

**Community Sustainability Council
Greensboro, North Carolina
October 10, 2011**

A regular meeting of the Community Sustainability Council was held on Monday, October 10, 2011 in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building, beginning at 3:03 p.m. Members present were: Co-Chairs Joel Landau and Bob Powell, Valerie Vickers, Tom Clary, Eric Hoekstra, Art Davis, and Bob Skenes, and Bob Kollar. Staff present included: Jamal Fox, Amir Hrnjic, Sheldon Smith, Steve Randall, Nancy Jergenson, and Jessica Ridge.

Approval of Minutes from September 19, 2011 Meeting:

Mr. Kollar moved to approve the minutes from the September 19, 2011 meeting as amended, seconded by Mr. Davis. The Council voted unanimously 7-0 in favor of the motion.

Mr. Clary joined the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

BetterBuildings Program Update:

Amir Hrnjic, Planning and Community Development, reported that 507 applications have been made to the BetterBuildings program. Of this number 339 applications are for the grant portion of the program and 168 are for the non-grant portion. He explained that the community outreach contractor has made 54 visits to date with the goal being 60 visits per week. The number of volunteers for the program has increased from 5 to 8 individuals with more expected in the weeks ahead. Staff is working on the contract with Longjump, the data collection service company. In addition, there are currently 13 qualified contractors for the program with six or seven to be added in several weeks. Mr. Hrnjic stated that the banks being used for the program are Carolina Bank and Greensboro Federal Municipal Credit Union, along with Self-Help.

Solid Waste Projects and the Bottle Up Program:

Sheldon Smith, Solid Waste Collection Service Manager, gave an overview of the recycling program over the past five years. He stated that the focus has been on improving City facilities through recycling and materials enhancement. Dumpsters and carts were purchased and a government route has been established for dumpster collection. Materials were purchased for recycling at parks and recreations centers and educational material was purchased for presentations. Materials were also purchased for Greensboro Housing Authority usage and 86 plastic combination units were purchased for the Coliseum Complex and parking decks. Mr. Smith indicated that the number of recycling drop sites has also increased.

Current projects underway include new recycling for multi-housing complexes, restructuring cans for pedestrian recycling, and Victor Stanley combination units for use in high pedestrian traffic areas. A campaign is underway to instruct pedestrians on recycling in the City business district.

Mr. Smith reviewed the City's pilot incentive recycling program. North Carolina grant money will fund the six-month pilot incentive program. The program will be a coupon/gift card scenario for randomly chosen households on the recycle routes. All contents of the trashcan must be in the recycling program to qualify for a reward. Further information will be provided to the public at a later date.

Mr. Smith gave a brief overview of the Bottle Up project that is dedicated to plastic bottles. Contact has been made with a corporate sponsor. He indicated that they plan to design the bottle collection program to coincide with Earth Day in the month of April. Private schools will be targeted the first year followed by public schools and colleges.

EECBG Update:

Mr. Fox stated that program managers are in progress of moving their initiatives along. Staff is involved in a contract between BetterBuildings and Work Force Development to develop and provide training to contractors. He also reported that equipment for the Solar LED Initiative for the Greenway has been received but will be installed at a later date.

CSC Action Strategies:

Co-Chair Powell stated that a letter to the Mayor was recently drafted focusing on six items in the Sustainability Action Plan (SAP). Three high priority actions that were emphasized were (1) having a CSC seat on the steering committee of the Comprehensive Action Plan, (2) setting up a cash flow sustainability account, and (3) using City-owned parcels for community gardens.

Mr. Kollar moved to send the letter to the Mayor, seconded by Mr. Davis. The Council voted unanimously 8-0 in favor of the motion.

Items from Co-Chairs:

Co-Chair Landau related a recent article in the News and Record that indicated the CSC was in support of a particular City Council candidate. He explained details of the misunderstanding and reiterated that the CSC does not endorse any political candidate.

Members expressed their support to add City Council members to the CSC mailing list. Mr. Fox indicated that he would follow up on the matter.

Co-Chair Powel stated that Marnie Thompson with the Fund for Democratic Communities is organizing a trip to Catawba County to visit a zero-waste landfill effort. He asked any members interested in going to contact him for more information.

Items from Members:

Mr. Davis asked the Council to consider having the CSC listed as a supporter of the Triad Sustainable Community project and also becoming a member of the committee. After discussion of the matter, Mr. Fox stated that he would check to see if a Board or Commission could partner with an outside group.

Ms. Vickers announced that there will be a celebration of Thomas Berry along with the Thomas Berry Awards on November 11, 2011 at Guilford College. The event is open to the public and free of charge.

Mr. Skenes pointed out the advantages of bottle deposits to recycling and the environment. He suggested that the CSC work toward encouraging State legislation to facilitate the effort. It was suggested that the bottle deposit initiative be added to the next round of suggestions for the SAP.

Items from the Public:

MaryEllen Etienne spoke from the floor and introduced herself as the new organizer of Green Drinks Greensboro. Green Drinks Greensboro has been on hiatus until recently. She invited CSC members to attend the monthly meetings hosted by Reuse Alliance.

Acknowledgement of Absences:

Mr. Davis moved to acknowledge the absences of Mr. Duckwall, Ms. Sanford, Mr. Allen, Mr. Giles, Ms. Hancock, and Mr. McClough, seconded by Mr. Skenes. The Council voted unanimously 8-0 in favor of the motion.

Adjournment:

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Landau, Co-Chairman
Community Sustainability Council

JL:sm/jd