

**MINUTES OF THE
COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 9, 2012**

The regular meeting of the Community Sustainability Council was held on Monday, January 9, 2012 in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building, commencing at 3:18 p.m. The following members were present: Co-Chairs Joel Landau and Bob Powell, Bob Kollar, Art Davis, and Derrick Giles. Staff present included Valencia Roner and Caitlin Warren.

Co-Chair Landau announced that there was not a quorum of members present; therefore, agenda items requiring a vote would have to be addressed at the next meeting.

BETTER BUILDINGS GREENSBORO UPDATE:

Ms. Roner shared a letter from the Department of Energy reflecting their favorable response to the City's process and rate of activity relative to the Better Buildings program.

Ms. Roner reported there are 793 applicants to the program to-date. There are approximately 10 to 12 applications in the approval process and 60 assessments have been completed. In addition, a contract has been approved that will go to contractors for execution. A newly formed City-wide Contracting Division will be responsible for the execution and processing of the contracts. She stated that currently there are 14 contractors who will perform assessments and upgrades.

Ms. Roner informed members that 300 home visits have been made by Home Energy Response Officers (HEROs) since December 1, 2011.

EECBG UPDATE:

Ms. Roner indicated that staff is in the midst of a significant reporting period for the grant. Co-Chair Powell asked staff to present an extensive report on the EECBG at the next meeting. He expressed his interest in the programmatic progress of the grant.

ITEMS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Mr. Kollar stated that he also serves on the City's Advisory Commission on Trees (ACT). They are very interested in partnering with the Community Sustainability Council (CSC) in areas of common interest. He noted that the CSC is effectively connecting with the Guilford County Environmental Review Board and he asked members to consider working together with the ACT.

Co-Chair Landau suggested that the idea should be revisited at the next CSC meeting when more members were present. In the meantime, Co-Chair Powell asked staff to examine the Sustainability Audit to explore how it relates to the work being done by ACT.

GREEN HUB OVERVIEW PRESENTATION:

The Michael King Foundation gave a presentation on the Green HUB project. Members of the Foundation present included Linwood Ebron, 5856 Old Oak Ridge Road, Chief Operating

Officer; Felton Wooten, 2401 Lamrock Road, President of Pitts Farm; Derrick Monk, Chief Marketing Officer; Matthew King; and Zaron Johnson, Chief Environmental Officer. Mr. Ebron explained that the Green HUB initiative is a way to bring locally produced organic food to the community.

Mr. Wooten stated that Pitts Farm covers 150 acres in Edgecombe County. They raise alternative crops such as freshwater shrimp and they are now embarking on year-round greenhouse farming. He explained their collaboration with NC A&T University in research projects and the awarding of two grants to Pitts Farm toward the development of alternative crops and greenhouses. Mr. Wooten indicated that they are partnering with the Michael King Foundation to solve food insufficiency in desert food areas including Greensboro, North Carolina. The project will provide green job initiatives, agritherapy and agricounseling for veterans, educational and outreach initiatives as well as nature in the city. He said that 10% of their produce will be given away to the community.

Mr. Monk indicated that Green HUB is a network that establishes a co-op system that does not rely on governmental stimulus to generate funding for the project. Private sector investment into a Green HUB greenhouse on Pitts Farm can generate a revenue gain of 20 percent for each greenhouse production. He also explained how the project creates a sustainable ecosystem.

Co-Chair Powell noted the connectivity between the Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) and the Green HUB initiative. He asked members of the Michael King Foundation how the CSC could help their efforts.

Mr. King stated that community outreach and education were key elements in promoting the initiative. The Group discussed working with neighborhood community garden groups, presenting the concept to Greensboro Neighborhood Congress, sharing links to restaurants and grocers seeking local food providers, and other ways to provide an educational platform to the community.

Mr. Johnson gave an overview of educational efforts they are already involved in and pointed out that jobs would be created with the initiative.

Members of the CSC were receptive to an invitation from the Michael King Foundation to schedule a farm visit. Members were also asked to consider sending a letter to City Council in support of the Green HUB initiative.

Mr. Kollar left the meeting at 4:15 p.m.

GUILFORD COUNTY RESOURCE BOARD DISCUSSION:

Mr. Kollar is a member of the Guilford County Resource Board and is interested in finding ways for City and County groups to work together.

Co-Chairs Powell and Landau recently met with the Guilford County Environmental Resource Board and presented the SAP. Co-Chair Powell indicated that the Board's primary environmental interest is with water. He informed members that the Guilford County Environmental Resource Board recently passed a motion that encourages the two groups to work together in the future.

Co-Chairs Powell and Landau also reminded the Board of the sustainability plan created by the County three years ago and forwarded a copy to them to review and determine how to proceed.

INTERIM CITY MANAGER MEETING FOLLOW-UP:

Co-Chair Landau stated that the meeting went well between the Interim City Manager and CSC Co-Chairs. The Interim City Manager, Denise Roth, has requested a report on how the CSC envisions their work and structure to move forward. The report will be discussed at the January 21, 2012 City Council retreat.

Co-Chair Landau informed members that at the last City Council meeting, Yvonne Johnson made a motion for Ms. Roth to come back by the end of February with recommendations for moving forward with the SAP.

Members held an informal discussion on structural ways for the CSC to proceed. They discussed suggestions that included meeting quarterly, having a City Council liaison, or spinning off into a non-profit organization.

Members discussed the best way to move forward with Green Technology. It was suggested that a community meeting be held that would include the business sector. The discussion will be continued when more members are present.

Co-Chair Landau introduced Brian Higgins. Mr. Higgins, 1011 North Haywood Street, is the founder of Sustainable Greensboro. He discussed possible collaborations between the CSC and other groups. He referred to sustainable efforts in Winston Salem, North Carolina and urged members to consider operating as a non-profit organization. He also discussed the advantage of leveraging partnerships between the City, County, and local universities.

Mary Ellen Etienne, Re-Use Alliance and Green Drinks Greensboro, felt that a public/private partnership would benefit the CSC. She was not in support of the CSC holding quarterly meetings.

Mr. Giles offered to contact Wendell Harding with the Winston Salem sustainability group to invite him to a CSC meeting.

ITEMS FROM CO-CHAIRS:

Co-Chair Powell stated that the first Piedmont Triad Sustainability Community meeting for the county will be held on January 30, 2012. He will forward more information on the meeting when it becomes available.

Co-Chair Powell informed members that a panel discussion will be held at the Weatherspoon Gallery on the campus of UNC-G on March 20, 2011. The topic of discussion is *Greening Greensboro: How the Sustainable Cities Movement Can Make Our City and Region More Livable*. Members felt that the CSC should sponsor the event.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Landau
Co-Chairman
JL:sm/jd