

SUSTAINABLE LA CROSSE COMMISSION

May 26, 2011

Administrative Center, Room 3220

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marilyn Pedretti, Dan Bagniewski, Sharon Hampson, Wayne Olson, Jean Salk, Eric Schmidt, Rob Tyser

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Mike Giese, Jai Johnson

OTHERS PRESENT: Karl Green, Charlie Handy, Ron Chamberlain, Jackie Eastwood, Amy Peterson, Nick Nichols, Jodi Scarlett, Daniel Scarlett, Terri Pavlic

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Marilyn Pedretti called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW COMMISSION MEMBER

Chair Pedretti introduced Sharon Hampson, as the new Sustainable La Crosse Commission member. She will be taking Brad Konkel's place who has resigned from the County Board.

PUBLIC COMMENT*

There was no public comment.

APPROVE MINUTES OF APRIL 28, 2011

MOTION by Bagniewski/Salk to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2011 Sustainable La Crosse Commission. **MOTION** carried unanimously. (Giese & Johnson excused)

AGENCY REPORTS/INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

Nick Nichols informed the commission of the Green Tier Groundbreaking event at the La Crosse County Landfill. We are receiving green tier recognition from the DNR. The event starts at 1:00 p.m. Immediately following the Green Tier celebration, will be the groundbreaking for the Gas to Energy project.

TRANSPORTATION REPORT ON THEIR PART IN STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY (FAELLA, CHAMBERLAIN, BLUSKE)

Jackie Eastwood, Transportation Planner for the MPO, was present to discuss four different indicators that were within the Sustainability Plan. They have been working with the City of La Crosse and the La Crosse County Health Department to install facilities. Their goal was to have 10 miles of bike lanes by 2015 – they have almost met this goal already. There has been a minor increase in trails. Transit ridership has been slowly increasing every year.

Charlie Handy, La Crosse County Planner, indicated a portion of their goals had to do with affordable housing. The La Crosse County Economic Development Fund has set, as one of their major priorities, the improvement of affordable housing. They have a few projects going on where they are working with the Coulee Housing Development Corporation, which is a land trust. There are two new land trust houses in the City of Onalaska – one occupied and one under construction. Also there are a few land trust homes in the City of La Crosse, and also there are some working with Habitat for Humanity. They are planning for 12 new single family homes in Rockland where the subdivision had actually gone into tax foreclosure. They have taken over 55 lots that were in rem foreclosure. They have sold 3 out of the 4 homes that are built and the 4th one has an offer. Four more homes are scheduled to be built this year, along with a couple of duplexes to be rented out for low income housing.

The County has taken a lead role on a potential bike/pedestrian trail adjacent to Hwy. 16 in the design of the reconstruction from the landfill road over to Veterans Park.

Midwest High Speed Rail & Shared Ride – they had significant support for the High Speed Rail and Shared Ride until the recent budget cuts from the State.

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Ron Chamberlain, the new Highway Commissioner, has reviewed the Sustainability Plan and took it in a little bit different direction. He distributed the Highway Department Sustainability Initiatives, a summary of which follows:

- Bio-diesel – they are currently utilizing during the warm months when possible.
- Alternative fuels and hybrids – are exploring the idea. Chamberlain recently explored hybrid vehicles for plow trucks – but there is not enough power generated for these types of situations.
- Paving – are utilizing a warm mix instead of hot mix; utilizing asphalt mix designs that contain recycled asphalt; exploring new mix designs that utilize recyclables.
- Use of recycled materials in the base course of rehabilitated and reconstructed roads - grinding up existing asphalt to use as a portion of base; alternative base course treatments
- Salt minimization – reducing chlorides released in the environment thus reducing ground water contamination.
- Alternative plantings – exploring and utilizing slow growth no-mow plantings, utilization of native vegetation and wild flowers where and when mowing is reduced and/or prohibited.
- Renewed focus on environmental impacts in road maintenance and construction – crew training on storm water and culvert replacement; purchasing equipment for minimization of erosion; tracking best management practices in the control of storm water and invasive species; ensuring fish and wildlife passage pas part of road construction/maintenance; minimizing impacts to habitat and endangered species.
- Complete Streets Initiative- ensuring a multimodal process is considered for all road projects

DISCUSSION ON DRAFTING RESOLUTION REGARDING COUNTY'S USE OF ALTERNATIVE FUELS (NICHOLS)

Nick Nichols and Chair Pedretti had discussed preparing a resolution about the use of alternative fuels for county vehicles. Health & Human Services has 2 hybrid vehicles (which saves @ \$6,000/year). The resolution would ensure that all departments are exploring these ideas when purchasing vehicles. As Chamberlain stated earlier, the issue with hybrids for the Highway Department would be power issues, as well as cost. Using compressed natural gas may work well, but the problem with this is that there is only one fueling station in the La Crosse area. Nichols will do some research and bring back a draft of a resolution to the next meeting. He will also check into grants available & explore the possibility of public/private partnerships.

UPDATE ON BASELINE DATA STORAGE AND ESTABLISHING NEW WORKGROUPS (GREEN)

Karl Green met with Steve O'Malley and the Finance and Facilities Departments regarding the above. It was decided that the Facilities Department would maintain baseline data storage, because they are currently monitoring their own buildings. Facilities is working with the Energy Star Program in trying to get comparisons with other buildings of the same type (use). There will be some costs, i.e. campground energy charges, that the County doesn't really have control over. They will then be able to use the baseline to show which buildings (based on energy used per square foot) aren't performing adequately. The City will be introducing a resolution to do the same within the City.

The Baseline Committee has been discussing ways to better articulate this information and get it out to the public. They would also like to come up with some type of grading system that each of the different departments can use regarding sustainable practices and track the progress that they are making regarding energy usage. Nichols will work with them to incorporate the baseline data and also incorporate the rest of the strategic plan. Nichols has been talking with Northstar Local Government and Sustainability Group, who works with several different cities and counties. They have some different reports and different styles that Nichols will send to the Baseline Committee. The Baseline Committee will make some lists for each department to let them know what they are looking for and get these out to Department Heads.

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A Green Building Subcommittee (Eric Schmidt, Dan Bagniewski, Nick Nichols) was formed to develop a policy on new buildings or remodeling and using Energy Star or Green. Pedretti also knows of some citizen members who are interested in working on this. Back in May 2010 Green did an Assessment of Environmental Certification Program so this could be used as well.

DISCUSSION ON 2011 GOALS AND REVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Prior to the next meeting, members of the Sustainability Commission will review and rank the 2011 goals and strategic plans for sustainability. Salk will send out an online questionnaire via Survey Monkey.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Results from the Online Questionnaire
2. Discussion On Drafting Resolution Regarding County's Use Of Alternative Fuels (Nichols)
3. Recycling Facilities for all County Buildings – report from Speropulos (Nichols will check with him)

NEXT MEETING: JUNE 23, 2011

ADJOURN

There being no further business, **MOTION** by Schmidt/Bagniewski to adjourn the meeting at 5:22 p.m. **Motion carried unanimously.** (Giese & Johnson excused)

Approved, June 23, 2011, Terri Pavlic, Recorder