

Greensboro Community Sustainability Council

Minutes, Regular Meeting

September 8, 2014

The regular meeting of the Community Sustainability Council (CSC) was held on Monday, September 8, 2014 in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building, commencing at 3:03 pm.

CSC Members Present:

Joel Landau, Co-Chair	Bob Powell, Co-Chair	Carolyn Allen
Chad Carwein	Art Davis	Tom Duckwall
John Kavanagh		

Staff and Others Present:

Jeff Sovich, Planning	Hanna Cockburn, Planning
Bill Blancato	Sigrid Marks
Howard Taylor	

1) APPROVAL OF JULY 14, 2014 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Davis moved approval of the July 14, 2014 meeting minutes as presented, seconded by Mr. Duckwall. The Council voted 5-0 in favor of the motion (Ayes: Landau, Allen, Kavanagh, Carwein, Duckwall. Nays: None.)

2) CITIZENS CLIMATE LOBBY

Bill Blancato, works with the Citizens Climate Lobby (CCL). Their goal is to persuade Congress to act on climate change. He described the formation and growth of CCL along with legislative proposals currently before Congress. He distributed copies of a proposal that CCL is trying to get Congress to enact. The proposal includes imposing a fee on fossil fuel at the point of extraction based on the amount of carbon emission per metric ton released into the atmosphere. The base fee would be \$15.00 per metric ton increasing every year until emissions are at 50 percent of 1990 levels. Every penny collected would be returned to the public allowing lower income households to pay the higher energy costs. A recent independent study determined that this policy would significantly reduce carbon emissions and would add 2.1 million jobs to the economy over a ten-year period. Once the policy is in place, GDP would increase 70 to 80 billion dollars a year over baseline.

Mr. Blancato said that there are currently over 200 CCL chapters with a presence in 364 congressional districts. There has been interest in developing a CCL chapter in District 6 and he described ways to become involved with the organization. He distributed business cards with contact information to members.

2) UPDATE ON LOCAL FOOD COUNCIL TASK FORCE

Howard Taylor, Food Council Task Force member, gave a presentation on the work being done to set up a local Food Council. He pointed out that local food is in demand and is becoming an important issue. He discussed the impact from the knowledge about food's effect on personal health and the strong correlation between chronic disease and poor

diet. Several public meetings have been held recently by the Food Council Task Force and he described issues that came to light as a result of the meetings. Mr. Taylor noted that there has been a lot of discussion about food deserts. In Greensboro, approximately 30% of households are located in areas identified as food deserts, reflecting a lack of available healthy foods in these areas. He pointed out that the YMCA has not only expressed interest in health through their educational and exercise programs but also in issues of nutrition. They are interested in the challenge of distributing fresh foods. Farmers and growers markets are interested in finding ways to provide more fresh produce to facilities where distribution is a challenge such as retirement communities and hospitals. Education about food production, selection, storage, and preparation is needed all across the system.

Mr. Taylor distributed a Guilford Food Council Process Diagram describing the food system flow. The Food Council will keep track of what is going on in all facets of the system. Their major functions will be communication, advocacy, and education.

To date, the Task Force has researched the food system across the state and a charter has been drafted relative to decision making. There is a member application form accompanied by a list of member skills that are needed in the Food Council. In addition, five public input sessions have been held. The Task Force is trying to provide some basic research information without making decisions about actions that will be undertaken by the Food Council. Numerous draft materials will be available for the Food Council when they are ready to get underway.

Mr. Taylor stated that a meeting will be held next week to assess the information obtained at recent public meetings and draft documents will be finalized. He is hopeful that the Food Council can be launched before the end of the year.

4) UPDATE ON THE "GROWING SOLAR" WORKSHOP

Co-Chair Landau informed members that the draft resolution discussed at the last meeting is being fine-tuned but has not yet been finalized. A two-tiered goal will be set as they ask City Council to embrace the project. The goal is for five percent of Greensboro's electricity to come from solar by a certain date and then ten percent to come from solar by a subsequent date after that. He felt that the final resolution should be ready by the next meeting.

6) SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A) ECONOMY, *Green Technology Forum*** – Mr. Kavanagh indicated that the subcommittee recently met and has set a date for the Green Technology Forum of February 18, 2015. Meetings have been held with the Proximity Hotel who has expressed an interest in accommodating the group. Mr. Carwein stated that the event will take place between the hours of 9:00 am and 3:00 pm.

Mr. Kavanagh said that a tentative budget of around \$15,000 would be needed to organize the event and produce materials to bring people in. He felt that the money could be raised but he expressed the subcommittee's concern of how to get people to attend the Forum. Their goal is to have 100 to 150 people in attendance at the event.

Responding to Ms. Allen's question regarding the goal of the Green Technology Forum, Mr. Kavanagh said that the purpose is to bring businesses in the industry together to connect and network. In addition, Mr. Carwein commented that

companies with knowledge in the sustainability area would be highlighted and information regarding resources and funding could be shared. A platform would be provided for companies who are looking to pursue green technology.

The subcommittee shared the proposal that they plan to present to potential donors. There was a discussion about marketing, branding, and the idea of creating a green economic development engine.

Mr. Duckwall commented that adding space for exhibits, demonstrations, and models at the Forum would provide additional interest for participants.

Mr. Sovich proposed that the name be changed to the Green Economy Forum to draw significant interest from the public, as the economy is currently on everyone's mind.

- B) ENVIRONMENT, *City Green Team*** – Co-Chair Landau reported that there have been no new developments since the last meeting. It was acknowledged at the last meeting that Butch Simmons, Director of Engineering and Inspections for the City of Greensboro, has been in touch with Steve Randall, Energy and Sustainability Manager for the City of Greensboro, to oversee efforts of the City Green Team. Co-Chair Landau plans to speak with Mr. Randall later in the week for an update.

Mr. Sovich stated that the North Carolina Bike Summit will be held October 9 through 12, 2014 at UNC-G. He plans to send additional information to members regarding details of the event.

- C) EQUITY, *Tree Canopy Inventory*** – Ms. Allen reported that Greensboro Beautiful's Urban Forestry Committee is working with Duke Energy to provide new trees in areas where they are needed. In addition, she stated that Judson Clinton, City of Greensboro's Urban Forester, is very much involved looking at properties to determine where power lines are located underground to avoid problems when planting the trees.

Mr. Davis suggested that Mr. Clinton give a presentation to the CSC on his plan of action with Duke Energy.

5) GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY 2013 UPDATE

Co-Chair Powell updated members on greenhouse gas inventory estimates. With the help of Dana Clukey, Planning Department, staff looked into the greenhouse gas estimates for the City of Greensboro comparing them to what was determined in 2007. Greenhouse gases are based on consumption of electricity and natural gas in the industrial, commercial, and residential sectors. It is based on transportation energy use and landfill waste that gives off methane gas. The preliminary information being presented relates to the industrial, commercial, and residential use of electricity and natural gas. More information is still needed on transportation energy use and information on landfill waste needs to be incorporated into the results.

Co-Chair Powell said that he has been cautioned by the utility companies that although a raw number comparing 2007 and 2013 figures can be given, an exact reason cannot be given to account for the differences. He pointed out that residential electricity usage is different from commercial or industrial uses. The number of accounts for residential

electricity has grown by 14%; however, the actual energy use has only grown by 9%. There has been a 4% reduction in energy use in the residential sector.

In the commercial sector, the increase in the number of commercial businesses is matched by the per capita decrease in the accounts. Therefore, the actual usage remained steady, but the per capita usage figure is down by 5%.

In the industrial sector, there has actually been a net decrease in the actual consumption of electricity by 9%. This decrease is due in part to the 8% drop in industrial activity in the City. In addition, the energy use per account has dropped by 7%. This decrease could be the result of either existing industrial users becoming more energy efficient or of new industrial users in the area that are less energy-intensive.

Co-Chair Powell indicated that when combining residential, commercial, and industrial electrical energy usage, the actual consumption in the City from 2007 to 2013 has remained flat. The City used just about the same amount of electricity in 2013 as it did in 2007 for a number of combined reasons.

Co-Chair Powell explained that in the period 2007 through 2013, Duke Energy has shifted its fleet of power plants away from coal and toward natural gas. The actual greenhouse gas (CO₂) production per kilowatt hour has dropped. The electricity usage is flat and the CO₂ per kilowatt hour has dropped. Greenhouse gas production from electricity in Greensboro was lower in 2013 than in 2007. Additionally, natural gas consumption has decreased by 29%. He summarized that greenhouse gases have dropped in the City due to a variety of reasons, some good and some bad.

Ms. Allen asked if greater efficiency in appliances, construction, and other areas played into the drop in levels. Co-Chair Powell suggested that any of the per capita savings that are present in residential and probably in commercial as well, are due to efficiency savings. It was noted that weather conditions would have also had an impact on the results although not significantly.

Mr. Kavanagh commented that these results seem to reflect what he sees happening in the residential market. In past years there was a stronger preference for natural gas. There is currently a trend toward electricity for heating and cooling. It has become more cost effective to build all-electric structures. Mr. Duckwall proposed that the trend may be toward buildings that are heated and cooled by electricity, with the electricity generated from natural gas as a fuel.

Co-Chair Powell indicated that the preliminary report has been reviewed by Duke Energy and Piedmont Natural Gas who were in agreement with the numbers. He stated that he was hopeful the report could be published in November, 2014, followed by community conversation. Co-Chair Landau felt that the results should be reported to City Council after the transportation and waste information has been incorporated into the data.

7) INCIDENTAL ITEMS

- A) Items from Co-Chairs** - Co-Chair Landau plans to contact City Councilman Jamal Fox regarding the remaining open CSC seat.

As requested at the last meeting, Mr. Sovich has drafted a letter of support for the recommendations of the Recycling Program Assessment. Following review, members were supportive of sending the letter as written.

Ms. Allen moved to submit the letter, seconded by Mr. Davis. The Council voted 7-0 in favor of the motion (Ayes: Landau, Powell, Davis, Allen, Kavanagh, Carwein, Duckwall. Nays: None).

- B) **Items from Council Members** - Ms. Allen encouraged the Council to invite the City Urban Forester, Judson Clinton, to a future meeting for an update on his efforts to coordinate with Duke Energy regarding tree replacement and with the NeighborWoods program.
- C) **Items from the Public** – None.
- D) **Items from Staff** – None.

10) ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ABSENCES

Ms. Allen moved to acknowledge the absence of Steve Armstrong, seconded by Mr. Carwein. The Council voted 7-0 in favor of the motion (Ayes: Landau, Powell, Allen, Davis, Carwein, Duckwall, Kavanagh. Nays: None).

It was noted that the next meeting of the CSC will be held on November 10, 2014 at 3:00 pm in the Plaza Level Conference Room.

11) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting adjourned at 4:53 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Landau
Co-Chairman

JL:sm/jd