

Greensboro Community Sustainability Council
Minutes, Regular Meeting
July 14, 2014

The regular meeting of the Community Sustainability Council (CSC) was held on Monday, July 14, 2014 in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building, commencing at 3:06 pm.

CSC Members Present:

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

Staff and Others Present:

Jeff Sovich, Planning	Dana Clukey, Planning
Steve Randall, Engineering & Inspections	Daniel Amstutz, Transportation
Tom Clary	Steve McCollum
Randall Welch	

1) APPROVAL OF MAY 12, 2014 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Davis moved approval of the May 12, 2014 meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Carwein. The Council voted 6-0 in favor of the motion (Ayes: Landau, Powell, Allen, Davis, Carwein, Duckwall. Nays: None).

4) RECYCLING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Alex Arnett, Waste Reduction Supervisor for the City of Greensboro, is in charge of the City's waste recycling program. The program is being rebranded to create new interest in recycling. The Recycling Program Assessment document, compiled by Mr. Arnett and Mary McClellan, Recycling Programs Coordinator for ReCommunity, contains recommendations for the best course of action to improve the program.

Mr. Arnett stated that the assessment looked at many sources of information. A recycling sort was conducted using a week's worth of recyclable materials. They discovered a high contamination rate of 21% in Greensboro's recyclables. The average contamination rate for peer cities is 8%. He felt that one of the reasons for the high contamination rate is because the City only has one solid waste code enforcement officer responsible for looking at 82,000 households. The code enforcement officer can only look in about 5% of the carts on the street in a given day. Mr. Arnett said that last January, City water bill mailings included a recycling survey, which achieved a strong response rate. Among the findings of the survey were that 81% of respondents lack adequate information about what materials are acceptable for recycling. His team also examined recycling metrics to track the performance of the program and found that in Greensboro, just 63% of households participate (ie: set their recycling carts at the curb for pick-up). The team also looked at the number of pounds of recyclables per year generated by a household. The range for typical households statewide is 600 to 900 pounds of recycling per year, whereas the average household in Greensboro generates just 160 pounds per year. Consequently, a much of the solid waste material is not being diverted to the recycling system. Mr. Arnett

pointed out that recycling participation rates are strongest in the northern and western parts of the City and weakest in the southern and eastern parts. He noted that this distribution strongly correlated with the pattern of stress affecting Greensboro neighborhoods, with higher recycling rates in low stress areas and lower recycling rates in high stress areas. Community stress indicators take into account factors such as crime, affordable housing, and access to City services.

Mr. Arnett summarized that each ton of recycling delivered to ReCommunity yields \$30 in revenue to the City. The City has to pay \$44 for every ton of solid waste deposited in a landfill. Therefore, every ton of material that can be moved to the recycling facility represents a combined revenue and savings of \$74.

One of the assessment's recommendations to improve the recycling program is for cart conversion. Mr. Arnett suggested the purchase and delivery to every household of a new blue recycling carts equipped with RFID chips, and using the old brown recycling carts, for yard waste. The switch to automation would represent at least a half million dollar savings per year. Other recommendations included direct marketing, overhauling code enforcement, updating policies, and the introduction of a multi-material recycling facility.

Mr. Armstrong joined the meeting at 3:34 p.m.

Responding to questions about savings realized by the City if the contamination cost was reduced, Mr. Arnett indicated that the City gets paid \$30 per ton for material delivered to ReCommunity. It is then up to ReCommunity to pay for the disposal of material. There is not a direct cost to the City for the 21% contamination rate. However, it does make it difficult for ReCommunity, who has been the City's recycling partner for 20 years. Mary McClellan, Recycling Programs Coordinator for ReCommunity, pointed out that the contamination rate makes it difficult for Greensboro to sell its recyclables on the market regardless of the contractor. Sheldon Smith, Waste Reduction Supervisor for the City of Greensboro, described details of the contract with ReCommunity and said that it was an incentive for all parties involved to reduce the rate of contamination. He commented on the opportunity to change the financial model by actually growing the tonnage to reinvest back into the program.

Ms. McClellan distributed USB electronic copies of the assessment document and presentation to members.

Mr. Carwein was in favor of the CSC offering a letter of support for the recommendations presented in the assessment. Co-Chair Landau asked Mr. Arnett when the proposal will be presented to City Council for consideration. It was determined that the presentation will occur prior to the next CSC meeting in September.

Mr. Carwein moved that the CSC draft a letter of support for the final proposals when they are ready, seconded by Ms. Allen. The Council voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Landau, Powell, Allen, Davis, Carwein, Duckwall, Armstrong. Nays: None.)

Mr. Sovich plans to draft the letter of support on behalf of the CSC.

2) REVISED "RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INCREASING SOLAR-GENERATED ELECTRICAL USE IN GREENSBORO" TO SUBMIT TO CITY COUNCIL

Co-Chair Landau indicated that the resolution is not yet ready for a vote but will be presented at the September meeting for consideration.

3) SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

A) ECONOMY, *Green Technology Forum* - Co-Chair Powell stated that the committee has identified a tentative date of February 18, 2015 for the Green Technology Forum. Two locations, the Proximity Hotel and Revolution Mill, are being considered for the event that should bring in around 150 people from small green businesses. The agenda will consist of three sections. There will be an opening speaker, panel discussions in the morning, a lunch speaker, followed by an open space technology discussion.

B) ENVIRONMENT, *City Green Team* - Co-Chair Landau informed members that organization of the City Green Team is moving forward. Butch Simmons, City of Greensboro, has been in contact with Co-Chair Landau with plans to put together a meeting with department representatives. Mr. Randall was asked to research similar efforts being made by other communities and he is in process of developing a proposal regarding the creation of a Green Team.

Greenhouse Gas Inventory Update - Co-Chair Powell stated that he and Mr. Carwein have been gathering information and all necessary data has been collected to update the greenhouse gas inventory. Members can expect a presentation on the inventory at the next meeting.

C) EQUITY, *Community Gardens Inventory* - Mr. Davis stated that he and Ms. Allen are continuing to work on the inventory of community gardens. He indicated that there is now a Community Gardens website.

5) GREENSBORO BIPED PLAN UPDATE SUMMARY

Daniel Amstutz, Greensboro Department of Transportation, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Greensboro BiPed Plan for the update. He said that the objectives of the original BiPed Plan were connectivity, health and wellness, safety, alternative transportation, economic development, growth management, and enhancing the environment. Many miles of sidewalks and bike lanes have been constructed and many overall infrastructure improvements have been made since the original plan was approved. The update will work on connecting that infrastructure to Greensboro's system of greenways and trails. Improvements in bicycle parking have been made in an effort to make Greensboro a bike friendly community. There is ongoing public outreach through an online survey, and a BiPed Advisory Committee has been formed. In addition, there has been analysis of bicycle levels of service for the arterial roadways in the City and out into the County as well. A safety analysis was also conducted that indicated the need to focus on reducing bike crashes in the downtown and Spring Garden Street areas and reducing pedestrian crashes in the downtown, High Point Road, and UNCG areas.

Mr. Amstutz stated that recommendations in the updated plan include buffered and protected bike lanes. He also stated that the NC Bike Summit is planned for October 9 through 12, 2014 in Greensboro, primarily on the UNCG campus. Launch of the 'Watch For Me NC' bicycle and pedestrian safety awareness campaign will coincide with the beginning of the school year. The Greensboro Department of Transportation continues to work on the issues of bicycle racks and parking programs and are collecting data on the numbers of bicyclists and crashes to justify further improvements.

Mr. Amstutz described the next steps in the BiPed Plan update process as working on the recommendations for bicycle lane implementation goals, creating a priority work plan for

the goals, documentation and drafting of the plan, and conducting additional public outreach. They are currently working on the draft of the plan and expect to have a completed document in the fall of 2014.

6) ITEMS FROM CO-CHAIRS

Co-Chair Landau announced that Maurice Allen, District 2 representative, has stepped down from the CSC due to time conflicts.

Steve McCollum expressed his ongoing interest in the CSC and offered his services in the area of communications. He has experience with writing press releases and other activities that could help promote the activities and presence of the CSC within the City.

7) ITEMS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS None.

8) ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC: None.

9) ITEMS FROM STAFF

Mr. Sovich reported that he attended a meeting of the Transit Alliance of the Piedmont (TAP) on June 15, 2014. During a review of highlights of the meeting, he said that the Burlington City Council recently voted to establish and fund a fixed-route public transportation system for the City of Burlington.

A fundraiser for advocacy work called Power to the People's Transit was held at the War Memorial Stadium shortly after the TAP meeting. A downtown circulator bus service has been launched to provide service in the evenings and on the weekends for night-life activities. The service is fare-based.

The next meeting of TAP will be held on August 18, 2014 at 6:30 pm at Scuppernong Books at 304 South Elm Street.

10) ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ABSENCES

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

It was noted that the next meeting of the CSC will be held on September 8, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. in the Plaza Level Conference Room.

11) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Landau
Co-Chairman

JL:sm/jd