

February 23rd, 2009 AMATS Air Quality Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

AMATS Committee Members in Attendance:

Toni Jones	MOA, Planning & Zoning Commission
Lois Epstein	Alaska Transportation Priorities Project.
Rusty Myers	Alaska Pacific University
Marge Larson	American Lung Association of AK
Dan Southard	MOA, Street Maintenance
Scott Lytle	ADOT & PF, Stevens Anchorage International Airport,

Staff and Public in Attendance:

Jeffrey Manfull	Public Trans. Advisory Board
George Conway	Municipal Health Commissioner
Cindy Heil	ADEC, Air Quality, PZC
Aneta Synan	ADOT & PF
Mark Parmelee	ADOT & PF
Diane Ingle	MOA, DHHS Director
Chris Tofteberg	MOA, Environmental Services
Steve Morris	MOA, DHHS AQ
Yuriko Yano	MOA, DHHS AQ
Chris Salerno	MOA, DHHS AQ
Anne Schlapia	MOA, DHHS AQ
Matt Stichick	MOA, DHHS AQ
Stacey Cooper	MOA, DHHS AQ
Alton Staff	MOA, Public Transportation
Craig Lyon	MOA, Transportation Planning
Neil Thalaker	Citizen

Toni Jones called the meeting to order at 11:34am. A quorum was present. Attendees were introduced and outgoing members; Marge Larson, Scott Lytle and Dan Southard were thanked for their service. Jeff Manfull and George Conway have been nominated as new members to the Air Quality Committee. The AMATS Policy Committee is expected to consider their appointments to the committee in their March meeting.

Acceptance of Prior Meetings Minutes:

The Advisory Committee unanimously approved minutes for the 16 September 2008 meeting as presented.

Update on the SIP, CO Plan and Anchorage IM Program

Steve Morris explained that in November 2007 the prior Anchorage Assembly voted to eliminate the Anchorage IM Program by 31 Dec 2009. On 15 July 2008 the new Assembly voted to reinstate the IM Program in modified form (effective 31 Dec 2009) and directed DHHS staff to work with ADEC to determine whether the commitment to continue I/M could be removed from the SIP. I/M would then become a "local option" not subject to approval by the State or EPA. DHHS has consulted with ADEC and it seems likely that there are no insurmountable obstacles blocking the way toward a local option I/M program. However, it seems clear that it will take a year or more to negotiate the agreements and change the State regulations necessary to move to a local option I/M program and remove the commitment to I/M from the SIP.

Steve noted that the Assembly also made other changes to the I/M program, most notably extending the new car test exemption period from four to six years. Given the long time frame anticipated to remove I/M as a SIP commitment, Steve said that it may be prudent to move forward with the SIP changes necessary to accommodate the other changes made by the Assembly to I/M, and to pursue designation of the IM program as

a local option in the SIP. Even “minor” changes such as these can take two years or more to gain approval by EPA. **Diane Ingle** noted that there are also regulatory and revenue implications that still need to be resolved with respect to the Assembly’s decision.

Cindy Heil noted that the EPA has been more lenient with regard to gaining full EPA approval of minor SIP changes such as extending the new car test exemption period. She said they would likely be much more concerned if we were considering terminating the I/M program prior to their approving the required SIP amendment..

Marge Larson asked if the SIP revision for the “minor” I/M Program modifications would proceed separately from the revisions required to make the IM Program a local option. Steve believed that they would because the revisions necessary to make the IM Program a local option and remove commitments to operate I/M from the SIP is a more lengthy process. Steve noted that he had not had the opportunity to discuss this issue with Diane Ingle or with the Claman Administration. A final decision about how to proceed will be forthcoming.

Eagle River PM10 Limited Maintenance Plan hinges on EPA approval of Dec 2007 Exceptional Event

Steve Morris explained that on 2 December, 2007, PM-10 concentrations in Eagle River exceeded the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) due to transport of windblown silt from the Matanuska Valley. EPA regulations provide a mechanism to flag exceedance of the NAAQS if they can be shown to be due to natural causes. They lay out a specific procedure for these exceptional events to be handled. Unfortunately some of the technical requirements related to “flagging” the data were not followed. Consequently it is possible that EPA will not approve the exceedance as an exceptional event. Steve noted that DHHS staff recently completed a draft PM-10 Maintenance Plan that is the first step in getting Eagle River redesignated from a nonattainment area to an attainment area that “officially” meets the PM-10 NAAQS. If the EPA does not approve the exceptional event request, the Plan would have to be delayed for a minimum of three years and be re-drafted.

Yuriko Yano presented information on the 2 December 2007 event. She explained how high winds stirred up dust in the Knik River Valley and transported PM-10 to Eagle River and Anchorage. She explained that DHHS staff has thoroughly documented the cause and exceptional nature of the exceedance. Federal regulations require a local public review process prior to submitting an exceptional event request to EPA. Steve suggested that the AMATS Air Quality Advisory Committee meeting could serve as a forum for public review. There was general agreement among committee members that such a review could be accomplished in an upcoming meeting. **George Conway** suggested that waiting a month or two to submit the exceptional event request to EPA might allow the new federal administration to sort itself out and improve chances for a fairer review.

Advisory Committee to Submit Comments on TIP Project Evaluation Criteria

The deadline for comment on Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) project evaluation criteria is 23 March 2009. **Craig Lyon** explained that the TIP is a four year plan for allocation of all funds received from the Federal Highway Administration. The current TIP covers 2005-2009. The next TIP will cover 2009-2013. The project evaluation criteria determine which projects will be included in the TIP. **Lois Epstein** submitted her recommendations for revisions to the Project Evaluation Criteria (handout provided) for roadway and transportation enhancement projects. Lois is the Air Quality Advisory Committee representative to the AMATS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).

Toni Jones encouraged Advisory Committee members to review Lois’ recommendations for the criteria and meet again prior to 23 March to draft committee comments for submittal to the TAC.

Marge Larson made a motion that the Air Quality Advisory Committee review the TIP project evaluation criteria and that the committee submit formal comment on those criteria to the TAC. **Lois Epstein** seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

The next Advisory Committee meeting was scheduled for 23 March 2009. The committee adjourned at 12:42 pm.