

GREENSBORO COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL
Minutes, Regular Meeting
May 11, 2014

The regular meeting of the Community Sustainability Council (CSC) was held on Monday, May 11, 2015 in the Transportation Conference Room, 3rd Floor, of the Melvin Municipal Office Building, commencing at 3:03 p.m.

CSC Members Present:

Joel Landau, Chair	Bob Powell	Stephen McCollum
Chad Carwein, Vice-Chair	Tom Duckwall	Bill McNeil
Art Davis		

Staff and Others Present:

Jeff Sovich, Planning	Steve Randall, Engineering & Inspections
Dana Clukey, Planning	Jack Martin, Triad Electric Vehicle Association
Hanna Cockburn, Planning	Carolyn Allen
Greg Johns, Advisor	Sigrid Marks, Triad Reporting

1) INTRODUCTION OF NEW CSC MEMBERS

Chair Landau introduced the CSC's newest member, Bill McNeil, who has been appointed to the District 4 seat. In addition, he noted that Art Davis has been appointed by Councilwoman Yvonne Johnson to fill the open at-large CSC seat.

Chair Landau reported that with the recent appointments, eight of the nine seats are filled. Councilman Jamal Fox has indicated he is working to fill the open District 2 seat.

2) APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 9, 2015 MEETING

Mr. Davis moved approval of the March 9, 2015 meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. McCollum. The Council voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Landau, Powell, Carwein, McCollum, Duckwall, McNeil, Davis. Nays: None.)

3) REPORT ON GHG PRESENTATION AT CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Chair Landau stated that the presentation on the updated Greenhouse Gas Inventory was delivered at the March 24, 2015 City Council work session.

The main conclusion drawn by the updated Greenhouse Gas Inventory is that the City is going in the right direction, since overall emissions have declined; however, the portion of the decrease that can be directly attributed to efforts to reduce emissions is unknown. Chair Landau said that City Council was interested in the report, but that the presentation generated a limited amount of discussion.

Mr. Powell informed members that a Grow Solar presentation was also given at the work session. The report received broad support from City Council. They directed the City Manager to put together a group to develop a plan for how Greensboro can become the most solar friendly city in the state, or in the country. The City Council felt that a potential solar program should be cost effective and meet some kind of business plan requirements. There was a lot of discussion relative to Duke Energy and what they are doing to promote solar energy.

Mr. Powell informed members that there is a bill in the Senate that is intended to provide the ability for users to lease solar power generation equipment, which is seen as a great incentive for businesses. There are a number of ways for cities to engage in these discussions with utilities and citizens.

Chair Landau indicated that City Council wants a small group to be involved in developing a solar energy strategy and goals. It is his hope that the entire CSC will be involved in the initiative in the future. Steve Randall is currently researching information about what is happening with solar energy around the country. Cities that are leaders in solar energy will be identified and members of the committee will talk with them. The committee is composed of Chair Landau, Mr. Powell, Elaine Stover, Steve Randall, Jeff Sovich, and Hanna Cockburn. The information will be taken back to City Council and the CSC will be updated on progress moving forward.

Jack Martin, Triad Electrical Vehicle Association, provided information about three bills that are currently in the Senate. One bill deals with setting energy bills based on time of use patterns. Another bill, the Energy Freedom Act, allows for no money down solar financing. The third bill extends a 35 percent solar tax credit to North Carolina.

4) REPORT ON GREEN TECHNOLOGY FORUM

The CSC co-hosted a Green Tech Forum several weeks ago. Present at the Forum were Mr. McCollum, Ms. Allen, Mr. McNeil, Mr. Duckwall, and Chair Landau. Mr. Powell was moderator of the event. Members of the Green Tech Forum Committee are Mr. Kavanagh, Mr. Duckwall, Mr. Powell, Mr. Carwein, and Kim Yarbray.

Sponsors of the Forum were the North Carolina Energy Association, the CSC, and the U.S. Green Building Council. The Forum followed a template generated by the Sustainable Energy Association (SEA). A report has been put together that will be distributed to CSC members.

Mr. Powell stated that the larger topic of interest at the Forum was residential energy conservation and what business opportunities might result from that. Mr. McNeil observed that there are many sectors with great potential such as the trucking industry. He felt there was a lot of activity occurring in residential; however, there is also great potential in non-residential users. Mr. Duckwall agreed that the emphasis of the Forum was on the residential side. He felt the event was

worthwhile but the next forum should be more owner based with topics other than energy. Mr. Landau felt the Forum was worthwhile but commented that it seemed to focus more on brainstorming rather than directly promoting green industry in Greensboro.

Mr. Powell stated that SEA is having a statewide meeting that is meant to be a gathering of people who attend the local meetings. The meeting will be held in Raleigh later in the week. They would like to have a CSC representative present at the meeting and Mr. Powell plans to send information about the event to anyone interested in attending.

Mr. Duckwall informed members that an industrial site called ADI Laminates will be opening up soon. It is a large solar installation sponsored by the U.S. Green Building Council.

5) REVIEW OF 2014 CSC WORK PLAN

When the CSC's 2014 work plan was developed, each CSC member was assigned to one of three subcommittees corresponding to the so-called 3-legged stool of sustainability: Equity (People), Environment (Places), and Economy (Prosperity). Several non-CSC members were also recruited to participate in the work of these subcommittees.

- A) EQUITY** – Mr. Davis summarized work accomplished in 2014 and stated that members created an inventory of community gardens in the City. Also, the City has adopted an amendment to the Land Development Ordinance that permits a variety of agricultural activities and depending on its location, sets the standards by which that can happen. In addition, NCA&T State University is working to develop an initiative for the Phillips Avenue area, aimed at improving access to healthy affordable food choices for residents.
- B) ENVIRONMENT** -- Chair Landau stated that this group developed the updated Greenhouse Gas Inventory for the City. The subcommittee is also working toward a City Green Team, which would consist of a representative from each department. The Team would meet to gather and share ideas that could serve as best practices for carrying out City functions more sustainably.

Mr. Sovich stated that a team was put together to develop a feasibility study for a Bike Sharing Program in Greensboro. The study is almost finished and should be available soon. He indicated that the 2018 completion of the Downtown Greenway is a key to making a potential bike sharing program viable. Chair Landau stated that the last work item under the subcommittee is Transportation and Land Use. The group would like to see transportation planning and land use planning fully integrated to maximum efficiency. He noted that no specific progress has been made on this item.

C) **ECONOMY** – The main item pursued by the subcommittee was the Green Technology Forum, which was described in detail during Item #4 on the Agenda.

It was suggested that the CSC should invite Action Greensboro to present preliminary findings of the Bike Sharing Feasibility Study at the next meeting.

6) DEVELOP 2015 WORK PLAN

CSC members proceeded to brainstorm project ideas to include in the 2015 work plan and decided to retain the existing subcommittee structure.

Mr. McCollum informed members of the Participatory Budget Initiative. Through the initiative the City is prepared to budget a total of \$500,000, with up to \$100,000 to be allocated per district to fund projects based on public input. Members identified several work items that could be achieved through the initiative.

Mr. Johns pointed out that a large amount of money and trash could be saved by eliminating plastic water bottles and creating water filling stations where individuals would use their own water bottles. A ten cent fee on plastic bag usage was also suggested.

Ms. Cockburn mentioned that staff is working on a USDA Planning Grant and strategies will be available later this year around improving retail access into food desert locations. Implementation strategies are currently being tested that could improve retail access.

Members noted the importance of continuing to monitor urban gardens in an effort to improve food access in communities as well as to providers of homeless services.

Mr. McCollum pointed out the link between food production and the need for water. He felt there should be an overarching theme in the CSC going forward that ties food production, water conservation and renewable energy together.

Mr. Davis suggested that the City Urban Forester present annual updates to the CSC on what is happening with the Tree Ordinance, Tree Canopy Study, and City-owned properties used for community gardens.

Mr. Davis felt that the work plan should include enhancing the collaboration of colleges and universities with sustainable practices through sustainability efforts and programs.

Mr. McCollum expressed interest in the connection between land use and transportation. Members discussed ways to incentivize density along transportation corridors.

Members were supportive of following through with the Growing Solar effort and the Bike Sharing program.

During a general discussion, members identified the following work items under each subcommittee category:

Equity Subcommittee

- Ongoing maintenance of Community Gardens Inventory.
- Partner with Guilford Food Council on improving food access and those providing homeless services.

Environment Subcommittee

- Plastic bag ban or surcharge.
- Bottled water ban.
- Pure water filling stations.
- Follow through with effort to establish City Green Team.
- Incentivize increased development of density along public transportation corridors.
- Follow through on Bike Share Feasibility Study.

Economy Subcommittee

- Follow through with Growing Solar effort.
- Follow through with Green Technology Forum – Business Connection.

Other Work Items

- Collaborate in Participatory Budget Initiative process as a method for achieving other items.
- Strengthen link between food production and water, land, and energy conservation.
- Update present Urban Farm agenda.
- Enhance collaboration and knowledge exchange among institutes of higher education on sustainability efforts and programs.

For the 2015 work plan, CSC members and volunteers agreed to serve on the three subcommittees as follows:

Equity Subcommittee: Art Davis, Stephen McCollum, and Carolyn Allen

Economy Subcommittee: John Kavanagh, Bob Powell, Tom Duckwall, and Jack Martin

Environment Subcommittee: Bill McNeil, Joel Landau, Chad Carwein, and Greg Johns

The three subcommittees gathered into groups to discuss and prioritize their work items.

Chair Landau asked each subcommittee to meet prior to the next CSC meeting. Several members indicated that they had a conflict and would not be able to attend the July 13, 2015 CSC meeting. It was suggested that the meeting be rescheduled to July 20, 2015. Subcommittees should have a draft work plan to present at that time.

7) INCIDENTAL ITEMS

A) ITEMS FROM CO-CHAIRS – None.

B) ITEMS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS – Mr. McCollum asked for clarification on how many of the 12 policy suggestions listed in the Executive Summary of the 2011 CSC Action Plan have been addressed or achieved. Mr. Sovich indicated that a summary of the status of the 12 policy suggestions was made last year. He will distribute that information to Mr. McCollum.

C) ITEMS FROM PUBLIC – None.

D) ITEMS FROM STAFF – Mr. Sovich said that May is National Bike Month. Several events have been planned that might be of interest to CSC members. He stated that the Ride of Silence will be held on May 20 to honor bicyclists who have been injured or killed while riding on public roadways. A full calendar of events is available at Greensboro-nc.gov/bikemonth.

8) ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ABSENCES

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

9) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Landau
Chairman

JL:sm/jd