

Notes from Energy and Sustainability Task Force Working Group – Community Involvement

First meeting Feb 25, 2010, City County Building Small Assembly Room

Attendees: Chris Woodhull TribeOne, Pat Hudson LEAF, Joyce Floyd KCDC, Art Cate KCDC, John Harris CAC, Annette Gomberg Sustainable Future, Brad Coburn Pellissippi State, Justin Kropff Knoxville Chamber, Sam Hart Knoxville Chamber, Mark Homer, Emily Woodle City of Knoxville Community Development

This was the group's first meeting. We got together for about 30 minutes during the full Task Force meeting and shared each individual's ideas for and involvement in sustainability issues in Knoxville. This discussion is summarized below.

We chose a group leader – John Harris from CAC – and decided to determine our next meeting time in an online discussion.

The Knoxville community is waiting for City leadership and this group can help citizens take ownership of sustainability issues too. We could frame our work on our heritage and our geography – focus on producing and sustaining locally. We want to prepare resilient communities.

Brad Coburn is with Pellissippi State Community College. Pellissippi has a BEP training program. Their campuses are available for use. The solar training at Pellissippi is a 3 year certification including 74 contact hours.

Joyce Floyd and Art Cate from Knoxville's Community Development Corporation (KCDC). KCDC is working on measuring their savings. Have developed a Section 8 renters (vouchers for low-income renters) rating tool weighted on energy efficiency with CAC. They are looking at ways to implement LEED standards in projects. U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) "green communities" exist at Valley Oak Apartments. KCDC also carries out a resident training and education program. KCDC was apart of the Ameresco energy audit.

John Harris with Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC). John organizes the Americorps program for Knox County. Americorps volunteers work closely with schools and others to teach principles and practices of sustainability. CAC was apart of the Ameresco energy audit. CAC also receives funding from City and County sources to implement weatherization strategies for home owners in Knoxville and Knox County.

Annette Gomberg works with Sustainable Future. They are installers of solar and weatherization and home energy audits. They are oriented to be able to successfully share renewable energy information community-wide.

Mark Homer is an interested citizen and is looking for ways he can plug in to this process. He wants to help Knoxville citizens organize themselves around issues of sustainability.

Sam Hart and Justin Kropff are with the Knoxville Chamber. The Chamber hosts information sessions, has a usable website and touches many businesses – about 2000 members. The Chamber is a good outlet for communicating our message to the business community in Knoxville.

Pat Hudson is with LEAF (Lindquist Environmental Appalachian Fellowship) and will share work on this working group with Dawn Coppock. LEAF works with sustainability in churches. They have a state-wide network. Their goals is providing churches guidance on living more lightly on the earth.

Emily Woodle works for the City of Knoxville Community Development Department and is assisting with the efforts of this working group. Community Development currently requires at least Energy Star certification in our housing programs, including the redevelopment of the Fifth Ave. Motel, Eastport Elementary School (LEED), and Flenniken School (LEED).

Second meeting March 24, 2010 – KCDC office

Attendees: Art Cate, Joyce Floyd, John Harris, Susanna Bass City of Knoxville Sustainability Coordinator, Brad Coburn, Annette Gomberg, Sam Hart, Stan Johnson SEED, Mark Homer, Emily Woodle

Our main goals for this meeting was to discuss a mission statement for our group, decide on outreach efforts for Earth Day, and discuss preparation for reporting to the full Task Force on April 29, 2010.

Value words listed:

Communication

Educate

Inform

Transparency

Involvement

Raise awareness

Energy

Promote

The public

Informing community

Engage

Build relationships

Our group discussion about the mission statement started out broadly and ended with a re-focus on the outline provided by Susanna Bass at our first breakout meeting during the February 25, 2010 Task Force meeting.

Draft mission statement for our working group:

To foster marketing, incentive and leveraging recommendations for community involvement to COK Energy and Sustainability Taskforce.

It is our role at this point to look at the three recommendations from the Energy Inventory report and prepare to report back to the Task Force with recommendations on how to implement recommendations from the report.

Energy Inventory Next Steps for Community Involvement Work Group:

1. Marketing Task Force and City successes and engaging the community
 - For example,
 - a. Ameresco project
 - b. Energy and Environment Community Block Grants (EECBG) funded projects
 - The Working Group needs to determine the status and outcome of both these projects
 - It was discussed that sharing information about successes the City is having must be in terms that resonate with citizens – for example, if we want to highlight the transition to LED traffic signals, we must be able to connect the expense saved by using LED lights in our traffic signals, and when possible talk about what is then able to happen because of savings created due to use of the new lights.
2. Incentives and Program Participation Drivers
 - a. Educate about the importance of renewable energy
 - b. Formalize clean energy business, job development strategy
 - The Working Group will gather research data during Earth Day, and at other future events such as various farmer's markets (determine other outlets to do this information gathering), about how citizens understand sustainability and efficiency in City government and in their own homes.
 - It will be important for this Working Group to begin the education process in a manner that we can be successful – not biting off more than we can chew.
 - The Working Group needs to understand the City's clean energy business and job development strategy (mentioned on page 9 of Knoxville's Energy Inventory).
3. Leveraging sustainability
 - a. Develop targeted community engagement strategies
 - b. Identify grants and potential partnerships within organizations

- Groups we discussed engaging:
 - Neighborhood Associations – at least via weekly Neighborhood Advisory newsletter
 - Chamber Newsletter/Business Journal
 - UTK
 - Pellissippi State Community College
 - Knox County Schools, private schools, home schoolers
 - Churches
 - Business and Professional Associations
 - Library
 - Farmer’s Markets
 - Dogwood Arts Festival
 - Ijams Nature Center

We have not yet discussed grants and potential partnership organizations – we will do this when we meet again.

To Dos

1. This group’s goal for Earth Day is to:
 - have a one-pager to hand out at the Knoxville Earth Day event April 17 – Art Cate agreed to work with Susanna to create and print the handout from a section of Knoxville’s Energy Inventory report.
 - Develop a brief survey for collecting information on Earth Fare attendees’ perception of what the City is doing regarding energy efficiency and sustainability.
 - If individuals have other information about their work they would like to share at Earth Day, get that to John Harris.

2. The Task Force’s next meeting is April 29 at the City County Building. This group will be prepared to update the TF on the following items:
 - Draft mission statement for Community Involvement Working Group.
 - Draft recommendations based on Energy Inventory next steps listed above.
 - Update on the work the group has done to develop recommendations.