

**MINUTES
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY**

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

6:00 pm McCloskey Room, City Hall, 401 North Morton Street

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 14, 2013

Roll Call:

Members present: Bill Brown, David Parkhurst, David Rollo, Jeff Jewel, Molly O'Donnell, Gary Charbonneau, Dave Rollo, Cynthia Schultz, Ashley Cranor

Regrets: Maggie Sullivan, Claire Cumberland, George Huntington

Staff: Jacqui Bauer

Public: Randy Cassady

Vice-Chair Cynthia Schultz called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

Announcements:

Bill noted that there will be a tree planting this Friday in honor of both Earth Day and Arbor Day.

BCOS currently has 3 council openings. Dave R. indicated that they will be doing interviews very soon and hope to have appointments soon.

Last month the County Council approved a transfer in the county's new energy management fund, comprised of both energy savings from the solar panels and rebates received from the utility.

Ashley also noted that the kids she's been working with as part of their Community Conservation Challenge grant will be presenting policy recommendations to the school board.

Approval of Minutes:

The February 2013 meetings were approved unanimously.

Presentation by SCCAP on hydroponics: Todd Lare, Doug Wilson

Todd Lare and Doug Wilson from the South Central Community Action Program gave a short presentation on their proposed hydroponics initiative, which would employ disenfranchised populations (unemployed older adults, ex-offenders, youths, etc.). He noted multiple benefits of hydroponics, including reduced exposure to disease, reduced land requirements, etc.

They are using "Arthur & Friends Greenhouse" in New Jersey as a model for their program. SCCAP has now signed an agreement with this organization to explore feasibility in Bloomington. This study is expected to take 6 months, and they expect to eventually hire a project coordinator to oversee the effort.

This initiative is outside of the normal scope of SCCAP's mission, but shrinking alternative sources of funding have encouraged them to diversify their programs, including additional revenue-generating activities.

Some other details of the project:

- Currently looking for a site that is 30' x 90' that has water available, ideally located within Bloomington city limits.
 - Are open to using waste heat from an industrial process; could also consider solar power as way to make the project more attractive for grants.
- Are in the process of gathering start-up funds, including some of their own internal funds. Are exploring loans (paid back with products, potentially), gifts, tax credits.
- Hoping to be up and running by the end of 2013.

Who are the key partners? They've identified multiple possible social service providers who can act as partners, but need more help on the farming side.

Suggestions from BCOS: Middle Way House; LIFE Farms

Dave R. noted that hydroponics is not organic, and is more chemically based. Todd responded that there are multiple ways to create the nutrients that are needed, some of which are more natural than others.

How will the project be managed? In the short term, they are planning to manage it in-house, and hope to create an advisory board of experts.

Further inquiries may be sent to todd@insccap.org.

Presentation on Fair Trade resolution: Mary Embry and David Debikey

The Fair Trade Bloomington movement was formed in 2005 with 6 board members with the mission of advocating for increase availability of Fair Trade products. The movement globally is supported by Fair Trade Towns—there are now 600 cities that are identified as Fair Trade Towns.

Because of the widespread presence of Fair Trade Towns in Europe, corporations are starting to change their practices. In the US, there are just 26 Fair Trade Towns, although many others are exploring it. Bloomington would be the first in Indiana.

Efforts so far have involved increasing the amount of Fair Trade items that are available, getting media coverage, establishing a local store, working with local merchants to increase their Fair Trade products.

The last step of becoming a Fair Trade town is to pass a Fair Trade resolution, and they are working to build local support for this. Council member Chris Sturbaum has agreed to sponsor.

The group is looking for a letter of support from BCOS.

Jacqui noted that she has suggested adding other purchasing priorities to the resolution as well to provide flexibility to purchasers and mirror the existing sustainable purchasing policy, and Mary and David indicated that they are open to this.

BCOS voted unanimously to write a letter of support.

Report from the Chair

Update on the Earth Day effort: Jeff reviewed a number of Earth Day events that BCOS will be helping to publicize. Maggie will be putting together a poster to help get the word out.

Global Reporting Initiative: Cynthia noted that the STAR report this year will be based on the Global Reporting Initiative, and the students will be presenting on their findings on April 26—this will also be publicized as part of the Earth Day events. The event will be held in the Hooker Room in City Hall at 10am. Cynthia will report on their recommendations next month.

Food Charter: Dave P. read a resolution expressing BCOS's support of the Food Charter that the Food Policy Council hopes to present to City Council soon.

Jacqui noted that she is concerned with the phrasing of the charter because it includes bullets that don't fall under the City's jurisdiction, and indicated that she would make this comment to the Council as well.

BCOS voted unanimously to support, even if language is changed to reflect these or other comments.

Report from the Sustainability Coordinator

Jacqui described a new Civil Streets Initiative that will focus on increasing courteous behaviors among cyclists, motorists, and pedestrians. She hopes to get the campaign going by the end of April.

Tabling opportunities—there are a number of opportunities coming up in the next few weeks, so anyone interested in participating should contact Jacqui.

Committee reports

STAR committee report: See above.

Environmental Commission Planning Committee: Dave Rollo is the representative, but has not yet been able to attend a meeting due to scheduling conflicts.

Green Business Certification: The group had planned to speak on this at the May Green Drinks, but will plan to expand this discussion to include the broader activities that BCOS has been working on (including the GRI report).

Global Reporting Initiative research project: See above under "Report from the Chair."

Imagine Bloomington committee: the group has not met, and will report next time.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.