

MINUTES
STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY BOARD
Marietta, Georgia
February 2, 2005

Present were Stakeholder Advisory Board members Alice Champagne, Doug Easter, Jim Hamilton (Chair), James Magnus, Robert Ringer, Karim Shahlaee, Greg Teague, Ben Thompson, and Burns Wetherington. Members Mark Byrd, Jo Ann Macrina, Aaron Varner and Connie Wiggins were not in attendance. Also present were Soil and Water Commission employees Richard King, John Carden and Michaelyn Rozar. Interested parties in attendance included Bettie Sleeth (Homebuilders of Georgia), Seth Yurman (Georgia Water and Pollution Control Association), Laura Beall (Council for Quality Growth), Michael Barnhart (Environmental Consultant), Butch Watson (Gaskins Surveying Company), Bobby Betterton (Betterton Surveying and Design), Terry M. Scarborough (Scarborough Land Surveys), Lane S. Bishop (Bishop & Associates), Joseph M. Saurge (Registered Land Surveyor), Dwight Kilby (Registered Land Surveyor), Michael Kelley (Registered Land Surveyor), Doug Sherrill (Registered Land Surveyor), Doug Sherrill (Registered Land Surveyor), Keith Kilby, and Robert Breedlove (Blairsville Surveying Company).

Mr. Hamilton opened the meeting by welcoming Board members and guests. He requested that all parties in attendance introduce themselves.

Agenda Items

1. Review and approve December January 19, 2005 meeting minutes.

On a motion by Dr. Shahlaee and seconded by Mr. Wetherington the minutes of the January 19, 2005 SAB meeting was approved contingent upon further review. The Board agreed to send emails if any changes were necessary.

2. Schedule of future meetings.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed recent SAB activity stating that the Board had discussed finishing the review of course curricula by March. He stated that the Commission is concerned about the timeline, as Commission staff will still need to prepare course materials and presentations. He recommended that the Board revisit the meeting schedule and recommended that a subcommittee be formed to meet weekly and review the details associated with each course. Dr. Shahlaee agreed. Mr. Thompson agreed stating that the subcommittee should bring back a strong outline for each course to the full Board. Mr. Wetherington asked if subcommittee meetings would be open to the public and Mr. Hamilton stated that all meetings would be open. Mr. Wetherington agreed that it would take a more aggressive meeting schedule to get through all the course discussion. Mr. Teague recommended using email to speed up communication between members. The Board agreed to forming a subcommittee and the first meeting was scheduled for February 9, 2005 at the Commission's Region III office in Conyers.

3. Review of Draft Proctoring Requirements

Mr. Hamilton asked Ms. Rozar to present a draft of proposed proctoring requirements prepared by Commission staff (a copy of this document is attached to these minutes). Ms. Rozar reviewed the proposed requirements.

Mr. Brumbelow (GUCA) asked if there would be applicants would be charged a fee for proctor training. Ms. Rozar stated that there would not be an application fee but there may be a course fee.

Ms. Sleeth (HBAG) asked that language be added to include associations in scheduling proctors. She stated that many instructors would want to let an association or other entity handle scheduling and logistics. She added that she would work with Ms. Rozar and offer some recommendations.

4. General Level IA Fundamentals Course Discussion

Dr. Shahlaee stated that he had received Mr. Magnus's written comments regarding Level IA training and that the Commission would look at each and every point.

Mr. Magnus asked how courses and course requirements would be publicized. Mr. Hamilton stated that each SAB member would need to convey information to his or her respective groups. Mr. Teague stated that ignorance of the law would not be an excuse to avoid certification and groups such as Associated County Commissioners of Georgia and Georgia Municipal Association could be useful in publicizing the new requirements.

Mr. Breedlove (Blairsville Land Surveying) stated that information could be given through the Commission and NRCS offices to notify plan designers and contractors. Mr. Bishop agreed and added that local newspapers could be used for those who do not have internet access. Ms. Rozar stated that the Commission issues press releases on a regular basis and has a plan multi-pronged plan for publicizing the new program and its requirements.

Mr. Hamilton directed conversation back to the Level IA Fundamentals Course. Mr. Magnus stated that his written comments included some points about merging and deleting slides and stated that overall the Commission had a done a good job preparing the presentations.

Dr. Shahlaee stated that he agreed with Mr. Magnus's major points about combining presentations and that a presentation had been sent to Mark Wyland at EPD to review.

Mr. Magnus stated that structural practices vary depending on location. He asked how these different practices would be addressed.

Dr. Shahlaee stated that he has received feedback stating that soil type and topography need to be taken into account. He added that a core presentation would be needed for use all over the state and that a vegetative presentation would include differences for the coastal, piedmont and mountain regions.

Mr. Hamilton stated that part of the problem is that a contract may just work in a certain part of the state while engineers do work all over Georgia. He also stated that there are some DOT that are over and above the Green Manual but because of the law cites the Green Manual the more stringent requirements would have to be differentiated.

Dr. Shahlaee stated that these differences could be handled the same way that local buffer requirements are handled and that while not time can be removed from presentations, perhaps some time could be added at the end of the day.

The Board continued to discuss the issue.

Mr. Teague stated that because the certification is good statewide it would have to reflect state minimum requirements and cover all of Georgia.

Mr. Easter stated that it is more important for inspectors and designer to understand the difference but that Level IA training needs to be universal.

Mr. Teague stated that classes held in Athens will include people from all over the state and therefore the course may not be able to be tailored based on the location the course is offered. He commented that too much regionalization of the material could lead to trouble.

Dr. Shahlaee stated that the Level IA course should offer practical information.

Mr. Magnus stated that individuals who have gone through DOT training may answer questions incorrectly on the exam because they have been trained according to DOT's more stringent standards.

Dr. Shahlaee stated that the same problem might apply to local government standards such as buffer requirements.

Mr. Teague stated that the certification is not for DOT or local governments like Cobb County, it is a state certification.

Mr. Thompson stated that the problem could be avoided by wording question correctly. He recommended that questions could begin with a phrase citing state requirements. Mr. Easter agreed stating that the proctor could read an opening statement saying "this exam covers state requirements and not DOT or LIA standards".

Ms. Champagne stated that individuals need to study before taking the exam and be prepared.

Mr. Hamilton commented that the problem could be addressed in the proctor's opening statement, a FAQ document and good word of mouth. He asked that the subcommittee review the Level IA agenda and Mr. Magnus' comments. He requested that Dr. Shahlaee step through the Level IB agenda.

5. Overview of Level IB Course

Dr. Shahlaee reviewed the proposed Level IB course agenda (a copy has been attached to these minutes). He added that this was a draft and would like feedback from SAB members.

Mr. Hamilton clarified that the Level IB course is intended for regulatory inspectors or a company hired by a LIA to do on-site inspections.

Mr. Wetherington asked why the agenda needed to include wetlands and streambank restoration adding that it would confuse state and federal requirements.

Mr. Teague stated that more time should be spent on structural practices not designing plans. Inspectors need to know how to read plans and enforce regulations. He further stated that inspectors need to know proper installation of structural measures and that devoting only 2 hours to structural measures would be a disservice. He recommended that one of the two days be focused on BMPs.

Dr. Shahlaee stated that for every hour of the course, 40 minutes should be spent on instruction and 20 minutes should be spent on discussion. He said that it would be possible to lengthen the structural practices section.

Mr. Easter recommended that the Level IB agenda address common malpractices that an inspector might expect to see in the field.

The Board discussed the role of the regulatory inspector in the field.

Ms. Beall recommended that time be spent on reading plans and enforcement of buffers.

Mr. Easter asked if the Commission had done any work on the Train-the-Trainer course. Dr. Shahlaee referred to the material included in the SAB member notebook.

Mr. Teague asked if the Commission could have an FTP site for SAB members to access PowerPoint presentations that are too large to be emailed.

Mr. Hamilton thanked Board members and visitors for their input, reminded them about the subcommittee meeting scheduled for the following Wednesday and adjourned the meeting.

Submitted by

Michaelyn Rozar