**Meeting Notes and Follow-up Items**

LGAC Communications Committee

11:00 a.m. May 9, 2014

1. Call to Order (Sheila Finlayson, Chair)

Attendees: Finlayson, Noll, Dunmyer, Porter, Thomas, Gattis

The Chair introduced meeting which has been called because the committee is expected to present something at the June meeting. Need to consider in light of committee’s original charge and time constraints.

1. Reviewed LGAC Mission and Goals (as stated in Strategic Plan)

MISSION

*To share the views and insights of local elected officials with state and federal* *decision‐makers and to enhance the flow of information among local governments about the health and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.*

GOALS

Goal: Promote ongoing communication and information exchange between local governments and the Chesapeake Bay Program.

Goal: Promote local government implementation of water quality initiatives and land use that supports a healthy Bay watershed.

Goal: Strengthen LGAC internal operations to better involve members and empower them to fulfill their mission.

*Discussion:* Agreed that as elected leaders, LGAC members need to understand the health of the Bay and be able to share that message. Transferring information about what’s happening in member jurisdictions may be helpful. John said there isn’t much communication locally about connection between local issues and the Bay. Noll said we need to communicate among ourselves then take it back to our localities as best practices.

First goal is most relevant to this committee. Finlayson asked for confirmation that the committee was to develop one message about the Bay Agreement that could be used by members. Everyone agreed that this was a priority for the committee. Noll referred to the Roundtable Facilitators Guide that Gattis created for the 2013 Roundtables. Said most of what’s included is now out of date but the last 5 points are good.

Revisited the Committee Charge (interpreted from Strategic Plan).

The LGAC Communications Committee was formed to address the first goal (promote ongoing communication and information exchange between local governments and the Chesapeake Bay Program).

Some of the means for accomplishing this, as outlined in the Strategic Plan, include:

1. Participate in meetings of state-based organizations that represent local governments to better engage them in LGAC issues and ensure communications on Bay watershed issues, goals and policies. (1.b)

*Status/Recommendation: Members should seek out opportunities to participate in meetings of state-based organizations (municipal associations). Members should share CBP information, press releases, etc. with municipal associations.*

*Comments/Discussion: The committee briefly discussed the roundtables held last year. There was agreement that they were useful but need to be better promoted.*

*Plan was to do panels this year with federal and state partners but uncertainty about the Bay Agreement delayed planning. Now that signing is imminent, need to pursue again.*

*Finlayson and Porter going to MML – June 9 -11; Kelly is on communications; need to coordinate with Planning Committee. Scott Hancock is Director. Mary to follow up on scheduling. Finlayson is already committed 6/9 from 2-3.*

*Dunmyer going to MACO*

*Noll going to VACO*

*Thomas going to Township Commissioners Associations; also asked to speak to Chamber about impacts to business.*

***Mary to create talking points/presentation for John and others to use.***

1. Convene workshops for local government officials to share resources and information, identify issues and needs, and gather feedback to bring back to the Executive Council. (2.a)

*Status/Recommendation: LGAC members hosted 3 roundtables in 2013. Staff received a grant to host 16 roundtables in Pennsylvania over the next four years.*

*Comments/Discussion: Agreed that we are not putting on workshops ourselves. We should pursue panels at others workshops. See #1 above too.*

1. Lead by example and recognize local actions by compiling local success stories (such as Our Waters, Our Towns) and share at meetings, in print, and online. (2.b)

*Status/Recommendation: Local actions are being recognized and shared with local elected officials through tours held in conjunction with quarterly LGAC meetings.*

*Comments/Discussion: Kelly suggested taking something to his local meetings as being of value. What about municipal newsletters? Touring best practices keeps us engaged. Finlayson questioned whether online information is of value. Staff may find it of value according to Thomas. Gattis shared discussion with media company about opportunity for them to assist with press releases following events such as quarterly meetings/tours. Everyone agreed that press releases following each meeting should be pursued.*

*No to printed documents for distribution.*

*Finlayson asked about sharing best practices through press releases or on-line. Need to discuss more. Finlayson suggested online version could be a static document not necessarily an active web page. Noll cautioned against duplicating efforts. Finlayson shared national mentoring program example. Noll asked Finlayson to draw up proposal for LGAC consideration.*

***Members to review*** [***Chesapeakebay.net***](http://www.chesapeakebay.net) ***to see how it is meeting this need and how it might be better used by LGAC.***

1. Develop a set of key local messages and successful tools for elected officials to use for communication with their constituents and colleagues. (2.d)

*Status/Recommendation: Staff developed a Facilitators Guide which was used by the Roundtable hosts. The Facilitators Guide will be refined for these workshops. Need committee input.*

*Comment/Recommendations: Need a presentation that everyone can use. Supplement with handouts.*

***Mary to create generic presentation.***

***Insert Noll article about Local Government involvement in the Bay Agreement in MML program with Kelly’s help.***

1. Build an LGAC website, share links to resources, videos, and other information, and establish a *Facebook* page to keep members up to date. (2.e)

*Status/Recommendation: An LGAC Facebook page was created and has been populated with information as time allows.*

*Comments/Discussion: Look at Chesapeakebay.net and assess whether it is meeting our goals. If not, how can it be adapted/enhanced?*

1. Provide assignments and talking points for LGAC members following each meeting and prepare a generic press release that can be customized by members for local media follow-up. (3.b)

*Comments/Discussion: Continue to pursue discussion with media.*

1. Consideration of Additional Assignments

Addressed the question of whether the Committee is prepared to accept additional charges, e.g. reviewing materials from CBP and providing feedback on content and method of delivery?

*Comments/Discussion: This committee isn’t able to take this on.*

***Mary will do work to prepare for discussion at LGAC meeting.***

1. Other Business

*Discussed LGAC meeting schedule. Members would prefer not to have to travel two nights. Will discuss with full committee.*

**Follow-up Tasks Gattis**

1. Create talking points and presentation for LGAC members to use at meetings, roundtables, etc.
2. Contact municipal associations to schedule roundtables and/or panel presentations about Bay Agreement.
3. Work with Kelly on having an article by Noll inserted in MML program.
4. Pursue discussions about increasing media coverage with Michael Goldberg of Action Media.
5. Prepare for Indicators discussion at June meeting.

**Follow-up Tasks LGAC Communications Committee Members**

1. Review [Chesapeakebay.net](http://www.chesapeakebay.net) and assess whether it is meeting our goal of reaching local governments with things like success stories. Can it be adapted/enhanced?