MEMORANDUM

To: Groundwater Advisory Council
From: H. Bokuniewicz
Concerning: Minutes of the meeting of 21 May, 2001
Date: May 29, 2001

PRESENT

N. Bartilucci
H. Bokuniewicz
J. Milazzo
B. Nemickas
D. Paquette
G. Proios
W. Prospect
P. Ramirez
S. Robbins
K. Roberts

REGRETS

M. Nofi
S. Jones
L. Koppelman

1. The minutes from the last meeting were distributed. Comments or corrections can be sent to me.

2. The RFP for the SWAP has been distributed and a contractors’ meeting was held in Albany. Many, upstate consultant companies were there. Nonprofit organizations could bid and the USGS could be involved as a subcontractor to a non-profit group, but neither the USGS or the University plans to bid. The RFP left a good deal of latitude for how much detail would be appropriate for the various tasks and no limit was placed on the costs even though the amount of money available is know at least to some.

3. The proposed federal budget contains substantial cuts for the USGS. The Water Division had not been reorganized in previous budget “adjustments”, but it has been targeted this year. It is slated for a 21% reduction as compared to 6% for Geological and 7% for Biological. NQWA has a $20 million cut and the Toxics program would be eliminated ostensibly to avoid redundancy with the EPA. The L.I. office may not be directly affected by the cuts but, to make-up shortfall nationally, overhead costs may have to be increased across the board. It is hoped that in the final budget the reduction may be 10 to 15%.

We have sent letters to our congressmen expressing concern for these cuts.
4. The AWWA has an RFP for the treatment of pharmaceuticals to which the Institute will respond.

5. We are proposing to hold a national conference of the Groundwater Foundation here on Long Island in 2002 or 2003. The Foundation is primarily an educational and public outreach group. Because some of LI’s problems are with public confidence, the publicity from such a meeting could be useful. We would plan on holding the convention at a hotel on the Nassau-Suffolk border. The Sheraton gave us a good package. About 300 – 500 people are expected to attend. We had submitted a previous proposal. It wasn’t accepted being criticized for accessibility (?) and high cost.

We have the accessibility issue taken care of, but need to find sponsors for an aggregate of about $30,000. We can’t expect for anyone to commit at this stage but with the proposal we’d like to submit letters from potential sponsors saying “If the proposal is accepted we will bring a recommendation before our board (or executive committee or other governing body) to provide # thousand dollars in support of the convention”. This is probably more than could be expected from a consulting firm but perhaps the Water Conference, the SC Water Authority, Sustainable Development Group of the LIA, or HIA (the Hauppauge Industrial Association), the counties or EPA (regional, Steve Gould) might be willing to co-sponsor. It was also suggested that we ask Jim Tripp for advice and, perhaps, there is an educational program of the AWWA that could be approached. Newsday was also mentioned; I believe Kevin Dunn is pursuing this.

6. We are proposing that Long Island host an international intercomparison of techniques to measure the seepage of groundwater into coastal, open waters. Dan O’Rourke, Chris Smith and Ron Paulsen have given presentations on this topic before. It is a new field, however, and there’s a need to standardize techniques. Two intercomparisons have been done – one in Florida and one in Australia sponsored by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (UNESCO, Paris). Other experiments may be in Hawaii, Japan, and Venice.

They would like the next intercomparison to have a strong management component. On Long Island estimates of the seepage have been used to help determine allowable housing density (Mastic Study Area). It has been implicated in the brown tide and seepage along the North Shore is one of the non-point sources of pollution in Long Island Sound (EPA/LISS). I have volunteered this committee to serve as a management-working group for this experiment. If there are other people who should be involved, please let me know.

7. We started a student project on the fate of fertilizer nitrogen in the unsaturated zone.

Over the summer, the student, Peter Schuchman, will place lysimeters at various depths under a lawn and watch the migration of nitrogen under various irrigation scenarios. Two sites are intended to be examined. One will probably be on campus. John will see if there are places on SCWA property that might be used. We might also check with the Nature Conservancy.

It was suggested that it would be interesting to pattern the application after the usual procedures used by lawn companies, or golf courses, or the best management practices recommended by the EPA and State or the Cooperative Extension. Golf
courses seem to be doing well. They have low levels of nitrogen in their groundwater so they seem both to apply fertilizer and to irrigate intelligently.

Peter should look up a paper by Bob Prell, Ed Oaksford and Rich Marcel, 1986, in “Groundwater” and the “nitrogen” section of the 208 report.

8. Sy provided a draft appendix on nitrogen (attached) and the pesticide work was discussed briefly. Breakdown products are rarely found above 50 ppb but there is concern about composite effects at low levels. Five to 10 ppb is not uncommon. As we discussed at the last meeting County Health wanted to do further work on private wells this year at a cost of $60,000 or $70,000. It would seem that such information is important for SWAP, however, “Ag and Markets” has not been supportive. There is a limit of 100 ppb for unspecified contaminants (UOS) but synergistic effects are hardly considered. It is assumed that the effects of various contaminants merely add linearly. It is uncertain how best to design a treatment system for such mixes.

There has been surprisingly little public reaction to the reports. Not only have pesticides and breakdown products been fairly widely detected but breakdown products were found even in the absence of the parent compounds.

9. Bill distributed an EPA fact sheet on car washes (attached). There are 30 or 40 car washes on LI that do not discharge into a sewer system. Contaminants including VOC, metals, and detergents can make treatment difficult. Recycling seems reasonable; it is used elsewhere and is especially helpful during times of drought. It takes only 2 gallons to rinse a car; this would need to be held and hauled away but all other water can be recycled. If an establishment does hold contaminated water and haul it away for treatment, they can do undercarriage washing and steam cleaning of engines. Recycled systems are not regulated by the DEC.

The initial costs can run $50,000 to $100,000. Presently about 10 stations are pursuing the “hold-and-haul” option, seven are working on treatment facilities which will require SPDS permits and 10 to 15 seem to be ignoring the issue.

10. The next meeting will be on Monday, June 25 at the offices of the Suffolk County Water Authority, 9:30 – 11:00 AM.