

Community Sustainability Program Committee
March 4, 2009
City Hall, Public Works Conference Room

The inaugural meeting of the Community Sustainability Program Committee was held in the Public Works Conference Room of City Hall on March 4, 2009. The following members were present: D.D. Adams, Cornelia Barr, Jake Cashion, Jason Frichner, Justin Gomez, Janet Loew, Peter Marsh, Jenni Mowery, Mose Belton Petty, Dr. Irene Phillips, Robert Smith, Anne Tambling, and David M. Wright, III. Also present were Mayor Allen Joines, Martha Wheelock, Assistant City Manager, Randy Rogers, Facilities Management Director, Sandy Barfoot, General Services Director, and Lindsey Smith, Energy Management Coordinator.

Mr. Donald Hamrick and Dr. Kendall Jones, Sr. were unable to attend the meeting.

Mayor Allen Joines called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM. He welcomed the committee members to City Hall and thanked them for agreeing to serve on the Community Sustainability Program (CSP) Committee.

Mayor Joines reviewed his and the city's commitment to addressing climate change and sustainability issues, reviewing his endorsement of the U.S. Conference of Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement, in which Mayor's have committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions 7% below 1990 levels by 2012. For the city, that equates to an almost 25% reduction from current levels.

He noted these efforts were spearheaded by the Mayor of Seattle, who has already achieved an 8% reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions. He expressed frustration about the lack of response to the issue by the federal government as prompting mayors across the country getting involved in the issue. He informed the committee that 910 mayors have signed the agreement, and many positive steps have been taken already in Winston-Salem, including hybrid buses, use of propane, more efficient streetlights, and recycling. He also talked about the city's greenhouse gas inventory and audit that was presented to City Council in August 2008.

Mayor Joines expressed that the entire community must be engaged in the efforts to be successful. The city itself was responsible for only 2-3% of the entire greenhouse gas emissions for Forsyth County.

Mayor Joines reviewed why the committee was formed, reviewing the resolution adopted by City Council in August 2008. He commented that many things are involved in the sustainability issue – schools, incentives, buildings codes, etc. He also expressed that small things can have a big impact on our success in

achieving our goals. The Mayor stated that the city hosted “Go Green” last fall, and felt it was moderately successful.

The Mayor asked committee members to introduce themselves, state their occupation and state why they were interested in sustainability. Staff also introduced themselves to the committee. Mayor Joines also provided the names of the committee members who were unable to attend the first meeting.

Mayor Joines indicated he had asked Jason Frichner to chair the committee. The Mayor turned the meeting over to Mr. Frichner and excused himself from the meeting.

Organizational Items

Martha Wheelock provided a copy and reviewed the North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS14-234) regarding conflict of interest and its relation to service on board and commissions. Ms. Wheelock also provided committee members with a copy of the city’s draft ethics policy and discussed the planned implementation of that policy within the next six months.

Ms. Wheelock discussed the framework of boards and commissions within the city and the staff support that would be provided to the committee. She noted minutes and agenda of meetings are provided to City Council members who are interested in the committee’s work. She also distributed information forms to be completed by the committee members that would assist Chairman Frichner in determining future meeting dates, times, etc.

Review of the City of Winston-Salem Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

Randy Rogers presented an overview of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory that was adopted by City Council. The full report was provided to committee members with the meeting agenda. Committee members discussed various components of the report and asked questions about the report.

Committee Planning

Chairman Frichner suggested that the committee elect a vice-chair, and recommended establishing subcommittees to address some of the responsibilities of the committee as an effective way to address some of the items quickly. The committee reviewed the committee responsibilities as outlined in the committee formation resolution. Ms. Wheelock mentioned that the city had absorbed the costs of performing the greenhouse gas emissions inventory and the memberships to ICLEI and Cool Cities. There is currently no sustainability program funding, and suggested City Council would look to the Committee’s recommendations for budgeting future sustainability program funding. She also

noted the city is looking at options to establish a position substantially devoted to sustainability initiatives from current resources.

Anne Tambling volunteered to serve as vice-chair; the committee agreed to this appointment.

The committee generally discussed meeting monthly, with subcommittees meeting individually according to a self-determined schedule.

Mr. Smith suggested specific metrics would be necessary to quantify reductions. Mr. Rogers indicated staff would have access to software programs provided by ICLEI to perform that task, and staff would be responsible for doing so and providing that information to the committee. Randy also indicated he would provide the committee with a list of resources the committee could use to conduct their work.

Ms. Loew asked about benchmarking Winston-Salem's progress against other cities. Mr. Rogers felt Winston-Salem's progress was comparable to other North Carolina cities and ongoing comparison would be helpful to monitoring success in our efforts.

Mr. Marsh cautioned that information could be misleading – the committee needed to find out what really works in reducing greenhouse gases.

Mr. Smith suggested the committee would need to address the fear of government mandates and develop trust in a formal sustainability program.

Ms. Adams stressed the opportunity to make an immediate impact through going after “low hanging fruit” in identifying sustainability measures. Mr. Rogers confirmed the city was using that approach within our own internal operations.

Mr. Smith mentioned cardboard recycling as a challenging sustainable measure. He discussed the problem with the cost of shipping cardboard to a plant for recycling was cost prohibitive unless a processing plant was available locally.

Ms. Wheelock noted that the city's marketing/communication department was actively involved in promoting public awareness campaign and would be able to assist in public awareness and education efforts.

Mr. Rogers also briefly discussed the stimulus funding currently being developed, and cash could be available through competitive grants.

Mr. Cashion stated that the North Carolina General Assembly has also sponsored some bills that might assist with alternative transportation measures. He discussed the City of Charlotte's use of the ½-cent sales tax for multi modal transportation. Mr. Marsh agreed that alternative transportation was an important

consideration for the Winston-Salem community. The mission of the Community Sustainability Program Committee must be defined by the committee. Funding issues, potential grant opportunities and the role of a sustainability director are all important factors to a comprehensive program of activities.

Ms. Barr discussed land use and planning issues and the need for the community to enforce the provisions of the Legacy Plan. Chairman Frichner suggested that issue was massive and questioned whether that component of the committee's responsibilities might be better held until as a Phase 2 project. Ms. Wheelock suggested land use and planning issues were very technical and complex and would require assistance and support from the Planning Department. She indicated she would coordinate a presentation by Paul Norby, City/County Planning Director, and planning staff at a future meeting date.

Ms. Mowery asked if the city's recycling program was out of money and whether the committee should tackle this issue. Ms. Wheelock affirmed that city support for the recycling program is firm. The issue is which funding mechanism is appropriate for funding the costs of the program. The Utilities Division, Budget Department and City Council are working on reviewing various options as a part of the budget process.

Mr. Gomez agreed that the committee should pursue low hanging fruit. He supported public education and seeking community partnerships as the first steps to engage the community. He liked Green Week but thought there were ways it could be improved.

Mr. Marsh expressed concern about county support for sustainability initiatives, particularly since greenhouse gas emissions were measured at a county level, although urban density obviously contributes significantly to those levels. Mr. Norby will be asked to provide additional information on this subject.

Mr. Wright felt Dudley Watts, County Manager, was supportive of sustainability efforts. He also noted the school system is also a key player in addressing greenhouse gas emission levels.

Chairman Frichner commented that it might be appropriate for the committee to determine what it wanted to do, then form strategic partnerships that aligned with those goals. He felt the committee was responsible for best practices and education.

Chairman Frichner suggested the formation of four subcommittees:

- 1) Public Education/Awards/Best Practices (Responsibilities a, b and d)
- 2) Promoting and expanding sustainability measures in the residential sector (Part 1 of Responsibility e)

- 3) Promoting and expanding sustainability measures in the non-residential sector (Part 2 of Responsibility e)
- 4) Transportation/alternative vehicles/fuels/land use Issues (Responsibilities f, g and h)

Chairman Frichner suggested Responsibility c would play a key role in all of the subcommittee planning. Staff is prepared to be responsible for preparing reports for review by the committee in performing Responsibility f.

The committee agreed to this subcommittee structure, and members were asked to indicate on their preferences form which subcommittee(s) on which they would like to serve.

Chairman Frichner summarized the main role of the committee members as raising the awareness of sustainability issues in the community and instilling in the community the desire to do something about the problem. Then, provide the knowledge and resources of how to do it. A primary role is inspiring the community through education.

Mr. Cashion suggested the use of words was important to the message. He thought sustainability may be the wrong word – we should emphasize values like clean, safe, and healthy.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 PM.