

**COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP
ON SUSTAINABILITY
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA
SEPTEMBER 8th, 2008**

A meeting of the Advisory Group on Sustainability was held on Monday, September 8th, 2008 in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building, beginning at 3:00 p.m. Members present were: Co-Chair Joel Landau, Art Davis, Joe Venable, Kim Yarbray, Eric Hoekstra, Tom Clary, Debbie Leiner, Tom Duckwall, and Marlene Sanford. Staff present were: Dan Curry, HCD, and Jeryl Covington, Director of Environmental Services.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FORM THE JULY 14TH, 2008 MEETING

Ms. Yarbray made a spelling amendment. Ms. Sanford moved to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Hoekstra. The Group voted unanimously to approve the motion 9-0.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 11TH, 2008 MEETING

Ms. Yarbray and Co-Chair Landau made spelling amendments. Ms. Sanford moved to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Davis. The Group voted unanimously to approve the motion 9-0.

4. REPORT AND DISCUSSION ON THE "HEALTHY HOMES GREENSBORO" INITIATIVE

Beth McKee-Huger, Director, Greensboro Housing Coalition, gave a background on the initiative and gave the Group a presentation on their efforts. The presentation covered health, housing, safety, energy conservation, water conservation, and the efforts to improve these through the initiative. She gave a brief explanation of the health issues created by unhealthy homes, and the energy and water loss due to under maintained homes.

She stated the initiatives of Healthy Homes and the efforts of the Group overlap in many areas. She stated that Guilford County Public Health is becoming a training center for the National Center for Healthy Homes, to train practitioners to recognize and know what to do about health risks in housing. Nurses, social workers, and other public service providers that visit homes regularly are the focus of the training. Identified risks will be referred to the Housing Coalition. She stated that members of the Coalition are being certified to identify and provide solutions to health risks. Once identified, homeowners would be provided recommended contractors that use lead safe work practices, integrative pace management, and energy efficient techniques.

Ms. McKee-Huger stated that they wanted to gather some baseline data and relayed that Dr. Mark Smith, epidemiologist GCPH, and the Coalition are working toward developing a mapping system of health data that will protect confidentiality. Healthy Homes would like the Group to help obtain data from utility providers, like the City and Duke Energy, to help in correlating utility use and health issues.

She invited members of the Group to go on a bus tour of homes that are at risk and homes that are being rehabilitated. She also invited members to attend the training done by the National Healthy Homes initiative on November 10th.

Mr. Clary asked if there was an existing process for contractors to be certified as 'green contractors'. Ms. McKee-Huger stated that there were several certifications for different areas, but there was not a general certification the initiative would be seeking to be included on the future recommended contractor list.

Ms. Sanford asked Ms. McKee-Huger to better define the overlap between healthy homes and sustainability. Ms. McKee-Huger stated that the link exists because of need to ensure that efforts to ensure healthy homes can be made both healthy and more sustainable. Mr. Landau cited the efforts to improve energy efficiency and water conservation for both missions as a connection.

Mr. Duckwall asked Ms. McKee-Huger to give an anecdotal account of the state of the housing stock in Greensboro. Ms. McKee-Huger stated that the stock was in pretty good shape, and much better than a lot of other places.

Mr. Venable asked if the training of clergy was being considered based on their regular visits to homes. Ms. McKee stated that the training of clergy would be very beneficial, and training could be adapted to their needs.

Mr. Davis stated that the baseline data may be difficult to obtain, but a correlation could be helpful in focusing efforts and ensuring that efforts are having the intended effects.

Co-chair Landau asked how training efforts would be funded. Ms. McKee-Huger stated that funding efforts would be made through various organizations including GCPH, the City, and other collaborative organizations and grant opportunities.

Ms. Yarbray put forth the idea of expanding the partnerships between the two groups, and invited the Healthy Homes group to the Community Sustainability gathering. Ms. McKee-Huger stated that the collaboration includes approximately 17 collaborators.

Mr. Duckwall asked if the group would consider expanding the initiative to exterior problems.

Co-chair Landau asked that any member who is interested to get in contact with Ms. McKee-Huger at the provided contacts.

5. Community Sustainability Gathering Update

Ms. Yarbray stated that the subcommittee had gathered availability information from 11 members. The tentative date for the event is likely going to be Thursday November 13th, from 4 pm to 7 pm. She stated that the meeting notes had been emailed out to members.

Ms. Yarbray stated that the agenda has been changed from the initial meeting, and the agenda will be reviewed again at the next subcommittee meeting. There would be a registration time to gather information on who is there, what district they are from, and what affiliations they have. A map will be created to see what districts are well represented, and those that are under-represented. Affiliation information will be used to focus the explanations of efforts. When people enter a board will be available to allow attendees to put forth ideas for sustainability. Co-chair Powell will be working at the event with several students to help with registration.

Co-chair Landau asked if a location for the event had been considered, and reminded her about the offered location of Holy Trinity Church.

Ms. Yarbray stated that the Mayor will be introduced and allowed to address the gathering for a few minutes. Then, an MC would set the stage of the event and go over the agenda. The time together has been split into three areas: where are we now, where are we headed, and what do we need to do to make it happen. She stated that the green house gas survey does not have specific data, and might be too cerebral for the event. The GHG survey has been cut to five minutes.

Jeryl Covington suggested that some of that time might be spent walking attendees through the green house impact survey provided on the EPA website, and that might allow attendees to get a better understanding of their personal impact on sustainability. Ms. Yarbray stated that the Group site should be linked to the EPA survey. Ms. Yarbray stated that the subcommittee also discussed developing business cards for the Group.

Ms. Yarbray stated after the GHG survey, the event will have a discussion of the Coolcities program including a brief history and the inclusion of the goals of the program. Following the background the attendees would have a chance to tell what their affiliation is and tell the group what their current efforts include.

In the “where we are headed” part the MC will introduce the poster session. The group will be broken up into smaller groups based on their work and where it fits based on the twelve points. Attendees will be allowed to write down their efforts and put the sticky notes on the corresponding posters. Students will help attendees decide which point is most appropriate.

During the ‘what we need to make it happen’ session attendees will break out into smaller discussion groups based on which point they feel most related to. The smaller groups will have a facilitator and a student recorder. The ideas produced from the smaller groups will be added to the different posters for the twelve points. The groups will then be brought back together to discuss ‘what more needs to be done to get us where we want to go?’ and ‘what do we need to do to build the Greensboro sustainability community?’, and a few points will be presented from the brainstorming sessions.

The end of the event will include reflections and announcements of upcoming events including possibly the next gathering or the survey being produced.

Co-chair Landau stated he saw three main purposes of the first gathering: to learn what is going on, to give some public recognition to the groups, and to create a path to synergy. He suggested flipping the schedule of the GHG survey and the Coolcities discussion.

Mr. Clary asked if the event was going to be recorded, and suggested the involvement of Channel 13. Mr. Curry discussed their abilities and how the event might be covered. Ms. Yarbray stated that Channel 13 involvement will be explored.

Ms. Yarbray asked members to volunteer for roles in the event. Ms. Leiner – shepherd and breakdown, Mr. Davis – facilitator, Ms. Sanford – facilitator, Mr. Venable - facilitator, Mr. Hoekstra – hospitality, Mr. Duckwall – setup and breakdown, Co-chair Landau – breakdown and possibly MC.

Ms. Yarbray stated that the next subcommittee meeting will be September 25th. She also stated that there is a tentative facilitator training session on October 23rd from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm, and facilitators would be notified with more information.

6. ESTABLISH A SUBCOMMITTEE TO MONITOR COMMENTS FROM THE WEBSITE, AND APPOINT A LIAISON TO THE WEBSITE MANAGER; REVIEW MEMBERS' NAMES AND BIO INFORMATION FOR THE WEBSITE

Co-chair stated that City staff has been developing a website for the Group, managed by Debbie Davis. The site is currently offline. The Group reviewed the basic setup and gave suggestions for improvements.

Several improvements for the 'Areas of Interest' section were discussed and noted by Co-chair Landau.

Co-chair Landau stated that biographical information was still needed from Carolyn Allen, Art Davis, and Eric Hoekstra. Name clarifications were also made for all members that were present.

Co-chair Landau went over the rest of the proposed website with the Group. He suggested that the website be live just before the next meeting, and members could then review and make final suggestions.

Ms. Yarbray told the Group that a working email address for the Group was greengso@gmail.com. She stated this was a community web address, and that comments could be sent to this address as well.

Co-chair Landau stated that a subcommittee was being formed to monitor comments on the website and email address. He stated that Ms. Yarbray has volunteered to chair until the subcommittee is established. Mr. Hoekstra, Ms. Sanford, and Ms. Leiner volunteered for the subcommittee. The subcommittee and procedures will be determined further as comments to the site begin to come in. Mr. Curry stated that there should also be some staff involvement.

8. ITEMS FROM CO-CHAIRS

Co-chair Landau advised the Group that the next meeting would be October 13th, Columbus Day, but no members voiced any problems with this date.

Co-chair Landau mentioned that responsiveness to email and other contact was essential to the productivity of the Group, and wanted to encourage members to respond to issues in a timely manner.

Co-chair Landau informed the group of an effort by Impact Greensboro and A&T to form a large-scale community garden/community agriculture program. The program is not finalized yet, but 25 acres and \$300,000 in funding are possible parts of the project.

He informed the Group of the upcoming Piedmont Triad Partnership meeting November 6th and the Piedmont Green Gala event in Burlington on October 4th. Details of both events will be sent to group via email.

Co-chair Landau related the City's ranking on asthma as very poor in two recent studies.

He also informed the Group that the Co-chairs would be meeting with the City's executive team on Wednesday.

10. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Mr. Curry gave an announcement to the Group about the formation of the Piedmont Triad Chapter of the Green Building Council last Friday. There will be an event on the 11th at the Proximity Hotel that evening.

He also informed the Group of Winston-Salem's week-long sustainability event next week.

9. ITEMS FROM GROUP MEMBERS

Mr. Davis stated that the A&T radio station would provide an open forum for the co-chairs on the 23rd of September.

Mr. Clary informed the Group of an environmental group sponsorship of a concert by Walkin' Jim Stolts on November 21st.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ABSENCES

Mr. Davis moved to acknowledge the absences of Bob Powell, Bob Kollar, Jim Brady, Carolyn Allen, and Maurice Allen, seconded by Mr. Clary. The Group voted 9-0 to approve the motion.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting adjourned at 5:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Landau and Bob Powell
Co-chairs