

Content Outline

1) Usable Quotes

We shouldn't equate public involvement with meetings. Maynard Plahuta

[Meetings, of many kinds, are probably the most utilized of all the public involvement activities. Meetings are attempts at direct democracy, but often provide only limited opportunities for members of the public to engage with issues and decision makers. In many cases, this engagement is brief and comes only after the issues have been framed and a narrow menu of choices has been developed. In the worst cases, meetings provide "hollow participation in which citizens merely make noise in some political ritual" rather than "real influence over outcomes." (Frank Laird as quoted on page seven of the Hanford Advisory White Paper)]

[Indeed, the reliance on public hearings as a mainstay of public participation is one of the weaknesses of the administrative process in the United States, in part because of the unequal relationship of citizens to government officials. . . . Public hearings typically do not give citizens a share in decision making. (Daniel J. Fiorino as quoted on page seven of the Hanford Advisory White Paper)]

Trying to do both in-depth public involvement and public education in the same meeting is unsuccessful. Norm Dyer

Evidence of quality public involvement is when plans change in accordance with public suggestions. The public should have a say in how public involvement is conducted. An ongoing relationship fosters trust in the public. Bill Kinsella

Public involvement at Hanford is not about influencing decisions; it is about putting issues on the radar screen of decision-makers . . . public involvement helps decision-makers know what they should care about. Todd Martin

2) Key Documents

-Hanford Advisory White Paper

A thoughtful and comprehensive discussion of how one identifies the goals, the mechanisms, and the techniques for the effective implementation of a Hanford public involvement activity. The section devoted to the "Goals and Evaluation Criteria for Public Involvement" is especially well done.

-HAB Advice #137 (11/02/02)

This advice addresses the importance of providing timely notice "to attract and engage the public to become involved in Hanford cleanup decision-making." As noted in the advice, to be responsible, timely notice must be consistent, substantive, and regular.

-HAB Advice #169 (04/07/05)

The subject of advice #169 is Budget Workshops and stresses the importance of seeking public input early enough for the input to be meaningful. Furthermore the advice notes the importance of regulator feedback so that the public can see how the input was or was not used.

-HAB Advice #191 (06/02/06)

A succinct discussion of the central principles—accountability, active facilitation, collaboration—and values one should consider in designing an effective State of the Site meeting.

-HAB Advice #222 (09/04/09)

Working from a short list of objectives for State of the Site meetings, Advice #222 provides a concrete description of the steps necessary for producing an effective State of the Site meeting given those objectives.

-HAB Advice #239 (11/05/10)

Advice #239 identifies and addresses the overarching principles, concerns and practices that necessarily ground meaningful public involvement.

3) Supporting Sources

-Draft Proposal: Hanford State of the Site

A comprehensive review of State of the Site issues, concerns, and central questions prepared by Nolan Curtis for the TPA (02/03/09)

-Landscape View of Public Involvement

A discussion and summary of the informal survey Ken Niles prepared for the December 2009 PIC Workshop on public involvement (04/2-3/2009, 25-28)

-State of the Site Meetings

Sharon Braswells' excellent history of SOS meetings and the PIC committee discussion that followed (08/05/2009, 15-20)

-State of the Site (SOS) Meetings and Ideas for Improving Public Turnout

A PIC discussion of how to contemporary methods to improve SOS attendance (09/02/09, 5-7)

-Advice Regarding State of the Site Meetings

The summary of the discussion that attended the introduction of Ken Niles' draft advice concerning State of the Site meetings to the HAB Board (09/3-4/09, 15-19)

-Strategic Planning for Public Involvement

The results of a Sounding Board based on material developed by Liz Mattson for the PIC (02/4-5/10, 14-18)

4) **Persistent Core Principals**

-The public have a right to the information they need to make informed and responsible decisions about their future.

-Those responsible for Hanford cleanup must provide a comprehensive and public accounting of activities, performance, and challenges related to the cleanup.

-All persons affected by or interested in Hanford cleanup are rightful participants in decision making.

-The public must be provided with opportunities to participate in Hanford decision processes, and encouraged to participate in those processes.

5) **Persistent Core Expectations**

State of the Site meetings should

-provide the public with information about the TPA and the government are doing by addressing substantive issues in a timely fashion

-promote board and inclusive public participation on a regular (on going/predictable) and understandable manner

-include a genuine dialog (i.e. all parties speak, all parties listen)

-include an evaluation structure that is predictable, responsive to participant concerns, and self-correcting

-employ a mechanism for the development of SOS agendas that address public views and suggestions drawn from the communities in which SOS meetings are scheduled

-operate in a manner that is consistent with the goals and values of an open government

6) **SOS Mechanics**

State of the Site meetings should

-employ a “Town Hall” format, if the SOS audience recognizes how this format supports the purposes/goals of the meeting

-provide a general glossary of critical technical terms and familiar acronyms for members of the audience in conjunction with a printed agenda

-rely on meeting sites that are readily accessed through public transportation (Community Colleges, public schools, state-owned buildings)

-encourage the use of name tags by potential speakers and organization participants

-feature presentations that are succinct and relevant to members of the audience

-seek to schedule SOS meetings in Spokane, Yakima, La Grande/Baker City, Portland, Seattle, Tri-Cities, and Hood River/The Dalles on a regular basis

-employ a meeting moderator who is familiar with the issues, the audience, and the goals/purposes of the meeting

-make use of mechanisms that let the public know their comments are being heard—flip charts, evaluation forms, opinion forms

7) **Questions that should be answered**

-What is the dominant purpose of a SOS meeting: Education and/or Discussion?

-What is the most efficient and effective way to provide the general public with information to help them decide what cleanup issues they want to focus on and how they can participate in addressing those cleanup issues? What does the public need from the Agencies, the HAB?

-What will effective, meaningful, involved, informed public participation in Hanford cleanup look like? What will it cost to achieve effective, meaningful, involved, informed public participation in Hanford cleanup?

8) **A recommendation**

Although it does appear that SOS meetings presented in a “Town Hall” format are not consistently successful, many of these meetings have been productive and do provide good contact between the public and the decision makers. It also seems that if sustained, careful planning takes place, the “Town Hall” meetings can be quite successful. To that end it is recommended that the PIC support a transition SOS meeting format that encourages:

-six SOS regularly scheduled meetings year (three in March-April/three in September-October) to take place in Hood River/the Dalles, La Grande/Baker City, Portland, Seattle, Spokane, the Tri-Cities on a rotating basis

-a meeting format that recognizes three separate activities: a one hour “meet and greet” session, a one hour topic specific session (budget, tank waste, health/safety topics identified by community interests), and a ninety minute general question/answer session

Ideally these SOS meetings will be regularly scheduled, widely advertised, and held in venues that are easily accessible to the public. Given the planning difficulties, it is critical that pairing SOS meetings with HAB/Agency activities is necessary. Initially at least two HAB/Agency activities linked to the SOS meeting can be considered optimal beginning during the 2011 calendar year.