's comments regarding the presentation by Ron Colman should be forwarded to the Secretariat to be compiled (Langman).***
- It was also suggested that workgroups may be one way of covering all the issues.
- A member felt that the role of the Round Table was to listen to what government is saying and put the collective intellect to the problems brought forward. Chairman Côté said that we are here at the request of the Minister to respond to the issues raised.
- It was suggested that some guiding principles may be required for reporting purposes.

9.0 Next Meeting

September (TBA)

Agenda Items

EGSPA Report
Climate Change
Communications
Group showing other Indicators
Environmental Trust