

To: West Valley Citizen Task Force  
From: Melinda Holland  
Subject: Summary of the August 7, 2001 Future Site Use Work Group Meeting  
Date: August 13, 2001

### **Next Meeting**

The next Future Site Use Work Group meeting will be scheduled as soon as NYSERDA research and development staff are available. Melinda Holland will contact workgroup members about possible dates.

The next full Task Force meeting is scheduled for:

**Date: Tuesday, September 18, 2001**  
Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.  
Location: Ashford Office Complex  
9030 Route 219, West Valley, NY

If you have questions or comments regarding the upcoming meeting or about this summary, please contact Melinda Holland at (864) 457-4202 or Tom Attridge at (716) 942-2453.

### **CTF Attendees**

Attending were: Paul Piciulo, Bill King, Mark Mitskovski, Nevella McNeil, John Pfeffer, Pete Scherer, Tim Siepel, Ray Vaughan, and Alice Williams. Not attending were: Eric Wohlers, and Joe Patti.

### **Meeting Summary**

The Future Use Work Group meeting began with a presentation by Joe Purcell of Diversified Controls & Emerging Technologies International. Mr. Purcell was invited to speak to the Work Group about a thermal treatment technology called "Melt-Mizer." He explained how the technology works and current efforts to develop a mobile plant which could be used for environmental remediation. The mobile plant is almost complete and should begin operating this fall. Task Force members asked several questions including how much silica or combustible materials the plant could handle. Mr. Purcell responded that they have a proprietary process that allows it to handle significant concentrations of silica, but he did not have the information on combustibles. Mr. Purcell also responded that he did not have data on the treatment of radioactive wastes, but that the mobile plant is set up for remotely controlled processing. In response to a question about how this technology ties into the Work Group's investigation of future use options, another CTF member replied that a mobile system like this could have application if a research center is located at the site.

Next, Dr. Ron Palmer made a presentation on his proposal that the site become the West Valley Center for Waste Management [a copy of his slides is attached to this summary]. Dr. Palmer presented his proposal for conversion of the West Valley site's expertise and facilities into a research and education center focused on waste management and remediation. He felt that customers for this facility could

include: other DOE facilities; international waste treatment/management concerns; domestic waste management companies; state and local governments; university and private laboratories; and nuclear power utilities. To make his proposal workable, he suggested that the mind-set at DOE would have to change and congressional action might be needed to create the new mission for the site. The center could be managed by a university consortium or a non-profit organization. When questioned by a Task Force member on how the center would support itself, he replied that fees for workshops, courses, and use of facilities would be charged. He also suggested that private foundations like the Rockefeller Foundation be asked for support. DOE National Labs have a program called "Work for Others" where scientists can use the Lab facilities to do work for others so long as it is not in competition with the private sector. DOE also allows staff to be adjunct professors at universities while working at DOE sites. When questioned about his near term and long term vision for the site, Dr. Palmer responded that his long term vision is to see the site become a 'green field.' In the short term (30 - 50 years), the focus would be on developing and testing new technologies for cleaning up the remaining contamination at West Valley and transferring that knowledge/technology to other sites/interests.

Work Group members stated that Dr. Palmer's vision was similar to their goals and suggested looking to the University of Buffalo as a partner. A Work Group member mentioned that you need a really good potential for success to bring new businesses or people to West Valley. Another agreed saying that future use at West Valley must have multiple functions/uses in order to succeed. He suggested that if the goal is to bring the site to 'green field' status, that it needs to be done in 10 - 15 [not 30 - 50] years to get global attention and interest. The site needs to become a model of excellence in this endeavor to have something to market to others. Another member mentioned the desire to keep control of the project on a regional/local basis to avoid a university or business having the ability to shut down the entire center. Work Group members suggested that the process presented by Dr. Palmer for developing a center be reversed by getting public/community vision first then taking that vision to the agencies and the congressional delegation.

Another Work Group member expressed a concern with university research facilities tendency to promote their own technologies whether users want that technology or not. This could create a conflict with people who want to incubate new technologies. He mentioned that the University of Buffalo technology incubation site is reported to be shutting down as an example of this problem. He stated that we need private sector involvement to create the dynamic of competition and search for marketability to speed up the results. The Corning Glass and Alfred University cooperative venture in the NYS ceramic corridor was cited as a good example to follow.

A Work Group member mentioned that they should look to address the institutional interrelationships that will need to be developed or resolved such as the relationships between universities; local/state/federal government; industry; etc. This should be a topic for a future Work Group meeting.

As requested at the last Work Group meeting, Tim Siepel summarized his findings on the National Center for Eco-Industrial Development. This is a joint venture of Cornell University and the University of Southern California with grant support to help create new eco-industrial projects in economically distressed areas. Tim contacted them via email and received a reply that they would like to work with the CTF on future use of the site. Tim agreed to follow up and request more detailed information.

John Pfeffer shared information he gathered on NERPs [National Environmental Research Parks]. He noted that NERPs seem to be a dying idea as DOE appears to be trying to end or cut back these projects. It also seems that NERPs are restricted to federally owned land, thus it wouldn't apply to West Valley. NERPs are focused mostly on ecology related research and there is a much broader research universe that West Valley could focus upon. Another Work Group member suggested that NYSERDA start a state environmental research park at West Valley. A DOE representative mentioned that technical talent is already starting to leave the site for vitrification related jobs at Hanford and the Savannah River Site as West Valley's vitrification process is winding down. She went on to say that stopping the loss of technical workers may not be possible at this time, but creation of a technical center at West Valley could draw some of them back in the future.

In response to one member's suggestion that the West Valley center should focus on Great Lakes research, several other members expressed concern that the site is not located on Lake Erie which could limit its appeal. But it was suggested that Great Lakes research be one of the goals listed in the report.

Next, Mark Mitskovski reviewed his revised outline for a West Valley future site use report which he explained is meant to be a primer and would need to be followed by more detailed analysis with economic projections. Mark stated that he estimates it may take his volunteers about six months to complete the report given the amount of research that needs to be done. The Work Group then commented on Mark's revised report outline.

A NYSERDA representative asked what role the Work Group sees for NYSERDA, adding that if it were to run a research facility NYSERDA would have to change its usual way of doing business. Work Group members asked NYSERDA for a presentation on NYSERDA's research and development programs. Another member asked to learn more about how NYSERDA does business (i.e. works with other governmental agencies, businesses, and educational institutions). Paul Piciulo offered to check with the Albany office to see when the appropriate people would be available to meet with the Work Group. Once possible dates have been identified, Melinda Holland will contact Work Group members.

In the outline section 4 - Potential Opportunities, Work Group members stressed the need to identify specific products, services, training/educational offerings, and other public benefits that the site and future use projects can offer. It was also suggested that the industrial/community development authorities in Cattaraugus and Erie Counties be added to the outline. It was suggested that the report must have enough appeal to attract the interest of those with money for these types of projects, such as universities, industry, etc. Another member suggested that it is important to provide a good description of the human resources, and physical resources, and opportunities currently available at the site. It was suggested that the report be written like a business plan which uses the "SWOT" approach to analyze Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

A Work Group member suggested that the report could be written more quickly if various Work Group members volunteered to help write the first draft of some of the sections. Another offered that Sections I and III are basically complete based on the information to be provided by DOE and NYSERDA. Mark stated that he thought too much research work needed to be conducted and that he proceed with the help of his unidentified volunteers to do the first draft as quickly as possible. He added that there needs to be a cut-off date for research and ideas so the report can be drafted.

A member suggested that the Work Group should find a way to obtain input from other “publics” beyond the CTF and site - this could be done in parallel with the report drafting. For example, the outline lists opportunity areas like agriculture, yet the CTF has no one involved in agriculture. Another member commented that the group needs to find out how the U.S. Department of Agriculture define its research needs, how they create new research stations, and whether they are interested in partnerships.

A DOE representative suggested that the report also needed information on current subcontracting at the site. WVDP subcontracts out approximately \$43 million a year. She will provide subcontractor information for inclusion in the report.

NYSERDA and Melinda Holland will attempt to schedule another Work Group meeting before the next full CTF meeting [which is set for September 18<sup>th</sup>] and notify members. The Work Group will make a report to the full CTF at the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Observer Comments**

There were no observer comments.

### **Action Items:**

- Tim Siepel will follow up with Cornell University and request more detailed information about their Eco-Industrial Development Grant and potential applications at West Valley.
- NYSERDA offered to check with the Albany office to see when the appropriate staff would be available to meet with the Work Group . Once possible dates have been identified, Melinda Holland will contact Work Group members;
- DOE will provide subcontractor information and more detailed information on skills/education of current site workers for inclusion in the report.