

SUSTAINABLE LA CROSSE COMMISSION

Thursday, June 23, 2011

Administrative Center, Room 3220, 400 N. 4th St.

4:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marilyn Pedretti (exc. 5:18 p.m.), Dan Bagniewski, Mike Giese, Sharon Hampson (4:03 p.m.), Wayne Olson, R. Jean Salk, Eric Schmidt, Rob Tyser

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Jai Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Hank Koch, Maureen Freedland, Nick Nichols, Karl Green, Brian Fukuda, Jerry Severson, Linda Van Art, Joe Morse, Margaret Norden

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

None requested.

APPROVE MINUTES OF MAY 26, 2011

MOTION by Bagniewski/Schmidt to approve the Minutes of May 26, 2011. **Motion carried unanimously.** Hampson, Johnson excused.

AGENCY REPORTS/INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

- Nick Nichols and Marilyn Pedretti reported on attending the Midwest Regional Energy Association Sustainable Building Fair, which is the largest sustainability fair in the world, and had many valuable workshops and connections.
- Nick Nichols reported that La Crosse County and Western Technical College co-hosted the Sustainable Cities Regional Collaboration meeting that included University Extensions from Minnesota, Iowa and Wisconsin, and addressed sustainability in the tri-state area.

CITIZENS ENERGY TASK FORCE PRESENTATION ON CAPX2020

The CAPX2020 high voltage project includes the proposed Badger Coulee 345 kV ATC transmission line from North La Crosse to Madison. Linda Van Art and Joe Morse, representing Citizens Energy Task Force (CETV), gave a presentation regarding the organization's concerns and opposition to the project. Van Art stated that trees in the proposed construction corridor will be clear cut and maintained with herbicides, thus destroying bird habitat. The electricity to be transmitted will be coal-fired power, which increases the dependence on fossil fuel, rather than making a commitment to renewable energy. Morse stated that local rate payers will be paying the cost of the project. It will not provide electricity to those users, but will transmit electricity to eastern U.S. areas, which actually do not want non-renewable energy interfering with their efforts in renewable energy. He spoke about democratizing energy efficiency and self-reliance, and concluded that high voltage is not affordable and not good public policy.

DISCUSSION ON RESOLUTION RECOMMENDATION REGARDING CAPX2020

A sample resolution, as provided by CETV, was distributed. The resolution opposes the planned grid expansion and requests additional public hearings before a recommendation is made on a Certificate of Public Convenience. It also calls for implementation and enforcement of Wisconsin Bill 414 that demands consideration of energy conservation and efficiency and noncombustible renewable energy resources. It also requests adoption and action of Wisconsin's energy policy regarding local ownership of energy generation. Lengthy discussion followed the CETV presentation. Sharon Hampson asked for recent statistics regarding reduced energy demand and the source of the statistics, and stated she would like to see more science-based information. Mike Giese stated that each community would have different issues, and any resolution should quantify that community's impact and put it into context. Joe Morse stated that the primary goal is to have additional public hearings with opportunities to hold discussions, and to hold the hearings within the next six month time period, after which the Public Service Commission will make a decision on proceeding with the project.

COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON ITS PART IN STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Brian Fukuda gave an overview of goals and accomplishments for Economic Development, as follows:

- Develop a marketing piece that is focused on attracting businesses within the sustainability industry: Fukuda stated they had partnered with the La Crosse Area Development Corporation to produce a brochure for use at various industry shows.
- Build a library of reference materials regarding green building techniques, which can be shared with other area organizations and developers: Fukuda reported that there is a small amount budgeted for reference materials, and the library now includes topics such as green office building, urban density design, and food markets. Suggestion was made to list the resources on the website, and to link with LADCO and La Crosse Area Builders Association websites.
- Encourage local businesses to adopt sustainable business practices, by leading by example and sharing our successes: Fukuda reported they are hoping to track results, and need to have good data. Documented success stories can then be posted on the website.
- Work to attract more living wage jobs to the County. Fukuda reported that having reliable jobs reporting has been a challenge: Karl Green added that jobs data is a moving target and they have relied on the tax base for an indication.
- Develop a revolving loan fund that is focused on lending to businesses in the sustainability industry or for local businesses to complete projects that will make them more sustainable in their practices: Fukuda reported there are currently three revolving loan funds, one county-funded, one state-funded, and one federal. There has been another fund created for workforce housing in Rockland. They also encourage employer-assisted housing, such as that created by Franciscan Skemp within its neighborhood, which can reduce employee commutes to work.

NOTE: At 5:18 p.m., Chair Pedretti was excused, and Eric Schmidt took the Chair.

REPORT ON ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING RANKING OF GOALS & STRATEGIC PLANS

Jean Salk gave the following results from the on-line survey that was sent to Commission members:

Out of 52 items slated to be completed in three years or under, the top 12 were:

- County success stories in media;
- New employee sustainability training;
- Programs to encourage shorter commutes;
- Energy audit for all buildings;
- Savings report;
- Employee newsletter columns;
- Bike friendly county campuses;
- Expand transit service;
- Consider lifecycle costs in purchases;
- Comprehensive recycling program;
- LEED standards for new buildings/remodeling;
- Centralized recycling program.

The top self-specified priorities were:

- Energy audit;
- LEED standards;
- Expand transit service;
- County success stories in media.

Lengthy discussion was held about tying goals to actions, and the need for measurement over time.

Rob Tyser suggested picking out things in the Sustainability Plan that can be measured, but also recommended looking at the entire plan with an objective of simplifying, filling in gaps, and identifying items to focus on.

MOTION by Tyser/Hampson to identify a limited number of goals and actions that can be clearly monitored for both city and county. **Motion carried unanimously.** Johnson, Pedretti excused.

MOTION by Olson to amend to add "and produce a report to post on the website" failed for lack of a second and was withdrawn by Olson.

DISCUSSION ON RESOLUTION RECOMMENDATION REGARDING COUNTY'S USE OF ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Nick Nichols stated he had not been able to find an agreeable time to discuss a resolution with the County Administrator and the item was referred to the next meeting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No specific items were suggested. Discussion took place regarding the role of the Commission in setting policy. Hank Koch suggested returning to "The Natural Step" to set a broad policy and timetables, and directing department heads to accomplish goals and be held accountable. Wayne Olson also spoke about the Commission's charge of public outreach.

NEXT MEETING: JULY 28, 2011

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Tyser/Olson to adjourn. **Motion carried unanimously.** Johnson, Pedretti excused. Meeting adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Approved, July 28, 2011, Margaret Norden, Recorder