

NRC Board Retreat Meeting

Thursday, August 29, 2019, 9 am-noon

Following the conclusion of the 2019 Resource Recycling Conference in New Orleans, LA, the National Recycling Coalition Board, including newly elected members Marialyce Pedersen and Alec Cooley, met for an annual Retreat. The seventeen (?) members in attendance formed four teams, which were instructed to discuss the following topics:

- Market Development
- ROC+NRC Relationship
- Membership
- Policy
- *(+ Education/Professional Training/Conferences)*

Gary: We need a conference committee or I am leaving.

Maggie: And where does “Library” go?

Dave: That should be a committee.

Rick: You have areas of focus. We will get it done with conferences and training.

Dave: Market Development has to stand alone, because of Nina’s platform, etc. I agree with “Conference Development” as another topic.

Chantal: What about education and professional training? Is that good?

(Group agreement—added to list above.)

Chantal: Prior to breaking out into small groups, Chantal reminded members to ensure that all goals are “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound).

Be cognizant where different areas feed into committees. For example, if we use “conference” as a potential example, you then need to identify which committee it goes to, which is likely “Conference”. Then we need to think who beyond the room needs to participate, and come up with skeleton dates, thinking backward, being realistic. Then we’d send it out to the board members who aren’t here. In late September, we’ll be on our way to having our 2020 plans set.

Dave: Remember that others that aren’t here can be tapped for work. Also be cognizant of Sarah’s time—20 hours go quick.

Rick: To keep the board informed, a committee chair should be there.

Maggie: Bob Hollis?

Dave: Bob has limited time. We are paying him. Like Sarah he’s doing more than he’s paid. HE feels he’s done everything he needs to do and it’s now the committee’s task.

COMMITTEE REPORT-OUTS

Group 1 (Mary*, Susie, Sarah, Antonio and Marialyce)

Marialyce will summarize the status of all 50 states + PR ROCs (working with Sarah, others with history) and provide recommendations for next steps to improve relationships.

NRC needs a person to make sure all the ROC positions are filled!

Sarah: I want to stress the importance of surveying ROs. Also, the open rate (of NRC emails) is very low. Before we go out and survey, we've got to increase member desire to open NRC emails.

Lynne: It's a google group return address. If I sent an email to Mary, saying, "Please fill out this survey," potentially we might get more responses to a survey.

Sarah: We don't use google group—I communicate to members directly.

Susie: Regarding the auto-signing initiatives like SumofUs, we would purchase a package from Salsa. We would have to account for it so it is legal.

Maggie: The more it's automated, the less we have to do!

Mary: Big idea—leveraging our member assets in policy communication and development. Wouldn't it be cool if NRC was housing and managing the policy and opinions of all of the ROC members? I think it would be really neat in involving ROC in policy positions in a way that surveyed them—using whatever tool. Then we could communicate that back out to them so they understand how everyone else is leaning on policy. TRP is asking for data about programs, and there's some other stuff there. Wouldn't it be cool to spit back out to the ROC, "60% think bottle bills are an effective strategy." It would be really helpful to have data and numbers. I think we could do a lot without workshops. It gives us legitimacy.

Nina: A dashboard that shows these policy positions.

Gary: RRS has been doing this instantaneous phone call—Zoom. We could be doing this to our entire membership.

Mary: We've had a few threats legislatively from surly legislators that want to get rid of funding. We have been effective in squashing that just by having a call to action.

Sarah: I hear people saying that regarding container deposit issues, "The NRC did not reflect my opinion. Where is my vote and what if I don't support that?" So that's the opportunity--that the NRC could reach out and say, "We are looking for feedback," then ask how it was taken, how it was received...and is how they respond to the NRC reflecting the ED's opinion (alone)?; was it the whole Board? (Is there stark division between official current state policy and the majority of ROC members?) The ROC has a voice in our policy discussion *not equal but important feedback* we will take under advisement. For example, Jordan at STAR supports bottle bills but his state won't let him vote for it. The click rate may improve as we engage more with ROCs. I'm a firm believer that when you have a chance for public engagement via survey monkey or other tool—why not use it!

Susan: What you said was the same conversation that happened in our group. I know at least 4 ways the communications broke down on container policy—we will have successfully sent our message to our members. You just told me something I hadn't thought about—not everybody's at every meeting. You can never successfully pass information on to those in your state. I had two conversations with board members in two states where we had communicated container policy to an ED and that ED had never said a word to their board—they hadn't heard about it.

One ROC member condensed the message, changing the meaning, and sent it on to their board! It needs to be a PDF that's locked down on our site. Out of all the organizations we tried to communicate with, I bet the success rate was really low. If it goes to all members.

Nina: One of our goals in doing inventory is to collect direct outreach to each RO and very proactively have board members in our database too.

Stephen: We have the database and peoples' votes count. This is of value to boards to know if their thinking is aligned with their members. There may be gaps (to be addressed).

Susan: I talked to three organizations, and it was *their* failure in 2 of 3 cases!

Sarah: when we're creating policies and listening to members, we need to get their opinions.

Mick: I'm a multi-state member and only one mentioned the container bill.

Lynne: If someone asked me for members list, I would not. WE have an agreement. I think sharing emails is an issue. I don't think we have anything that explains how we use and promise not to use their lists.

Gary: There are affiliate agreements, but no terms. Do we need to review it? Does it include email policies?

ACTION ITEM: Review Affiliate Agreements.

Mary: I think it would be helpful if you guys assigned us tasks—people to call for fundraising, etc. Tell us what to do so we do that. Everybody needs to take one task.

Susie: If we are hearing of issues on the website, communications committee can field information.

Group 2 (Nina*, Gary, Chantal, Dave(?))

Serve as authority on information sharing. Empower our policy committee to bring in other experts. Why do we want policy? Market dev is issue—we are lacking DEMAND. Going to NRC roots, decided to focus on BRBA. Have it ready to launch by America Recycles Day. Leverage platform of WasteWise. Data fields to capture info—data to attract those. Ties into WARM—can track emissions.

Goal to get 100 more businesses—recognized for using recycled. Don't want to be siloed. Provide value to members. Recognize giants of recycling economy. Support ROs to give them the BRBA widget to their website. If they bring in sponsors, they split profits—giving them something and giving them funding! Really bringing momentum of NRC in early 90s.

ZW Conference—where to focus resources in terms of promotion. Want to capture spicy bits from conference and workshop—highlights of where NRC is going, offer resources to ROs, re-focus on ZW conference—how to inspire support. Concerned about using common language—how do we tie in graphically and wording—Circular Economy, stimulating economy—how we distill this experience?

We didn't get into voting blocks

We are in support of individual members.

Propose share-able badge—"I just joined NRC..."

Chantal: Distressed ROs, could provide in-kind benefits as a national network—beyond just money.

Nina: As different ROs adopt the (Market Dev) campaign, they can get sponsors—which will drop into InfoExchange.

MP: We could propose using the USGBC ARC TOOL to report zero-waste achievements.

Gary: Sign MOU, More input on topics and speakers, graphics for promotions and newsletter, registration link by NCRA or NRC.

Nina: Do you have archive docs to feed NRC Library?

Chantal: Proposed tagline—"Advancing the recycling economy." The ZW conference can plug into this.

Dave: One thing that will affect committee structure—how do you incorporate regional representation on your committees? Have an affiliate rep serving on each committee—automatically incorporate ROs.

Gary: Need new regional leads for South Coast and West Coast.

May want to re-name BRBA. BRC?

Group 3 (Leslie, Gary, Rick)

Vehicle is educating and engaging members—allow us to look at new membership structure.

Conference—critical point at hotel relationship (non-binding). Incorporate the circular economy, branding and look.

We need a sponsorship plan—big—for the entire org—how to fund org—this is the vehicle. Looking at whole new strategic partnership plan—needs to be put together ASAP.

Nina and Sarah—working closely to create sponsorship plan—who are we accepting money from?

Gary: Board did adopt principles—firewall-- connection between policy dev and sponsorship. But do we want Exxon or WM on our platforms.

Dave: Better to have them at the table.

Leslie: If we aren't talking, who is?

Rick: 2-3 years, you get used to millions, then they start to give you caveats.

Nina: Patron of recycled market development—may not last long—need to catapult

Leslie: Face to Face ROC meeting at ZW Conference

Leverage our adopted policies and solicit input

On Market Dev, we support workshops proposed, and tools.

NRC+ROC relationship—plus Membership, we put together. Do survey, in conjunction with ROC. We have email list that we send, to OUR list—some concern that info we send ROC isn't going to members—we should communicate directly.

On Policy, we support Container Deposit Committee, and ROC. Support communication, improvement, what went wrong—need to solicit feedback and communicate to members, WITH support of ROC.

We definitely focus on the national level, but be a resource for states that support national positions—we are not speaking on behalf of ROCs, just the national?

Stephen: Does site say that (views are that of NRC, not necessarily ROCs...)?

Dave: \$2500 scholarship for workshop in San Antonio.

Group 4 (Maggie)

Typed, on zip drive (PLEASE PROVIDE TO MARIALYCE so I can add to Action Items matrix!)

Summary Discussion (all group members)

- Good to see redundancy and consensus
- Members who aren't familiar with the NRC's previous Strategic Plan felt disoriented. (Susan; Marialyce seconds)
- The food was good
- There were many, very open communications—really frank, got to heart of issues in a way we hadn't in a long time—the value was incredible. Trust was built.
- It was well organized.
- Next time—would open polling help? Sure.
- Board members should be provided with ample background information on issues so they come to meetings with similar awareness of what we will be addressing. (Stephen)
- A Board Packet—an agenda and background materials—would be helpful. (Gary)
- An onboarding function—like a binder. (Rick)
- Mick: And we do need a mid-year face-to-face board meeting (annually).



COMMITTEE 1 WORKING GROUP RAW NOTES

Marialyce, Susie, Sarah, Mary, Antonio

Market Development

MP: I think we should cede this to Nina's plan to build out InfoExchange, etc. (Market Development Platform)

Sarah: And let's not do same conference. Let's think what they should be—what happens next? Is it moving? What's the next level?

Mary: For the purposes of connecting customers, etc.

Sarah: I think members are seeing the value here. This year, members got a \$60 workshop price, and non-members paid \$70.

Mary: We should always offer discounts to members on every event.

Susie: Just try to think, with those 5 topics—look at each through the lense of other plan elements.

Mary: Maybe keep policy under the policy section.

Sarah: What does market development look like?

Susie: So Market Development is we do workshops?

MP: No, it's also tools and resources that we promote to the business community, well beyond our current membership, via Nina's InfoExchange plan.

Susie: So at workshops, we would train people on using the tools

Sarah: Conference attendees are realizing that successful states have formed statewide positions. Part of the conversation is, "How did you create that in your state?"

Susie: So now when we talk about this to people, we stress that someone from the state's economic development department is there. These people will feel a role as a liaison.

Sarah: Marketing comes in, to target state-level employees. It's grassroots heavy.

Mary: Target specific audiences for market development.

MP: So we would be training these state ROCs on how to do this...

Susie: We would ask did you invite Chamber of Commerce members, your state economic development offices?

Sarah: We've been lucky—Sarah Pierpont, Jordan—they are incredibly involved (ROCs). In Atlanta—we had to do it all.

Susie: That has to be a condition of us doing a workshop--we must have a strong co-host (ROC or other).

Mary: Do we need a contract explaining this?

Sarah: Yes, we would list out what their lift would be...

ACTION ITEM: Checklist/criteria and standard agreement language for workshops and conferences conducted in partnership with state people, ROCs. Need to add "sustainment" (post conf actions, lessons learned) to agreements.

Susie: So when we say to the co-host, they would bring sponsorship—that would be on the checklist.

Sarah: If, say, they didn't raise enough money...like if we'd agreed to pay a speaker--they only get the financial split if they met the financial contribution threshold.

Mary: You could even say there's an expectation to split the costs...

Sarah: Essentially, there are no proceeds—the time going in is not counted.

Mary: If you were to come to NC (which I hope happens), CRA would not expect to not contribute.

Susie: We should look for CEU credits. Employers may wish to see this.

Sarah: NM did that—they had it right on the form.

Susie: We are looking for ROCs to see our workshops as relationship builders, mutually beneficial
Sarah: This is important survey question—are you interested; can you support them? We are only as good as our RO's—we need that partnership.

Susie: What is role of RRS?

Sarah: We don't pay them—they're a consulting firm—they're getting their name out. Pro-bono. They are good, resourceful, they bring speakers, they pay their own expense.

Susie: What about Nina? Can she train the trainers?

Sarah: Her technical people talk to our tech people (Bob) – to take widget to create entrée into the superworld (of info).

Susie: How technical is it (adding a widget)?

Mary: I have people who know how to do that.

Sarah: The Markets Committee is great—they meet every week.

Antonio: I suggest, bring a showcase, where it has function. In Puerto Rico, talking to the Governor, he put us under Natural Resources—the Solid Waste agency. It doesn't fit—it's Economic Development. Commodities are resources. I don't see Market Development person in Solid Waste to comply with regulations. Economic Development has incentives, that they have to create markets. Companies don't have money...we can also make small things of glass—artisan-made. Many options.

MP: Maybe a virtual showcase?

Antonio: Maybe an agency to promote this.

Sarah: A lot more people will want this than we can take it to. We also get requests to bring it as a track or do a workshop. If demand increases, is it more than a one-day workshop? Could NRC help dig deeper?

Susie/Sarah: What does it look like to grow?

Susie: At conferences, people will bring out case studies. People that have glass.

MP: Yes a virtual tool, to see how building businesses using recycled feedstock happens.

Antonio: We need to have the industry to bring the new ideas.

Susie: People can make a pact—"Let's continue talking once a month..."

Sarah: The workshops have speakers from each sector in the morning (we need this, this this). The afternoon is to form groups to execute ideas. Then the RO has to take over.

Mary: Which committees would need to work on the above? Communications, Policy, Fundraising, Market Council and Membership. Many!

ROC+NRC Relationship

Mary: Some ideas are already on the board.

MP: I/we need to make table to assess each state's ROC status, to see where follow-up (or relation building or rebuilding) is needed.

Sarah: We need like a liaison. Someone from our board. It needs to be board member to nurture relationships.

Mary: It's about coming to the ROC and showing effort. It's symbolic.

Sarah: Because of what we went through, we cannot over-communicate.

Sarah: Working in city government for 20 years, if people are saying they got hurt, you let everybody come to meetings and speak. Why don't we just poll them?

Susie: We've assumed Dave is doing this? We need new caretaker, someone to make calls. They may have to travel and meet and get to know people. Dave is elegant at that.

Sarah: Yes, we need someone to listen and deal with the tension.

ACTION ITEM: Propose that a voting board member be designated a liaison to ROC Leader. Amy Roth (?) to nurture relationship.

Sarah: Something needs to come out of that---a charge, list of what ROC has to commit to (attend ROC meeting at annual conference...)

Mary: Look through lense of board member.

Susie: Not a fellow ED on the ROC, so it's not just part of the scrum.

Mary: An ED plus a board member can be best—understands both worlds.

Sarah: it should be the right one. Right now, pick the right person—

Susie: One of each—someone removed, someone in the thick. To ensure the message doesn't get skewed.

Sarah: We feel strongly there should be this liaison.

Anthony: ROCs have this structure. WE can tell them, not just important to attend ROC meetings, but to attend NRC meetings.

Sarah: Expectations have been formalized before. There is a charge to the ROC.

Susie: Should we review?

YES. ACTION ITEM: We'd like to review the expectations of ROCs. Add database management.

Sarah: I think there are some reach issues.

Susie: On the education of the ROC, the condition of the d-bases are bad. Is there an opportunity to provide support?

Mary: Just start the conversation, hook up peer-to-peer.

MP: Yes, pair up good ROCs with struggling ones.

Sarah: Can we get EDs to talk to Nebraska? Alabama too.

Mary: Board to expand ROC to other orgs that aren't affiliates.

ACTION ITEM: Build chart summarizing ROC relationships, all 50 states. (MP)

Membership

MP: let's talk about this individual members idea

Mary: Maybe not do-able this year—maybe a good long-term goal.

Sarah: Needs to be cleaner, needs to be benefits. What's our story? What's our value? Members will grow as org becomes more relevant to them.

Susie: I want to be a card-carrying NRC member...30 years...If I'm in a state where I can't find an RO or it's weak, I'm just going to go straight to the NRC. But then the RO will say the NRC interceded in their relationships.

Mary: Offer something really different! Two separate things. CRC vs. NRC...

MP: Give choice—you can join one or both.

Sarah: Maybe it's a good year to have that ED RO in that role to speak, wear that hat. If the idea of a liaison...

Susie: Lots of advance opportunity for the ROC to weigh in.

Mary: I think when we do a policy statement, we need to formalize how that process works with ROC involvement.

Sarah: If you anticipate controversy, consider a referendum. One person, one vote—no one can argue.

Susie: Survey of ROC membership would go a long way.

ACTION ITEM: Survey ROC members. Deal with errors, etc.

Sarah: We have an extensive contact list. I can see open rates of emails—it's very low (3%). We have 3,000 people now. Our bylaws say election is open for 24 hours. It's an issue. Less than a small percent opened it. Why? Survey needs to come after ROC relationships have been nurtured—so we get a better open rate.

Antonio: I talked to a member that didn't know about China, National Sword. He hadn't opened any emails from NRC.

Policy

Sarah: need to flesh out

Susie: If we talk about bottle bills, there are one or two webinars to listen to, to learn in advance.

Sarah: Just as we do market dev, policy discussion regionally. Workshop model—for/against, roundtable. Jordan mentioned that he personally supports bottle bills but his membership won't let him support it!

Mary: I know our open rate is low. If we could gather and manage data, based on different policies, collect info from ROs and members, and publish that back out to them would be a really interesting service for NRC to provide, without having a workshop. Constant Contact, Survey Monkey, etc.

Sarah: We have capacity.

Susie: Can we put disclaimers on our policies? "Not endorsed by all ROs..."

Sarah: The issue of lobbying is capacity—nobody can lobby as a volunteer. One letter for Green New Deal took three months! Might be a three- to five- year plan.

Susie: You might say if you have an advocacy plan you've established, here's a simple email...

Sarah: May need funding, pay Bob Hollis.

MP: Or hire an intern!!!

How to create filters for "member only" areas?

ACTION ITEM: Like SumofUs, EWG—send out advisories of issues arising and with one click, it signs your name to a petition, etc.

ACTION ITEM: Create "members only" areas content on NRC website.

Education & Conferences

Susie: Ed is heart and soul.

Mary: High level, not "caps on, caps off."

Sarah: I think newsletter is an important piece of what we do. I think this convo will inform the content. Priorities...

Mary: We are committed to this ZW conference. We need to throw in our full support.

Susie: Need to be innovative and aggressive to get word out.

Mary: Comms will be a big factor in everything we do.

Sarah: I would like to see Comm Plan for each initiative. Three social media posts a week!

ACTION ITEM: Need strong web person to provide backup to Sarah and Bob.

ACTION ITEM: Review website content for optimization. Go through Ed and Comms before updating.

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