

**MINUTES
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY**

Tuesday, December 9, 2008 6:00 p.m.
McCloskey Room, City Hall, 401 North Morton Street

Roll Call:

Members present: Bob Bent, Christine Glaser, John Hamilton, George Huntington, Dave Rollo, Paul Schneller, Cynthia Schultz, Jim Sherman, Steve Ashkin, Toby Strout

Regrets: Christine Glaser, Laura Kamp,

Staff present: Adam Wason, Michael Leahey

Call to Order/Approval of Minutes:

Meeting was called to order at 6:03 pm. George Huntington motioned to correct several items from the October minutes. The October minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment:

Loni Dishon from Fair Trade-Bloomington spoke to the committee regarding her organization, which seeks to bring a Global Gifts franchise to Bloomington, and to make Bloomington a “Fair Trade Town.” Asking the Commission for support in outreach, funding, and volunteer resources.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Committee Reports:

STAR

Cynthia Schultz summarized the subcommittee’s activities over the last 2 months. A decision was made to focus on ‘hot topics’, narrowing the number of categories from 12 to 7. Each broad category contains a number of objectives, with indicators linked to objectives.

John (Chair) voiced concern about the contents of the report shifting every year. Toby commented that we are making sure that we only focus on areas that can be measured. Paul mentioned that we are starting with a smaller focus due to human resource constraints. There was some discussion about whether it makes sense to bring on additional resources, via a paid part time position and/ or volunteer resources. Dave commented that that the IU Sustainability Taskforce has gotten students to work for them for credit. He also spoke about “relocalization” as a potential perspective on the report.

It was mentioned that the IU sustainability taskforce has vetted their list down from 80 to a handful of candidates.

Initiatives

Toby has put in a request for lightbulbs to go to Tuesday Rotary.

Education

Bob mentioned that Tom Evans' students will present their semester projects tomorrow, December 10 at 5:00 pm.

2009 Items: Planning, Priorities and Projects

John opened with an overview of BCOS' history and achievements. He emphasized the importance of BCOS being an addition to the community's efforts -- not another environmental committee, for example -- and how critical it was to create a common-ground approach, that built momentum among various constituencies of the community toward more sustainable practices.

John reminded the committee of the extensive outreach that characterized our first year, including numerous public meetings to gather input about what we ought to focus on, from scores of interested citizens. And the outreach to gather scores of ideas about what specific initiatives we ought to pursue.

He discussed the importance of creating the city's first sustainability report, and the difficulty of capturing in one report such diversity of issues while producing something that the public would pay attention to. John congratulated the committee on its specific initiatives, including the lightbulb replacement, the sustainability tour, and logo creation, as well as direct involvement with other taskforces, and encouraging of local leaders to present to BCOS. He affirmed the current involvement in recycling, water pricing, hospital relocation, transportation, and other issues.

John concluded by emphasizing how impressive the work of the educational effort has been, with such a breadth and depth of community involvement and outreach, including hundreds of people and scores of events. He stated that this effort reflects very well on BCOS and is a great investment for future progress. His overall message concluded with the view that this is a critical time for the organization, to build on a good start, and keep attracting good people to the commission and our work, to our committees (hinting we continue to need chairs and participants), and to keep building common ground in the community.

Steve mentioned the STAR committee as an example of best practices, in terms of having a focused leader and using time effectively. He also suggested creating standards of accountability/ execution of deliverables for each committee, and proposed that if a committee lacks a leader, it should be shelved.

Cynthia spoke about gathering data on outputs and outcomes to measure and demonstrate the successes of the BCOS. She mentioned that the committee lacks a clear focus and proposed that it could have a bigger impact on a policy-influencing level.

John brought up the caveat that it can be difficult to get a group of people to agree on public statements about contentious issues.

George mentioned that “while we can’t be fired, we can be ignored,” which speaks to the subtlety required to weigh in on issues without being perceived as reactionary.

Dave suggested that he could alert the committee to issues raised at City Council.

Steve mentioned that BCOS is not clearly positioned between other local groups (Environmental Committee, Peak Oil, Greenhouse Gas, and IU Sustainability taskforces). He challenged the group to think of what attribute differentiates BCOS, and from what does it derive its authority/ legitimacy. He also mentioned that, versus having Dave report back to the committee on City Council, a BCOS member should be sitting in on City Council and other relevant meetings.

Jim responded that when we have something good and interesting to say, the public will listen.

The conversation shifted to specific 2009 goals and initiatives. Ideas mentioned during the following brainstorming session included:

1. Sustainability Fairs
2. Small, contained projects that can show progress in short periods of time
3. Utilizing a simplified Natural Step or similar framework to measure projects
4. Analysis of UDO/ Zoning through sustainability lens
5. Project that engages community in dreaming up locally owned organization that provides living wage jobs to a diverse set of employees and customers
6. Robust STAR report and process, tied to BCOS goals
7. Formalized link between City and University Sustainability initiatives, with County linkage as a medium-term goal
8. Comprehensive communications campaign around BCOS activities and outcomes
9. Figure out a way to engage business community, while defining “local business”
10. Formal plan to better utilize a wider array of resources for research and analysis
11. Development of formal budget and planning process for organization
12. Formal, regular contact with decision makers (Council, Mayor, etc)
13. Outreach/ ambassador work with other communities doing similar work
14. Host a “Green” summit involving Mayors of other Indiana cities
15. “Transportation Summit”
16. First city to do volume pricing for water
17. Consider net metering for electricity
18. Take leadership initiative in fiber-to-home
19. “Startup Weekend” with/ without a green focus, while defining “local business”
20. Partner with US Green Building Council on a monthly basis
21. Report on impact/ state of recycling/ solid waste management
22. Put on workshops and topical seminars in key areas, to better inform community dialogue and bring attention to BCOS activities (ex. Siren and Photovoltaics)
23. Big plans for Earth Day/ MLK

24. Monthly “Green Drink” networking opportunities (first one 2/18 at Upland)

Jim requested that BCOS members not present be asked to reply with three 2009 goals via email.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm. The next meeting of the BCOS will be held on January 13, 2009 in the McCloskey conference room of City Hall at 6 pm.