

GREENSBORO COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL
Minutes, Regular Meeting
July 20, 2015

The regular meeting of the Community Sustainability Council (CSC) was held on Monday, July 20, 2015 in the Plaza Level Conference Room of the Melvin Municipal Office Building, commencing at 3:05 p.m.

CSC Members Present:

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

Staff and Others Present:

Hanna Cockburn, Planning	Steve Randall, Engineering & Inspections
Dana Clukey, Planning	Greg Johns, Advisor
Jeff Sovich, Planning	William Leimenstoll, Action Greensboro
Tom Clary	Dabney Sanders, Action Greensboro
Taknequa Alston	Sigrid Marks, Triad Reporting
Aron McCullough	

1) APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 11, 2015 MEETING

Mr. McNeil moved approval of the May 11, 2015 meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Davis. The Council voted 7-0 in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Landau, Kavanagh, Carwein, McCollum, Duckwall, McNeil, Davis. Nays: None.)

2) UPDATE ON BIKE SHARE TASK FORCE AND FEASIBILITY STUDY

Dabney Sanders, Project Manager for the Downtown Greenway, presented an overview of the history of the Bike Share Feasibility Study and its current status. Although Downtown Greensboro's primary focus is the Downtown Greenway, members of the community indicated that bike sharing was an important issue. As a result, Downtown Greensboro decided to convene a group of people from across the community to begin doing research on bike sharing and its viability in Greensboro. The Task Force began meeting in 2013 for the purpose of putting together a feasibility study to make a recommendation on the bike sharing program. She explained that a renewed and expanded Task Force group has recently been assembled to work toward the completion of the feasibility study.

Ms. Sanders introduced Will Leimenstoll who is doing a summer internship for Action Greensboro. He explained that the Task Force is looking at three main areas as follows: (1) City infrastructure analysis, (2) programs and recommendations,

and (3) funding. Subcommittees have been formed to address these three components and he invited CSC members to attend the meetings.

Chair Landau suggested that there be bicycle parking requirements in addition to auto parking requirements with respect to required infrastructure for new developments. Mr. McCollum recommended consideration of a bicycle taxi pilot program to address a variety of issues in communities. During discussion Ms. Sanders indicated that their goal is to present a bike sharing recommendation in time for City Council's next budget cycle. Responding to a question from Taknequa Alston, audience member, Ms. Sanders stated that discussions are underway for the installation of two bike "fix-it" stations as part of the infrastructure consideration on some existing greenways.

3) GROWING SOLAR UPDATE

Steve Randall, City of Greensboro Engineering and Inspections, said that they are in process of setting a meeting time to discuss information obtained from other cities. The next step will be to set a potential goal for Greensboro. Mr. Randall plans to send out an email to coordinate a meeting in early August.

At the request of Taknequa Alston, audience member, Chair Landau gave a brief overview of the Growing Solar program.

4) REVIEW OF 2015 SUBCOMMITTEE WORK PLAN

- A) **ECONOMY** – Mr. Kavanagh plans to convene the subcommittee before the next meeting. Also on the subcommittee with Mr. Kavanagh, Mr. Powell and Mr. Duckwall, is Jack Martin who is with Triad Electrical Vehicle Association. It was suggested that a representative from Unifi Corporation should come to talk to the CSC about their new recyclable fabric and other sustainable efforts. Members discussed other sustainable ventures in the community.
- B) **ENVIRONMENT** – Mr. McNeil stated that the subcommittee met and narrowed down their list of priorities to items including water filling stations, banning bottled water, the status of the City Green Team, the issue of dealing with plastic bags, and out year issues such as encouraging increased density along transit corridors. The prime issue of water filling stations has been researched by Mr. Johns who has an immediate proposal for review by CSC members.

Mr. Johns referred to UNC-Greensboro's water filling station program and a study put together by Penn State. The subcommittee believes that the water filling station issue is viable and their goal is to make a supporting presentation to City Council. He distributed copies of the proposal to members and described the highlights. The object of the proposal is to establish a plan for the City and eventually Guilford County to ban the sale of plastic bottled water. They will start off with a yearly budget for the City to convert all their drinking water fountains and to have built-in water bottle

fillers. It would be encouraged that all subsequent water fountains purchased for new buildings should come equipped with the water filling station function already installed. A program would be set up over a three-year period where a determined amount of dollars would be dedicated to change out all the water fountains in priority City buildings and park and recreation facilities. Once all water fountains in those priority locations have been converted, discussions regarding a ban on plastic bottles could begin. Mr. Johns explained the misconception that all bottled water is pure, highlighted the advantages of using reverse-osmosis water, and described the many concerns associated with plastic water bottles.

Council members voiced no objections to pursuing the water filling station initiative and presenting it to City Council.

Mr. McNeil referenced a recent article in the newspaper about bringing back water fountains and the hidden costs of bottled water. He felt there was an opportunity for a letter to the editor in response to the article to promote water filling stations. He presented a draft of a letter to Council members for their review. Following discussion, members voted unanimously by acclamation to send the letter to various local newspapers.

Mr. Randall updated members on the City Green Team. A recommendation was made a while back to set up a City Green Team. Several problems have been noted and suggestions have been made. Mr. Randall felt that there must be support from department supervisors to implement a City Green Team and there needs to be significant interest to facilitate the initiative. He commented that it is a complicated process to come up with a format that will work and it must be project oriented in nature.

Chair Landau said that the subcommittee's concept of the City Green Team involves minimal staff involvement time. A list serve could be implemented to highlight things that save time and money. Mr. Sovich suggested disseminating this information through the same channels that the departmental safety teams relay their information. Mr. McCollum recommended pursuing the endorsement of the City Manager for the City Green Team to filter the concept down to the various departments. Chair Landau offered to contact the City Manager to gauge his support for the initiative. Due to the smaller size of the project, Mr. Randall suggested that Chair Landau should instead contact the Director of Communications who has control over the website. Tom Clary pointed out that utility bills are sent to every household in the City. A newsletter of activities is included with the bill and would be a good vehicle for communication.

Mr. McNeil stated that the subcommittee is looking at how other cities have dealt with the issue of plastic bags. He felt there should be further exploration to determine the detrimental effect of plastic bags on the water and sewer system and how to move forward to help resolve the problem.

C) EQUITY – Mr. McCollum summarized the subcommittee’s agenda inherited from the 2014 Work Plan as follows: (1) ongoing Community Garden inventory, (2) partnering with Guilford Food Council on improving food access, and (3) promote greater connections among groups working to improve food access and those providing homelessness services. It appears that the locus of activity around food security is falling to the City’s Community Food Task Force, and the City’s report called *Fresh Food Access Plan*, made possible by a grant from the US Department of Agriculture. In addition, the new Guilford Food Council is seeking to be a clearinghouse for all things related to food security in the community. He described Guilford Food Council’s mission statement and invited any CSC members who are interested to participate in their five clusters of activities.

As a result of the activities of the Community Food Task Force and Guilford Food Council, the subcommittee is recommending the following for the 2015 Work Plan: (1) discard the maintenance of the Community Garden inventory because the NC Cooperative Extension Service of Guilford County is preparing to release an inventory of all things related to food in the community and the Food Council plans to become a clearinghouse for this type of information; (2) align with the City’s *Fresh Food Access Plan* and explore opportunities to connect with their agenda; (3) accept the invitation of the Guilford Food Council for CSC members to tap into any of the Council’s five clusters; and (4) research an amendment to City Zoning Ordinance regarding community gardens and urban farms and a roster of properties owned by the Redevelopment Commission of Greensboro that might be available for food security activity. In addition, research the idea of a surtax on fallow property as seen in an article by Jordan Green of *Triad City Beat*. The surtax was proposed as a way to stimulate some of the empty storefront development. If there is no interest shown on the part of an owner to develop a particular piece of property, a surtax might be implemented to move things forward.

It was noted that Building Stronger Neighborhoods Foundation Grants totaling almost \$20,000 have been given out over time to foster community garden development in Greensboro.

7) INCIDENTAL ITEMS

A) ITEMS FROM CO-CHAIRS – None.

B) ITEMS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS – None.

C) ITEMS FROM PUBLIC – Taknequa Alston, 2012 UNC-Greensboro graduate, stated that her current focus is environmental sociology. She was very interested in the water filling station project and encouraged A&T University to participate in the initiative. She expressed interest in volunteering and Chair Landau explained that any of the three subcommittees would like to have help from non-committee members. He stated that there is currently an

open CSC seat for any interested resident in District 2. Aron McCullough, audience member, stated that he is a District 2 resident and is interested in environmental studies. Chair Landau directed him to the City's website and to contact District 2 City Council member Jamal Fox.

D) ITEMS FROM STAFF – None.

8) ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ABSENCES

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

9) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Group, the meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Landau
Chairman
JL:sm/jd