

**COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP
ON SUSTAINABILITY
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA
AUGUST 11th, 2008**

A meeting of the Advisory Group on Sustainability was held on Monday, August 11th, 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, Carolyn Allen, Kim Yarbray, Tom Clary, Debbie Leiner, Tom Duckwall, Bob Kollar, Maurice Allen, Jim Brady, and Marlene Sanford. Staff present were: Dan Curry, HCD, and Jeryl Covington, Director of Environmental Services. Also present was, her honor, Mayor Yvonne Johnson.

2. RE-INTRODUCTION OF GROUP MEMBERS

All members present gave a brief introduction and background of their involvement with sustainability and their involvement with the advisory group.

7. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR YVONNE JOHNSON: CITY SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Her honor, Yvonne Johnson, thanked the members for their service on the advisory group, and their work towards making Greensboro as environmentally friendly as possible. She shared with the members information from her meeting at the first Mayors' initiative meeting in Madison, WI. She discussed with the group topics for consideration including inner-city bike riding with programs like "Share-a-Bike", fleet sharing, bus exhaust prevention, and locally grown food systems and community outreach/education. She stated she would like to give a presentation to the Group regarding the Mayors' Initiative meeting prospectively at the September meeting.

3. PRESENTATION BY CITY MANAGER MITCHELL JOHNSON AND OTHER CITY STAFF ON CITY'S CURRENT ROLE IN SUSTAINABILITY

The City department representatives introduced themselves and their respective departments. Mr. Johnson discussed the City's overall involvement in sustainability. He stated that the City, as an organization, was very large, including over 3,000 employees, and by its very nature is very energy dependent. He expressed the concept that the City is not of one mind or mission, and that departments have varying roles and functions with regard to energy policy. He stated that policies that may make sense for some departments would not work in others based on their function or regulations that must be met. He stated that no other entity has such a large effect on so many aspects of the quality of life for local citizens than the City.

Mr. Johnson stated that the City has a long history of being proactive in terms of sustainability activities. He gave the Group the examples of the City's efforts including: the EPA's Early Action Compact, the use of biodiesel beginning several years ago, the use of hybrid and flex-fuel vehicles, improving efficiencies in heating and air-conditioning systems, the construction of the more sustainable facilities in the fire station near Guilford College and the Kathleen Clay Edwards Branch Library, and other initiatives where the City has been leaders like recycling and reforestation. He stated that the City has a good relationship with local developers concerning the impacts and decisions of development, and setting a high standard that is accepted by the community. The issues of sustainability and environmental concern have become a more popularly supported issue.

He stated there were three main areas where the Group might be involved in addressing sustainability for Greensboro. The first is how the City as an organization does business internally, how to increase efficiencies, and improve policies. The second area is defining the City's role in the

growth and development of the community. The third area is the role of the City government in regulating and supporting these policies in the community. Mr. Johnson also explained to the Group the discretionary decision making ability of general fund departments and enterprise departments, and their effect of the costs of new initiatives on the general fund and service fees.

Ms. Leiner asked Mr. Johnson about the Compact initiatives and the attribution to improving air quality. Mr. Johnson stated that other factors probably had a larger effect than the City initiatives, but the policies helped and set an admirable standard for the community.

Mr. Clary asked about the City's implementation of the 12 points included in the Mayors' Agreement for Climate Protection. Mr. Johnson stated that the City was behind in implementing the agreement throughout the City. He stated the City's intent when signing on with the Agreement was to identify the implications of the various points, deliver that to Council, and then permit the Council to decide to what degree practices and policies would be changed. The Council and staff are now working to make meeting the Mayor's Agreement commitments a priority.

Ms. Allen asked Mr. Johnson's opinion about collaboration and cooperation with other units of government. Mr. Johnson stated that cooperation is better than it has been in the past, but with issues like land-use there is little collaboration. The most significant collaboration is found in transportation including programs like PART. From an environmental standpoint, Mr. Johnson was unaware of any entity that had a regional focus.

Mr. Duckwall asked if the City had a comprehensive process of tracking energy use. Mr. Johnson said that other than billing, fleet, and energy costs there is not a comprehensive management of energy use. Each department is responsible for the management of their own energy use.

4. SUMMARY OF GUILFORD COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

Rob Bencini, Guilford County, gave the Group background information on the County's sustainability efforts, and presented the draft document of the County's Green Plan. He stated that the plan covered goals for improving sustainability and efficiency internally, and the role the County played in community connectivity. The plan included efforts in the following areas: land conservation, soil and water conservation, vehicle management, operations and purchasing, solid waste and recycling, mobility, connectivity and intergovernmental, community sustainability, and the Guilford County Schools. He stated that the plan was close to completion, would need the approval of the County Commissioners. Once approved, a copy of the plan will be available to the Group after approval. Mr. Bencini stated the plan was less regulatory than suggestive. Mr. Bencini also highlighted a webpage, Green Guilford, to help support connectivity initiatives.

5. REVIEW OF THE EPA SUSTAINABLE SKYLINES INITIATIVE

Co-Chair Powell gave a brief background of the program, and informed new members of the City's hope for involvement. Co-Chair Powell told the Group that A&T University is anticipating a request for the City to be an applicant for a grant through the EPA's Sustainable Skylines Initiative. He stated that the EPA had met with A&T, and there had been open discussion about the City's involvement. He stated the RFA for the program is expected within the next month. At that time, Co-Chair Powell's group will be working to apply for these funds for a Sustainable Skylines program for Greensboro. Co-Chair Powell reviewed Dallas' involvement in the program for the Group.

6. "HEALTHY HOMES GREENSBORO" INITIATIVE: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY THROUGH COLLABORATION FOR SAFE, HEALTHY, ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOUSING

Beth McKee-Huger gave the Group a review of the initiatives mission and efforts. She presented a draft pamphlet to the Group that outlined healthy and unhealthy housing topics, to be delivered for community education. She asked for the Group to help in data collection to help form a relationship between costs and unhealthy housing practices. Ms. McKee-Huger will return to give a more detailed review of the initiative.

8. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION WITH CITY STAFF ON CITY SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

Co-Chair Landau introduced the topic of City involvement and the leaders within City operations. Each staff member gave a short synopsis of their department's sustainability involvement.

Alan Williams, Director of Water Resources, stated that the Storm Water Division was heavily involved in protection of stream buffers and watershed, tree planting, and stream rehabilitation. He stated that the main functions of providing water and sewer services are extremely regulatory driven. He stated that the three main drivers for the department were to provide for the cost to expand services as the City grows, meet the ever changing environmental regulations, and the need to invest money into the infrastructure of the system. The department currently has a detailed energy plans and energy tracking throughout the department.

Butch Simmons, Director of Engineering & Inspections, gave the Group a brief update of the City facilities that the department manages. He stated that the City has been working on an energy services contract for over a year and a half that will be completed within the next few months. The contract will maintain over 54 buildings with a focus on lighting, water usage, and HV/AC efficiency improvements. He stated that the facilities savings in energy costs is expected to pay for the improvements over a period of ten years. The City is also exploring the use of solar power for heating water in some facilities. The City will also be moving towards the incorporation of an energy manager at some point in the future.

Jeryl Covington, Director of Environmental Services, stated that the primary focus of the department was on disposal of solid and hazardous waste. She stated that these activities were also heavily regulated through state and federal requirements. She stated that the City signed an agreement a year ago where the City would work towards developing an inventory of City operations. During the process of developing the information, staff learned that the State would intersect the City's efforts due to new regulatory requirements. The State will now regulate and approve air quality permits, therefore the City's efforts to estimate air quality impacts has shifted to efforts of measurement. She informed the Group that both state and federal regulations may supercede local regulations in many areas in the future. Ms. Covington brought the issue of conflict of interest to the Group, and cautioned the Group to do effective evaluations.

Dick Hails, Director of Planning, explained the focus of the department on sustainable development. He told the Group about the use of the Comprehensive Plan to address these issues with nine or ten elements including the development of 'activity centers', reinvestment corridor plans, and changes to regulations including incentives for LEED certifications and sustainable development. He stated that in the next year or two the Comprehensive Plan will be updated, and staff is considering a sustainability element that would allow focusing sustainability efforts.

Dan Curry, Housing & Community Development, stated that the department works closely with Planning to develop and plan higher density/pedestrian focused community development. The department is also focusing on promoting mixed-use/higher density development, especially in the center city. The department is also exploring efforts for implementing incentives for more sustainable housing projects.

After the brief updates from staff, Co-Chair Powell asked the Group for feedback on the information presented. He asked the group what they heard from the day's presentations. The group mentioned topics including progress, continual upgrading, regulations, conservative changes, measurement and tracking, standards for regulations, prospects for the energy services contract for City facilities, downstream effects, greenway and transportation, and costs of improvements.

Co-Chair Powell asked the Group to share what aspects of the meeting most excited or impressed them. The Group members referenced topics including the downtown trolley, Lake Townsend completion schedule, City staff efforts and commitment to sustainability, the Counties efforts and cooperation, mixed/high density-use priority, greenway development, and a need to better publicize City efforts.

Co-Chair Powell asked the group to discuss challenges for sustainability efforts. Mr. Kollar stated the myriad of regulations and lack of coordination on all levels of government can cause problems and frustrations.

Co-Chair Powell asked the group to discuss key points from the meetings presentations. The Group cited the presentation of Guilford County's Green Plan, staff efforts, "Healthy Homes", and a reduction of energy consumption. Mr. Duckwall asked what efforts the Group could make to improve work with staff. Issues of open communication and continued information were discussed as necessary.

Co-Chair Powell asked the Group to offer items they felt belonged on a priority list of actions. The Group items discussed included meeting regulations, improved transportation options and coordination with land development, development of an energy manager for the City, supporting public education, and tracking the financial savings created by sustainability efforts.

Co-Chair Powell asked Group members to continue to think about the issues raised in the meeting and bring those ideas to the next meeting for continued discussion.

Co-Chair Landau stated that the Group is not limited to working with City staff, but looks forward to continued efforts towards information sharing and an alliance on sustainability efforts. He stated that public advocacy would also be an important part of the Group's efforts. Mr. Simmons stated that a public awareness campaign would be a part of the energy services contract, and asked for Group involvement.

9. SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT ON COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY EVENT

Ms. Yarbray stated that an introduction letter for the survey has been developed, and she read it to the Group. She stated the intent was to begin developing a database of contacts that were interested in sustainability efforts. The Group approved of the wording and intent of the letter. She stated that proposal survey questions were being developed. Ms. Yarbray asked for any input for survey questions from the Group.

Ms. Yarbray stated that the focus of the first event would be in the environmental community. The Group discussed possible dates and times for the event. Ms. Yarbray stated the general frame of the event will focus on the GHG inventory and City operations, the target areas of the U.S. Mayors' Agreement on Climate Protection, and what members of the community are doing. The Group suggested considering various days and times for the event. Ms. Yarbray stated that some items that would be needed for the event would include the GHG inventory, laptop and projector, and a large City map with districts, and possibly, streets. The availability of City staff to attend, reach out to specific larger organizations about the event, location availability, and marketing will all need to be confirmed.

Ms. Yarbray stated that post-event considerations included hosting another event taking into account a wider target audience. She stated the sub-committee also discussed district events to allow input from around the city.

The sub-committee was given authorization, under general consensus of the Group, to develop event agenda, proposed meeting dates and times, and move forward with the survey.

TABLED ITEMS

Co-Chair Landau tabled the following items until the next regular meeting due to time constraints:

- 1. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JULY 14th, 2008 MEETING**

- 10. ESTABLISHMENT OF A SUB_COMMITTEE TO MONITOR COMMENTS SENT TO WEBSITE, AND APPOINTMENT OF A LIASON TO THE WEBSITE MANAGE**

- 14. ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ABSENCES**

Ms. Allen moved to acknowledge the absence of Eric Hoekstra, seconded by Mr. Venable. The Group approved the motion 13-0.

15. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Landau and Bob Powell
Co-chairs