

# Minutes



## Complaints Task Group, Meeting #1

Date: November 15, 2013

Place: CASA office, 10035 108 Street, Edmonton, Alberta

### In attendance:

Name	Stakeholder group
Ann Baran	Southern Alberta Group for the Environment
Mike Bisaga	Lakeland Industrial Community Association
Roxane Bretzlaff	Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (Canadian Natural Resources Limited)
Keith Denman	Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development
Jennifer Fowler	West Fraser - Hinton Pulp
Joseph Hnatiuk	Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists
Sandi Jones	Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Jim Lapp	City of Edmonton, Compost Operations
Darren Morissette	Peace Airshed Zone Association
Tanya Moskal-Hébert	Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development
Ludmilla Rodriguez	Alberta Health Services
Merry Turtiak	Alberta Health
Dalene Wilkins	Alberta Energy Regulator
Celeste Dempster	CASA
Michelle Riopel	CASA

### Action Items:

Action Items	Who	Due
1.1: Jim to share the Odour Wheel used to classify odours from composting.	Jim, Celeste	By next meeting.
1.2: Celeste will consolidate List 2 and send it to the task group for review.	Celeste	ASAP.
1.3: Celeste will coordinate the * agencies' presentations for meeting #2.	Celeste	By next meeting.
1.4: Darren will look into possible presenters from the transportation sector.	Darren	By next meeting.
1.5: Celeste will research if CASA has an appropriate writer on file who could compile information gathered on existing complaints processes in Alberta.	Celeste	ASAP.
1.6: Celeste will ask the Odour Management Team if feedback from complainants would be useful for the broader work of the team and/or other task groups.	Celeste	As time permits.
1.7: Celeste will research how community input was gathered by the Clean Air Strategy Project Team.	Celeste	By next meeting.
1.8: Celeste will touch base with Jim Lapp about the cross-jurisdictional review.	Celeste	By next meeting.

1.9: Celeste will research the last CASA Science Symposium to determine if any work was done around odour.	Celeste	By next meeting.
1.10: Ann will conduct a scan of two documents to see if they contain any information relevant to task group work - RWDI Final Report Odour Management in British Columbia and Supporting Information for the Development an Odour Guideline for Saskatchewan (draft).	Ann	By next meeting.
1.11: Celeste will ask the Health Task Group for advice about how medical professionals should be included in the complaints process.	Celeste	As time permits.
1.12: Celeste will poll for dates for meeting #2 in the weeks of the 6 <sup>th</sup> and 13 <sup>th</sup> of January 2014.	Celeste	ASAP.

## 1. Administrative Items

Celeste chaired the meeting which began at 10:03am. Participants introduced themselves and were welcomed to the meeting. Quorum was achieved.

The agenda and meeting objectives were approved.

Celeste provided an update on the November 14<sup>th</sup> Odour Management Team meeting:

- The Odour Management Team has received a \$150,000 grant from ESRD.
- The team discussed how to manage communications between team and task groups to ensure that the task group receives timely feedback and that team members are kept informed of the task group's work. As such, after each task group meeting Celeste will prepare a short maximum 1-page update to send to the team which includes status/highlights, key decisions, and any items requiring team feedback.

Celeste also noted that CASA will be holding a training session on collaborative consensus processes for new task group members on January 16, 2014. It will be a full day in Edmonton.

## 2. Task Group Dynamics

Celeste provided an overview of CASA, the collaborative consensus process, CASA's *Guide to Managing Collaborative Processes* and the work of the Odour Management Team. Task group members had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss as required.

### CASA and the Collaborative Process:

CASA is made up of three components:

- Board:
  - 22 members from government, industry and non-government organizations
  - Oversees and provides strategic direction for CASA
  - Meets 4 times annually
- Secretariat:
  - Oversees the day-to-day operations of CASA
  - Responsible to the Board
  - Are the process experts
- Teams:
  - Responsible to the Board and to the constituents they represent
  - All team members have roles and responsibilities which can be found in CASA's *Guide to Managing Collaborative Processes (MCP)* (page 19-25).

CASA uses a collaborative, consensus process to work together and make decisions. This means that participants focus on interests rather than positions and strive to reach consensus - where consensus is defined as all parties can agree to the decision as a whole and can live with the final package. This process is described in detail in CASA's *Guide to Managing Collaborative Processes* which is available from the CASA website.

#### Overview of the Odour Management Team:

- The issue of odour management was brought forward by all three of CASA's stakeholder groups (government, industry and NGO). Some initial scoping was done and the CASA Board approved the formation of a small working group to create a 'Project Charter' which would outline the work for a CASA Odour Management Team.
- The working group considered the broad issue of odour management as well as what could be accomplished by a CASA team in 18-22 months and prepared the project charter for Board consideration:
  - Rather than focus on specific odours or odour producing activities, the team will focus on creating strategies, processes, etc. that can be applied to all sectors and odours.
  - The project charter outlines seven topics of objectives (complaints, odour assessment, health, prevention/mitigation, enforcement/role of regulation, education/communication/awareness, continuous improvement). There is an upfront recognition that the team may be able to delve more deeply into some topics than others, but at no point should ignore the interrelated nature of the seven topics.
  - The team is responsible to the CASA Board for two deliverables: A final report with package of recommendations, and a Good Practice Guide.
    - The Good Practice Guide is intended to be a user-friendly version of the final report and act as a communication tool to help share and apply the work of the team.
- To meet the 18-22 month timeline, the team will use small task groups. A task group is responsible for completing a piece of work that will subsequently be reviewed by the team and incorporated into the overall work of the team. This will help to the team to complete their work in a timely manner by making efficient use of resources. A task group reports to and coordinates with the team on a regular basis. The team provides oversight for all task groups. The team holds the final-decision making authority over the work of the task group.
- The team has prioritized three areas where work will begin first: odour assessment, complaints, and health.
- All task group members have roles and responsibilities that can be found in CASA's *Guide to Managing Collaborative Processes* (page 19-25). Task group responsibilities include:
  - Clearly articulating the interests of the stakeholders they represent
  - Establishing effective communication with decision maker in the organizations/groups they represent

The presentation prompted the following discussion by the task group:

- A key task group member responsibility is to share the perspectives of their constituency with the task group including feedback on the work of the task group. Different organizations have different protocols for communicating amongst members. Many task group members have a corresponding team member. This is a useful contact for connecting with stakeholders to collect feedback. Task group members should contact Celeste if they have questions about how to liaise with their stakeholders and/or corresponding team member. The task group can also make use of the 1-page summary that Celeste will prepare after each meeting (see update from team under item 1).

- Team recommendations are ultimately brought to the CASA board for final approval. These recommendations are directed towards a specific implementer such as government or industry. “Recommendations” are more than advice - CASA follows up with implementers to check on progress and it is the expectation of the CASA board that these recommendations will be effected. Teams only put forward recommendations that have been agreed to by all parties including the implementer. Past CASA recommendations have achieved success such as the Flaring and Venting Team which put forward recommendations to reduce flaring and venting in Alberta. Many of these recommendations were incorporated into Directive 60 which governs flaring and venting from upstream oil and gas, and led to significant reductions.
- There is one First Nations representative on the Odour Management Team. There are no First Nations representatives on the task groups. The CASA Secretariat would like to engage more directly with First Nations and Métis communities around CASA’s current areas of work. The Secretariat is currently scoping the best way to accomplish this task and putting together a pilot project.

Following Celeste’s overview, the task group continued discussing how they would work together.

Ground Rules:

Task group members were asked to list meeting behaviours they had experienced in the past that contributed to a bad meeting:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forget to turn off phone</li> <li>• Not paying attention</li> <li>• Personal attacks and comments</li> <li>• Confrontational behaviour</li> <li>• Lack of respect</li> <li>• Dominating/controlling the agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have their own agenda</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Being unprepared</li> <li>• Interrupting</li> <li>• Don’t honour commitments</li> <li>• Rambling, ranting</li> <li>• Talking over other people</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side conversations</li> <li>• Not speaking during the meeting and complaining afterwards</li> <li>• Poor chairing</li> <li>• No clarity on purpose of the meeting</li> <li>• Fist fights</li> <li>• Not being punctual</li> <li>• Meeting mechanics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Can’t hear people speaking very softly</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Swearing</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

By reversing this list, the task groups discussed what behaviours lead to a positive meeting experience. Based on this list, the task group modified the Odour Management Team’s ground rules to create their own set that will be used to guide how the task group will work together going forward:

- Focus on interests, not positions
- Respect the values and interests of others
- Listen to learn
- If you have a concern speak up
- Contribute to an environment where people feel safe to be creative and take risks
- Honour commitment
- Keep comments on topic
- Come prepared to meetings
- Set objectives for each meeting
- Be considerate of time

Operating Terms of Reference:

Task group members reviewed the team's Operating Terms of Reference which describes logistics for working together. In particular, they focused on sections:

- Section 10 - Requirements for quorum: A representative from each of industry, government and non-government organization must be present.
- Section 12 - Non-attribution: Any concepts or ideas suggested by a team member will not be attributed to that individual or organization outside of the discussions.
- Section 13 - Discussion with prejudice: In a genuine effort to maintain creativity and ensure open and honest dialogue, all discussions will be "without prejudice". I.e. Team members will not be viewed as having committed to a particular solution being discussed prior to reaching agreement on a complete package of recommendations. All team members are responsible for creating an environment where the team can talk about possibilities, explore issues, and take risks without fear.

#### Chairs:

Task group members selected three co-chairs: Tanya Moskal-Hébert, Jennifer Fowler, and Darren Morissette.

### **3. Debrief Workplan**

Celeste provided an overview of the Complaints Task Group workplan as well as the Health and Odour Assessment workplans. Highlights include:

- The Health Task Group met on November 4<sup>th</sup> to review and discuss their workplan. They are focused on two streams of work:
  - Stream 1 focuses on creating an odour and health backgrounder for inclusion in the Good Practice Guide. The Odour Management Team has also asked that this information be presented to the team to help build common understanding about odour and health.
  - Stream 2 focuses on developing a tool for individuals to track the health-related impacts of odour. The team also asked the task group to consider if an accompanying tool for physicians would be appropriate.
- The Odour Assessment Task Group met on October 10<sup>th</sup> to review and discuss their workplan. They are focused on:
  - Evaluating odour assessment tools and their possible application in Alberta.
  - Developing a user-friendly tool that links different odour issues to appropriate odour assessment tools and practices.
- The Complaints Task Group workplan focuses on developing tools in four areas that will support complaints management:
  - Tools for handling complaint response that will assist responders
  - Tools to support the follow-up process after a complaint is received
  - Tools that focus on tracking mechanisms
  - Tools that easily illustrate how complaints are received, documented and responded to in Alberta
- The Complaints workplan also offers some guidance around timelines and budget which will need to be refined and shared with the Odour Management Team as the task group's work progresses.

### **4. Implementation of the Workplan**

Following the overview of the Complaints workplan, the task group had a general discussion about the workplan with highlights as follows:

- The industry sector has many different processes for handling complaints and for communicating with AESRD.
- The initial response to a complaint sets the tone. Complainants will quickly become frustrated if they feel that they aren't being heard and the situation can escalate.
  - Do the people who receive the calls receive any training?
- Complainants call a variety of phone numbers. It is important that the source of the odour being referred to hear these complaints otherwise it is not possible to respond to a complaint. How do different agencies share information about complaints?
  - Different agencies will collect different information from complainants. They may not collect all the information required for an industry to properly investigate a complaint.
  - The issue of confidentiality can make it difficult for different agencies to share information.
    - How does Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) affect the ability for agencies to share information?
  - Sometimes complainants are very frustrated which can make it difficult to collect information from them.
  - Sometimes complainants don't know the appropriate number to call. This can lead to frustration.
    - It's not possible to control who the public calls. It may be possible to identify the most frequently called agencies and ensure that they know who complainants should be referred to.
    - AESRD and AER now use the same hotline.
- There are federal guidelines and limits for some odour-causing compounds such as H<sub>2</sub>S.
- How do municipalities handle odour complaints?
- Individual sensitivity can occur where one person reports an odour but a neighbour does not smell the odour.
  - This point brought up a link to the work of the Odour Assessment Task Group. How is the appropriate level of response to a complaint determined?
- Complainants will often report a health impact when reporting an odour. This links to the work of the Health Task Group.
- The task group will need to coordinate with the other task groups as well as with the team.
- The task group will be able to receive feedback from the team through team meetings and the 1-pager (see item 1).

***Action Item 1.1: Jim to share the Odour Wheel used to classify odours from composting.***

The task group went on to discuss next steps to action the Complaints workplan. Members decided that the next step is to gather information about existing complaints processes in Alberta. The task group brainstormed a list of agencies in Alberta that may have existing processes for handling odour complaints (List 1 – see below) as well as what information the task group needs to know about existing processes in order to address the Complaints workplan (List 2 – see below). The task group decided to focus first on agencies who are participating on the task group (marked with a \*) as they will be easier to access.

List 1: List of agencies in Alberta that may have existing processes for handling odour complaints:

- Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (AESRD)\*
- Alberta Energy Regulator (AER)\*

- Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB)\* (agriculture)
- Airshed zones\*
- Municipalities\* (ex. City of Edmonton)
- Environmental Public Health\*
- Northeast Capital Industrial Association (NCIA)
- Strathcona Industrial Association (SIA)
- Various Facilities
  - Edmonton Waste Management Centre\*
  - Hinton Pulp\*
  - Oil and gas\*
  - Food processing (rendering, dog food)
- Transportation

List 2: Information the task group needs to know about existing processes for handling complaints in Alberta:

- Do you have a process for handling odour complaints?
- How many odour complaints do you receive?
- How do you receive complaints? (ex. by phone, via twitter)
- What information do you collect from the complainant?
- How do you document:
  - Information recorded from the complainant?
  - What is investigated?
  - Response?
  - The follow-up process?
- Who has the initial contact with the complainant? (ex. who answers the phone)
- How are complaints triaged?
- Are complaints tracked?
  - Number of complaints?
  - By source?
- Is there any data analysis of tracked data?
- What are the timelines of the entire process from a complaint coming in to final follow-up with complainant?
- How well does the process work?
  - What works? What doesn't?
- How is information shared?
  - Links to other agencies?
  - Transparency? (the task group discussed that some air quality data are published online)
  - Is FOIP an issue with respect to release of information and confidentiality?
- How do you assess odour?
  - At what point can people smell it?
  - When are you required to notify ESRD?
    - There are guidelines for certain compounds.
- What descriptors are used to describe odours (link to odour wheel)?
- What tools are used to investigate complaints?

***Action Item 1.2: Celeste will consolidate List 2 and send it to the task group for review.***

To gather this information, the task group will hold a 1-day ‘workshop-style’ meeting with presentations from the \* agencies and time allotted for Q&A. The \* agencies will be asked to respond to the List 2 questions and to share any forms/documents/policies that they use to manage complaints. There may need to be a second round of presentations to hear from the remaining agencies in List 1 as well as any other agencies that may be identified.

***Action Item 1.3: Celeste will coordinate the \* agencies’ presentations for meeting #2.***

***Action Item 1.4: Darren will look into possible presenters from the transportation sector.***

The task group will use the information gathered through these presentations to:

- Compare different complaints processes,
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of different processes, and
- Understand how processes overlap and interact with each other.

It would also be useful for the task group to have a discussion about the attributes of a robust complaints process.

The task group discussed hiring a writer to compile the information from the presentations into a background document for the task group’s use. Members discussed if the writer should be present for the presentations. It may be useful for the writer to hear the presentations but contracting a consultant shouldn’t delay the meeting. It may be possible for presenters to include enough information in their presentations that the writer could use them as a basis for the report. Presenters may or may not be amenable to a follow-up phone call from the writer if he/she had questions. The task group agreed that the next meeting should go ahead as planned and the task group will revisit this issue.

***Action Item 1.5: Celeste will research if CASA has an appropriate writer on file who could compile information gathered on existing complaints processes in Alberta.***

The task group also discussed that it would be useful to incorporate feedback and input from complainants at the appropriate time. This feedback would be important so that the task group can understand the expectations of the public as well as receive input on the usefulness of different products. It was noted that this feedback could be gathered in a variety of ways including inviting particular members of the public to speak who are known to task group members. The task group considered that this may be something that might apply to the broader work of the team as well as other task groups, and asked Celeste to approach the team for feedback on this idea. The task group also discussed that it would be useful to speak to front line people (ex. from call centers) who handle complaints to gather their perspective and input on the complaint process.

***Action Item 1.6: Celeste will ask the Odour Management Team if feedback from complainants would be useful for the broader work of the team and/or other task groups.***

***Action Item 1.7: Celeste will research how community input was gathered by the Clean Air Strategy Project Team.***



The task group discussed how to action the cross-jurisdictional review that is outlined in Step 2 of the workplan.

***Action Item 1.8: Celeste will touch base with Jim Lapp about the cross-jurisdictional review.***

***Action Item 1.9: Celeste will research the last CASA Science Symposium to determine if any work was done around odour.***

***Action Item 1.10: Ann will conduct a scan of two documents to see if they contain any information relevant to task group work - RWDI Final Report Odour Management in British Columbia and Supporting Information for the Development an Odour Guideline for Saskatchewan (draft).***

## **5. Task Group Membership**

The task group reviewed current membership - the goal of this exercise being to check that interested parties are being engaged at the right level and in the most efficient manner, and to fill any gaps that might be identified. The task group had no adjustments to make at this time. Membership is an iterative process and the group will review it periodically. The task group noted:

- Indian Oil and Gas Canada (IOGC) could have some useful information to share.
- Food processors and auto body shops may need to be included at some point in time. There is a representative from the Alberta Food Processors Association on the Odour Management Team.
- The task group wondered if medical professionals hear odour complaints and at what point in the complaints response process should a medical professional be involved (if the complainant is reporting a health impact). The task group noted a link with the work of the Health Task Group.

***Action Item 1.11: Celeste will ask the Health Task Group for advice about how medical professionals should be included in the complaints process.***

## **6. Budget**

The task group identified a cost associated with hiring a writer to compile information about existing complaints processes in Alberta. This will need to be further scoped to determine the specific cost.

## **7. Meeting Wrap-up**

The team reviewed the action items from today's meeting.

The task group discussed that it would be most convenient for future face-to-face meetings to be held in Edmonton.

***Action Item 1.12: Celeste will poll for dates for meeting #2 in the weeks of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2014.***

Objectives for the next meeting:

- Hear presentations from the \* agencies
- Discuss next steps

The meeting adjourned at 2:55pm.