

Community Sustainability Council
Greensboro, North Carolina
November 9, 2009
(draft)

A special meeting of the Community Sustainability Council was held on Monday, November 9, 2009 in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building, beginning at 2:35 p.m. Members present were: Co-Chair Joel Landau, Co-Chair Bob Powell, Tom Duckwall, Terri Hancock, Carolyn Allen, Valerie Vickers, Art Davis, Eric Hoekstra, Derrick Giles, Marlene Sanford, Tom Clary, Bob Skenes, and Debbie Leiner. Staff present included: Dan Curry, Russ Clegg, and Susan Schwartz, HCD; Steve Randall, Energy and Sustainability Program Manager; and Jeryl Covington, Environmental Services. Also present was ad hoc advisor Phillip Morgan, Community Relations Developer for Piedmont Natural Gas.

Mr. Curry informed Council members of a new website available to the community containing updated information on any of the numerous stimulus activities being applied for by the City. The site is www.greensborostimulus-nc.net. Opportunities relating to stimulus activities will also be listed on the website.

GOALS, REVIEW OF OVERALL SCHEDULE, AND PROCESS:

Judy Dorsey, with the Brendle Group, reviewed the process and schedule leading up to the CSC's recommendation of a strategy package for City Council's review and approval.

CSC SURVEY, EVALUATION PROCESS, AND REVIEW OF CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATION:

CSC members were surveyed on 49 items according to preference to arrive at a working total of 20 items. The Brendle Group analyzed these items and based on guidance from the survey, all of the items were fundable and none were dropped. These 20 items have been compressed into six city projects and seven community programs. Transportation and land use activities were not included as other stimulus funding may be implemented in the future.

City project activities consisted of improving city facility recycling, building automation system improvements, hydroelectric turbines, energy efficiency retrofits to city buildings, solar hot water for fire stations, and pilot solar LED street lights. Recommended community projects included green jobs development infrastructure, residential energy programs, revolving loan fund, materials recycling enhancement program, and planning and regulations: Comprehensive Plan update. Community programs also contained recommended education programs including energy outreach coordinator, and city communication programs.

Mr. Giles joined the meeting at 2:50 p.m.

Ms. Dorsey reviewed the detailed process for distributing the total allocation of funds. The biggest differentiators in comparing the program options were cost and return on investment. Brendle Group staff quantified and developed the measures with help from Ms. Schwartz who connected with community liaisons for specifics.

Recommendations for city projects were generated by a Department Head workgroup. Mr. Curry stated that the workgroup would listen to the CSC's feedback and make adjustments to the projects to maximize funding. Seth Jensen, an engineer with the Brendle Group, went through each city and community project to clarify assumptions made in the development of each activity. Chris Duerksen, with Clarion and Associates, reviewed the long-term benefit of updating the Comprehensive Plan with sustainability elements and looking at land use patterns and energy savings.

ONE MINUTE ROUNDTABLE REACTION TO OVERALL PACKAGE:

Members took turns sharing their reactions to the recommendations. Phillip Morgan, Piedmont Natural Gas, expressed concern with assumptions being made in regard to financial incentives offered by utility company contributions. Ms. Allen commented that she agreed with the need for more funding in the revolving loan fund. Ms. Leiner and Ms. Vickers commented on the educational components. Ms. Leiner emphasized the importance of creating behavior change as a result of education, while Ms. Vickers expressed concern that there be long-term availability of money for youth energy leadership programs. She also questioned the impact of the recommendations on youth and low income individuals looking for a place to “plug in” and agreed that the revolving loan fund should be given more priority. Mr. Hoekstra suggested increasing the revolving loan fund by \$120,000 while decreasing materials recycling enhancement by \$120,000. Mr. Giles commented that encouraging financial incentives by making money available is an important priority that creates industry. He discussed the concept of leveraging the plan within itself to create jobs and training to support sustainable industry. Co-Chair Landau indicated that he was also in favor of putting more funding into the revolving loan fund. Co-Chairs Landau and Powell supported the Comprehensive Plan update; however, they were not averse to moving the allocated money to another program if the City already had plans underway. Co-Chair Powell felt that education, technical assistance, and financial incentives were the strongest components. Mr. Duckwall suggested that private capital be considered to increase the loan fund. Ms. Hancock was not in support of cutting the recycling enhancement program as she would like to see Greensboro as a zero landfill facility. She felt that the financial incentive component should be increased. Mr. Skenes suggested eliminating the residential energy program and moving those funds into the financial incentives program. Ms. Sanford questioned putting \$60,000 into planning and regulations at this time but she agreed that the incentives program should be increased. She commented that funds from several city projects with no return on investment should be moved into the revolving loan fund. She felt that the materials recycling enhancement program should be preserved. Mr. Clary supported the planning and regulations program to create a policy framework to incorporate not only sustainability and energy issues but also to establish policy regarding density and mixed uses. Mr. Davis commented that education should be included in energy outreach and the financial incentive program should be increased.

Ms. Allen left the meeting at 4:19 p.m.

Ms. Vickers and Mr. Hoekstra left the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Summary of CSC Feedback:

- Map activities against CSC subcommittee work.
- Run simple payback.
- Look at doing solar-thermal via private investors/contractors.
- Add total at bottom of page.
- Look at total savings to primary goals.
- Revolving loan fund should have more leverage than shown.
- Raise dollar amount for revolving loan fund--maximum is \$500,000.
- How is return on investment calculated?
- Concern about leveraged funds coming from utilities.
- Provide list of who was contacted.
- Cite behavior change references.
- Young people need a place to plug in.
- Youth energy service programs.
- Leveraging activities within the strategy and within other city activities.
- Use energy savings fund to further programs.

- Planning funds—is that something the City has to do anyway?
- Focus less on payback and more on return on investment.
- Get Greensboro to “zero” landfill.
- Move funds from residential energy programs to revolving loan fund.
- Planning money may take longer to implement.
- Move fire station and building money to revolving loan fund.
- Have information available on transportation funding from other sources.
- May need more money in Planning—add sustainability element.

DEVELOPMENT OF CSC RECOMMENDATIONS:

Members agreed to increase the revolving loan fund. After a lengthy discussion, the consensus of the group was to recommend an adjustment to the funding for green jobs development and to eliminate funding to solar hot water for fire stations.

Mr. Skenes moved to recommend reducing green jobs development infrastructure by \$122,000 and taking out \$27,000 from solar hot water for fire stations and adding these amounts to financial incentives, seconded by Mr. Davis. The Council voted 13-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Landau, Powell, Leiner, Giles, Duckwall, Hancock, Skenes, Sanford, Clary, Davis, Hoekstra, Vickers, Allen. Nays: None.) Mr. Hoekstra, Ms. Vickers, and Ms. Allen left the meeting early without a motion to excuse them. Therefore, their votes counted in the affirmative.

Mr. Duckwall moved to ask for \$100,00 from the hydroelectric turbine project to be added to the revolving loan fund, seconded by Mr. Skenes. The Council voted 13-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Landau, Powell, Leiner, Giles, Duckwall, Hancock, Skenes, Sanford, Clary, Davis, Hoekstra, Vickers, Allen. Nays: None.) Mr. Hoekstra, Ms. Vickers, and Ms. Allen left the meeting early without a motion to excuse them. Therefore, their votes counted in the affirmative.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ABSENCES:

Mr. Davis moved to acknowledge the absence of Mr. Kollar, seconded by Ms. Sanford. The Council voted unanimously 13-0 to approve the motion.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting adjourned at 5:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Landau and Bob Powell
Co-Chairs

JL-BP:sm/jd