

Greensboro Community Sustainability Council
Minutes, Regular Meeting
May 12, 2014

The regular meeting of the Community Sustainability Council (CSC) was held on Monday, May 12, 2014 in Boswell Hall, NC A&T State University Campus, Greensboro, North Carolina, commencing at 3:00 p.m.

CSC Members Present:

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

Staff and Others Present:

Hanna Cockburn, Planning	Tom Clary
Jeff Sovich, Planning	Elaine Stover, GreenSchemes
Steve Randall, Engineering & Inspections	Dr. Manuel Reyes, NCA&TSU
Howard Taylor	Steve McCollum

1) APPROVAL OF MAY 12, 2014 MEETING MINUTES

Co-Chair Landau announced that there was a quorum of members present and called the meeting to order. He announced that members would be going on a tour of the campus later on in the meeting.

Co-Chair Landau introduced the newest member, Chad Carwein, and asked him to say a few words about himself.

Chad Carwein stated that he has worked for the UNCG Office of Sustainability since September 2013, doing education and outreach, with Trey McDonald, the Coordinator. He wishes to become active in the community. He has lived and gone to school in Lexington, KY, and Bloomington, IN. He is very happy that he can become involved in the community as well as incorporate this into his job. He looks forward to working with this committee.

Co-Chair Landau also introduced Steve McCollum, who was the initial instigator prodding Mayor Elect, Johnson, to arrange the meeting that led to creation of the CSC.

Co-Chair Powell introduced Elaine Stover, who will be speaking about one of the items on the agenda. She has a consulting firm called GreenSchemes which works to restore ecological balance and human connection within landscapes and communities.

Howard Taylor was in attendance at the last meeting, and he is very interested in what this committee is doing in the community.

Co-Chair Landau asked if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes of the meeting in March 10, 2014. There being none, Mr. Davis moved approval, seconded by Mr. Duckwall. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

10. CSC TOUR OF SOCKWELL HALL AND NCA&TSU “NATUCULTURE” FACILITIES – DR. MANUEL REYES

Co-Chair Bob Powell introduced Dr. Manny Reyes, who is with the Biological Engineering Program, which was historically called Agricultural Engineering. This program was once part of the same department as Architectural Engineering. There are aspects of Agricultural, now Biological Engineering, that seeks to use natural processes to accomplish the same ends as engineered processes. Dr. Reyes will take the group outside for a tour of their laboratory.

Dr. Reyes stated that beginning in 2008, Agricultural and Biological Engineering worked in much closer coordination with each other. There is still much research going on in the realm of rural engineering, specifically in the field of biological engineering for stormwater management. Biological Engineering is defined as using living materials to make an engineering design. In 2008, he relayed to his students that there needed to be a change in society’s perception of beauty, after reading in a journal article that “a lawn is a drug addicted carpet”. His students came up with the term “perma-culture” to describe the type of engineered use of natural biological processes and materials. They applied for a grant to fund building a demonstration project on campus. The students then created a rain garden, after some initial difficulties in convincing administrators to allow them to dig a big hole, with the students managing it. They entered their project in a competition with 50 other Universities, and won the top prize of \$75,000. They now use the term “natu-culture”, to describe their creation, which is defined as any human-made system that mimics natural processes within a human-disturbed landscape. So the rain garden mimics nature in a human-disturbed landscape. This is a step towards perma-culture. Ongoing management and study of the rain garden gives students the opportunity to seek other grants and funding. Dr. Reyes then led the CSC outside for a guided tour of the rain garden and natu-culture laboratory.

After the tour, Co-Chair Powell asked if Dr. Reyes and his students had received any resistance from the Agricultural college. Dr. Reyes stated that the difficulty is the concept of beauty again. When people see the rain garden or the floating roof garden, they are unfamiliar with this type of system, so that is always a struggle and they are trying to overcome that struggle. The program is seeking partnerships with with local builders to transfer these technologies into the local construction market.

The Committee members thanked Dr. Reyes for sharing this information and for the tour. They also asked that he send more information to the members by e-mail.

2. CONSIDER “RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF INCREASING SOLAR-GENERATED ELECTRICAL USE IN GREENSBORO”

Co-Chair Landau stated that Elaine Stover and Dave Rogers have helped establish a local group that is working state-wide on expanding solar electricity generation and use.

Elaine Stover stated that the organization Environment North Carolina has several environmental programs, one of which is Grow Solar NC. Ms. Stover felt there needed to be more images and motivations for people to gain insight into solar electric projects. Grow Solar NC is trying to prepare a resolution to present to City Council, that would set a direction and policy to increase solar use. The main thing they want to do is have the CSC review the proposed resolution and make suggestions for changes or additions and improvements so that it could be used as an impetus for “growing solar in Greensboro”. There are potential solar initiatives that the City of Greensboro could adopt, with

education centers, energy capital improvement funds, and the whole community of education on using solar energy as a positive in Greensboro.

Co-Chair Landau stated that in preparation for this meeting he wanted to provide this information for review by at least one City Council member to get some feedback. He showed it to Nancy Hoffmann and she commented that there needs to be backup information to justify the proposed changes to show that it is feasible; and she also wanted to know what goals other cities may have adopted.

Elaine Stover stated that Grow Solar NC will put together a number of scenarios to show the positives of using solar energy in Greensboro.

Steve Randall stated that staff is now working on trying to get some additional solar photo-voltaic (PV) systems installed. Currently the City has only one, that he is aware of, at Gateway Gardens, where there are about 24 panels. The power generation of these panels can be monitored on-line. The primary sites for new PV installation are water treatment plants, where they hope to install a ± 1 megawatt system. Co-Chair Powell asked that Steve Randall provide some additional information that may be used when writing the background for the resolution.

In response to a question by Co-Chair Powell, Chad Carwein stated that UNCG has a few panels near the athletic field, and more panels may be installed soon, possibly including a bus station. These are more for demonstration purposes and educational displays, as opposed to any significant power generation. Elaine Stover suggested that they may want to consider solar-thermal for the dorm rooms, etc. Chad Carwein stated that would be a large scale capital investment question that is simply above his pay grade. He does not have the involvement in that area. The Office of Sustainability is not involved in the planning process on those large scale projects early enough to be able to present information that would make those decisions to become more of a clear advantage.

Co-Chair Powell asked Steve Randall to introduce himself. Steve Randall stated that he is the Energy and Sustainability Manager for the City of Greensboro and he is in the Facilities Division of the Engineering and Inspections Department.

3. SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATES

A) Economy - Co-Chair Powell stated that Will Stewart and Lewis Judge have joined the Economy Sub-Committee and they have had one meeting since the last CSC meeting. They continue to plan for the Sustainability Forum will be held in early 2015. They are currently trying to develop a database of potential presenters and attendees.

B) Environment - Co-Chair Landau stated that he is heading the Environment sub-committee and he does not have a report on the City Green Team at this time, but they will monitor the City energy usage. They will also be working on an updated Greenhouse Gas Audit for the 2012 data year. Hanna Cockburn stated that the Planning Department would intern would be available to work on the Audit for about six more weeks, after which a report would be prepared to summarize the findings.

Steve Randall stated that he receives reports from Duke Energy and Piedmont Natural Gas on the rate of supply to their customers, and from City departments on use of fuel. He can put all this information together for a printout at the next meeting.

Jeff Sovich stated that Dabney Sanders of Action Greensboro has indicated that the Bike Share feasibility study process has been on the back burner for a few months. They are now working to resume that process soon. The third annual North Carolina Bike Summit will be held in Greensboro this year, in October. More information about that event will be coming soon.

Chad Carwein stated that he has been bicycling to work more frequently and it is about 5.5 miles each way. Commuting by bike has allowed him to see different parts of the City from a different perspective, and it seems that the number one priority should be improving bike lanes and sidewalks, before a Bike Share program is offered. It is very scary out there and there are a lot of difficulties to overcome.

Art Davis stated that a bond referendum would probably be needed to establish a Bike Share system and make needed improvements to bike lanes throughout Greensboro. Tom Clary stated that a survey about Bike Sharing in Greensboro revealed that the number one concern among potential users was safety and the lack of an extensive system of bike lanes.

- C) Equity** - Art Davis stated that the Equity Sub-Committee is moving along and there is now a Community Garden website, so a limited inventory of the gardens is now available. In regard to the City's Neighborwoods program, applications will soon be available.

4. PLAN NEXT CSC MEETING (JULY 14)

Co-Chair Landau stated that the next meeting should be scheduled for July 14th as the 2nd Monday in the Plaza Level Conference Room of MMOB.

5. ITEMS FROM CO-CHAIRS

None.

6. ITEMS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

None.

7. ITEMS FROM PUBLIC

Howard Taylor presented a handout on Building Resilience for the members' review. They are trying to build public awareness of the climate and environmental changes taking place. Information and data about climate change is plentiful on the internet but data about the resulting economic, health and other effects of these changes is less readily available. A large repository of such data is now available at a newly launched federal website: www.climate.data.gov. Having such information would allow local areas to customize the interpretation to more accurately reflect their unique circumstances.

Steve McCollum stated that he may be able to help with outreach initiatives in some of the sub-committees through his public relations work. He will make himself available for that.

8. ITEMS FROM STAFF

Hanna Cockburn stated that this is National Bike to Work Week and there was a City ride this morning and Councilman Fox joined in along with about 17 other staff and other riders.

9. ABSENCES

The absence of Carolyn Allen, Maurice Allen, and Steve Armstrong were acknowledged by unanimous vote.

11.ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Landau
Co-Chairman
JL:jd