

**COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP  
ON SUSTAINABILITY  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA  
JULY 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

A meeting of the Advisory Group on Sustainability was held on Monday, July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008 in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building, beginning at 3:00 p.m. Members present were: Co-Chairs Joel Landau and Bob Powell, Art Davis, Joe Venable, Eric Hoekstra, Carolyn Allen, Kim Yarbray, Tom Clary, and Tom Duckwall. Staff present were: Dan Curry, HCD, Pat Boswell, Director of Public Affairs, and Jeryl Covington, Director of Environmental Services.

**1. APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 23<sup>RD</sup>, 2008 MINUTES**

The Advisory Group made two spelling corrections and a term addition to the minutes as submitted, and discussed expansion of the Biographical information. The Group decided to include the Biographical information in a separate document available on the website. The Group also formed a Website Subcommittee with Kim Yarbray, Joel Landau, Bob Powell and staff member Pat Boswell. Ms. Allen moved to approve the minutes, as changed, seconded by Mr. Davis. The Group voted to approve the motion 9-0. (Ayes: Allen, Clary, Davis, Duckwall, Hoekstra, Landau, Powell, Venable, Yarbray. Nays: None.)

Co-Chair Landau introduced Ms. Covington and Rob Bencini from Guilford County to the Group.

Mr. Bencini explained the planned development of a similar group at the County level.

**2. UPDATE ON THE EPA'S SUSTAINABLE SKYLINES PROGRAM**

Co-Chair Powell gave the Group a quick update on the program. The program is offered on a pilot basis, in Dallas and Kansas City. In each, the EPA program worked with the city to develop a planning proposal to develop a set of projects that the community wants to promote. Members from the Sustainable Skylines approached Co-Chair Powell and others, about the City's interest in involvement in the program. He stated the intent is for the program to put out an RFP for the program by the beginning of August at the earliest. The City will be applying for funding through this program.

Co-Chair Powell explained the projects developed in Dallas including a green buildings project, greenhouse gas strategy, green taxis, off-road equipment, and others that they felt were appropriate for their community. Co-Chair Powell stated that planning projects is premature for the City presently, but the Group will work through a process of identifying what types of projects would be best for Greensboro. Sustainable Skylines members stated that the planned approach was fine and Co-Chair Powell is hoping that will be explained in the RFP.

Co-Chair Powell explained to the Group that the basic strategy would be to develop a vision, goals, and a set of strategies for Greensboro over the next several meetings. Co-Chair

Powell stated that it was a grant program, run through specific RFPs, on the order of approximately \$100,000 a year for two years.

Co-Chair Powell stated that the plans in Dallas and Kansas City would only be used as a guide, but specific projects for the City would be developed by the Group.

Ms. Yarbray asked the Chairs about the status of the greenhouse gas inventory. Co-Chair Powell stated that the inventory is in progress. Co-Chair Powell and Ms. Covington have met to discuss what areas of the project were being worked on, and what else was necessary. He stated that the hope was to have the inventory plan complete over the next two weeks. Ms. Covington put together a

schedule that the staff portion of the project would be done sometime in October. Co-Chair Powell stated that if his staff could

help speed up the process, that would be done. Co-Chair Powell stated that A&T State University is an essential partner in getting this grant, and the hope of the Sustainable Skylines program is for A&T to help develop a program that is repeatable nationwide.

### **3. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF THE AGENDA PLAN FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR**

Co-Chair Landau stated that the regular meetings of the Group would be the second Monday of the month at 3:00 p.m. Co-Chair Powell stated that the hope for the August meeting would be to look at City operations. Discussion with the City Manager and Department Heads is necessary to involve those departments that have some relation to sustainability issues. Co-Chair Powell suggested pushing the September meeting out to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September, because the greenhouse gas inventory may be able to be discussed in more detail by that time. The planned agenda for the next several meetings will include in August a discussion of City operations, the September and October meeting would consist of either an update on the greenhouse gas inventory, or a series of presentations from members of various community sectors and their efforts towards sustainability. By the November meeting, the plan would be to begin developing a vision and strategies for projects.

Ms. Yarbray asked the Group if there was interest in having a more open community dialogue, and to begin development of community coordination and outreach. The Group discussed having a half-day event to bring members of the community together to develop coordination.

Ms. Boswell stated that department descriptions on sustainability have been done and links to the information would be provided to the Group members. Ms. Covington stated that updated information from the department heads can be sent to the members.

A community survey was discussed to gather information on what the community and the City leaders are doing towards sustainability. Mr. Venable suggested contacting the Neighborhood Associations to help with completion of the survey.

Co-Chair Landau summarized the items that were being developed through the Group's discussion. First, the development of a community survey, and, second, arranging a half-day event bringing in presentations from various members of the community. Steve ???? , from Holy-Trinity, stated that the church could be a possible site for the event.

Co-Chair Powell outlined what the Group has developed as a role in the community. The Group was to advise the City Council in City sustainability operations internally, advise City Council on what can be done to support community sustainability efforts, and, at a minimum, start the process of coordination and outreach necessary to support community and City sustainability efforts. Co-Chair Landau stated that he and Co-Chair Powell had already developed a long list of groups that should be involved with the Group's efforts. As the Group develops, so will the Mission of the Advisory Group. As targets are set, strategies will be identified. Then specific projects and programs can be developed.

### **Survey and Event Subcommittee**

Co-Chair Landau stated that a subcommittee was necessary to develop a community survey, and to arrange an event to present the baseline inventory and bring in presentations from various members

of the community. Ms. Yarbray discussed the need to set processes and setup for subcommittees. Co-Chair Landau stated that the Co-chairs' hope was that these subcommittees would be working, thinking, and lobbying groups. Ms. Allen stated that the half-day event could be used to test the method of setting up subcommittees. Co-Chair Landau stated that the goal of the subcommittee would be to develop a community survey, and also to arrange a half-day event to deliver the results of the survey and provide an arena for community coordination. Ms. Yarbray, Mr. Duckwall, and Ms. Allen volunteered for the Survey and Event Subcommittee. Co-Chair Powell stated that he would suggest the subcommittee invite others from the community to be involved in the efforts of the subcommittee.

The Group discussed a general date of the half-day event for October, but the timing was dependent on the ability to deliver usable information from the greenhouse gas inventory and community survey. A regular meeting of the Advisory Group may still be necessary, but the subcommittee will present a proposal at the next meeting.

## **4. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF BEST PRACTICES FROM OTHER CITIES**

Co-Chair Powell gave a brief overview of the links sent out to Group members. He stated that a catalyst for the formation of the Advisory Group came from the Coolcities organization and the establishment of the Mayors' Agreement of Global Warming. The second main group mentioned was the North Carolina League of Municipalities, which has developed a Green Challenge program for cities within North Carolina. The NCLM program is similar to the Coolcities program, and offers a number of suggestions for municipalities. The links offer programs on the national, state, and local efforts towards sustainability. Based on the efforts in Portland, Oregon and a discussion from Peter Kauber, the critical issue is mitigation.

Co-Chair Powell asked the Group to discuss the articles that they found most useful or interesting.

The Group discussed the key factors and terms that were found in the links. Mr. Clary brought up the separation of categories of interest like air quality, climate change, energy sources, transit, municipal buildings; the marriage between land use and transportation; and the use of zoning laws. Ms. Yarbray discussed location based solutions, and the best practices from the North Carolina Sierra Club that might be more helpful to Greensboro. Mr. Duckwall discussed the coupling of energy efficiency and water conservation based on articles found at the American Water Works Association ([www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org)), and the position of energy manager in municipal governments.

Co-Chair Powell asked the Group to outline some of the most interesting issues found through the readings. Mr. Hoekstra cited the Portland information and the fact that 17% of our energy is used in the production and transportation of food. Mr. Clary also cited the Portland information and the reference to the impact of declining oil production and the impact on lower-income people, and air quality.

Co-Chair Powell discussed the fact that the realization of the City being behind the curve was frustrating, especially given the effect that these concerns will have on low-income people, food costs, air quality, etc. Co-Chair Landau referenced the statistic that transportation cost is averaging 19.1% of U.S. consumers' expenditures. Mr. Clary talked about municipal responsibility, and the admirable efforts made by Salt Lake City, UT across the board on improving their sustainability efforts.

Co-Chair Powell asked the Group members to identify the best practices they feel most apply to Greensboro. Mr. Davis discussed making transit systems more energy efficient, and municipal support of conservation efforts. Ms. Allen discussed the use of car-pooling in the past, and efforts that

are necessary to improve it now. Ms. Boswell stated that departments within the City have developed car-pools, and an effort is beginning to involve other Downtown businesses. Ms. Covington discussed the involvement of PART with car/van pooling. Co-Chair Powell stated that the question was raised as a first step towards identifying targets. The Group also discussed the use of a four-day work week.

Co-Chair Powell asked the Group members to outline Key Practices for the city to focus on. Members of the Group suggested smart growth/transportation, green jobs, water/sewer and green water systems, and integration of land use and sustainability.

The Group then discussed the process of making big decisions for sustainability including, community involvement, community education, and gaining support of leaders from various sectors of the community. The Group discussed the fact that the half-day event should be a kickoff for future community focused meetings. Once a best possible City is identified by the stakeholders, strategies and plans could be made pragmatic.

Co-Chair Powell discussed the purpose of the first community event, and what would come from the event. The Group discussed the need for the community events to include a broad, diversified, group from the community including stakeholders in the business community,

within the city, and the Universities to develop a charette to address the issues. Development of implementable plans to begin building the partnerships and plans necessary to direct the City Council on what actions to take to support sustainability should come from the charettes.

The schedule of the Group was discussed, and a general goal of presenting to the City Council during December was suggested. The presentation should include suggestions that are implementable, effective, and fundable. The overall goal issued by Co-Chair Landau was to have implementable, effective suggestions that can be put into action, rather than heard and not followed up on.

## **5. ITEMS FROM CO-CHAIRS**

Co-Chair Landau suggested that the Group be as paperless as possible, and suggested that if members wished to print out items then they would be responsible. He stated the use of electronic information, and the internet by Mr. Curry was very beneficial.

Co-Chair Landau also acknowledged the Mayor's regret at not being able to attend the meeting, and her planned appearance at the next meeting.

Co-Chair Landau informed the Group about the House Appropriations Subcommittee provision of \$295 million in block grants for energy efficiency. The Senate must still work on the item. He described the program goals.

Co-Chair Landau recognized a notice in the News and Record about a local company, Phasetek, being awarded one of the state's first 13 North Carolina Green Business Fund Grants, designed to help small businesses develop and market promising green and alternative energy technologies. The company was awarded \$75,000 to develop thermal efficient building material.

## **6. ITEMS FROM GROUP MEMBERS**

Ms. Allen updated the Group on the Hazardous Waste Management ordinance, Sec. 10.5 in the Code. The focus is to prepare for the possible difficulties that arise from their presence, and the part hazardous waste plays in sustainability.

Ms. Yarbray stated she had spoken with Rachel Ekhart, NC-DENR, about the availability of grants for municipalities to begin and improve recycling programs for up to \$30,000. Staff informed the Group that the grant was focused to starting programs, and the size of the Greensboro program limits the ability to receive such grants.

Mr. Clary spoke to the Group about a program that tied citizen involvement with recycling in a Virginia community. He discussed the process of the program, and outlined the use of urban forestry based on the community involvement in recycling. Ms. Allen stated the city had an active Urban Forestry program, and it allowed open citizen involvement.

## **7. ITEMS FROM STAFF**

Ms. Covington distinguished the City as a non-electric city, and the differences that may arise due to the distinction based on federal legislation, and federal involvement. She stated that Greensboro does not currently participate in advocating for federal legislation, but involvement, including letters from the mayor, may be helpful in increasing federal support. The initiative at the state level includes the NC Renewable Energy Portfolio. The involvement of the federal government should be discussed at some point.

Co-Chair Landau requested that Ms. Covington update the Group on any federal or state issue that she felt was prudent to the Group's mission.

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ABSENCES**

The absences of Jim Grady, Maurice Allen, Marlene Sanford, and Debbie Leiner were moved to be acknowledged by Mr. Davis, seconded by Mr. Venable. The Group voted 9-0 to approve the motion. (Ayes: Allen, Clary, Davis, Duckwall, Hoekstra, Landau, Powell, Venable, Yarbray. Nays: None.)

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Landau and Bob Powell  
Co-chairs