

Durham Energy Committee

Minutes of April 6, 2009 Meeting

Attendees: Don Brautigam, Fil Glanz , Kevin Gardner, Nat Balch (This meeting's scribe), Robin Mower

Absent: Vaso Partinoudi, Dave Cedarholm

1. Welcome: Welcome to Robin Mower, as town council rep to the DEC.

2. Minutes: The 3/16/2009 meeting minutes were approved. The following requests were made for future minutes:

- a. Please put scribe's name/initials on minutes.
- b. Please add action items on minutes.

3. Introduction to Ellen Karelitz by IWMAC representative Nell Neil:

The IWMAC has focused on dealing with solid waste, and lately been focusing more on reducing waste quantities. Ellen Karelitz has been participating in the Natural Step program for eight weeks, and wishes to introduce elements of the program to the town departments and officials. The Natural Step originated in Sweden; the book "The Natural Step" that is used in this country was written in the United States; however, many examples are from Sweden since the program has been for a longer time in Sweden.

Ellen Karelitz:

Teaches at UNH, teaches writing, learning initiatives, etc.

Participated in Natural Step study circle last summer

Principles (developed in 1983 by a Swedish doctor.)

Four sustainability principles were developed:

- Reduce dependence on fossil fuels
- Reduce dependence on chemicals
- Reduce encroachment on nature
- Meet human needs fairly and efficiently

One concern of Ellen's: Practices can be Green, but not sustainable. For instance, corn ethanol, is considered green, but has been shown to be unsustainable, in that it displaces agriculture which could focus on food.

In the City of Portsmouth, government leaders have been trained in Natural Step principles. It shows up in records and minutes of City Council meetings.

Gov. Lynch has established funding and support for programs supported by Natural Step. Jack Ruderman (Director, Sustainable Energy Division, Public Utilities Commission) has established a \$30 Million energy fund.

The town of Newmarket is in the process of adopting Natural Step principles.

Ellen would encourage DEC adoption of Natural Step principles, partly because of its clarity in purpose.

For more information, go to: www.naturalstep.com

The book "The Natural Step" has many examples, some of which aren't necessarily applicable to US, since it was written in Denmark. However, our government could benefit from some aspects of Natural Step.

Bert Cohen (Portsmouth Sustainability Institute) has expressed willingness to present to us at our mutual convenience.

Ellen thought it would be wise for townspeople to be knowledgeable about Natural Step before advocating drawing up a resolution to include its principles into town workings. This would mean having an eight-week workshop program available here in Durham for Town Council members, Building Inspector, Planning Board, etc.

Portsmouth has been supporting Natural Step for over a year. While there is some resistance to using the principles at times, there is some room built into the principles for flexibility.

Robin: Perhaps we can start promoting the Natural Step with the town.

Nat: This could be a tool toward implementing the Master Plan.

Don: This may be one of several initiatives that Portsmouth has signed on to (e.g., another is the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives' Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) campaign.)

Nat: Perhaps we should contact Tom Kelly/UNH Office of Sustainability as to whether other similar programs exist, and how this may compare with others.

Mike: It may be hard to get substantial participation in town.

Don: Sometime in the near future we should decide whether we should promote the Natural Step.

Robin: We should contact Ellen or Nell as to how to set this up.

Action Item: Fil will contact Bert Cohen regarding this.

Robin: The value of this is that it may be a disciplined approach to heightening conservation awareness.

Don: the value of something like this is that it expands the horizons of people who are not currently aware of sustainability/conservation philosophies.

Fil: Ross Kittell (UNH Business School) moderated a discussion on the economy at the MUB last week. One example he used in the discussion was Beach Pea Bakery in Kittery, and its efforts to be more sustainable in its operations.

4. Submission of “Town of Durham Home Energy Audit and Retrofit Pilot Program” proposal

Kevin wrote a proposal for household energy audits and retrofits that Todd submitted to Public Utilities Commission on March 20, 2009. Up to \$400 out of \$500 is available per household for funding for an energy audit, and up to 1/3 of a maximum of \$1800 of project costs. Kevin hopes we will find out in May.

Assuming we get funding, we would get a list of pre-approved auditors available, and go from there.

Action Item: Kevin will write Amanda Merrill regarding the grant.

Action Item: Kevin will fill Nat in on an Education/Outreach grant RFP.

Possible outreach audiences: Townspeople, Bldg. Inspector, planning board, developers, etc.

5. Master Plan update:

Work on the Master Plan chapter has been progressing. Doug Clark suggested the town should hire a professional to take the work completed to date and begin to draft the actual chapter.

Don: One thing you have to watch out for with outside writers is to get it to people who have experience with the town.

Robin will find out whether a rep from the county extension service can assist in this regard.

Fil mentioned that he went through the pillars and looked at elements that are more feasible or less feasible for implementing.

Kevin: We should pick up the brainstorming process commenced at the last meeting for strategies for implementing.

Robin: How would this filter down through the various layers of town government, and how could you encourage participation. Would Natural Step workshops in the departments be the key?

Robin: Where do town values come in to decisions regarding vehicle acquisitions, etc.?

Kevin: The GHG (Greenhouse Gas) inventory showed that town energy use is miniscule compared with overall town use.

Action item: Robin will ask Jim Campbell if someone can help write the energy chapter.

Next meeting we will continue with the brainstorming process.

6. New Business:

Fil described the Smart Jitney program. This is similar in some respects to Safe Rides, which UNH is doing right now. It organizes like-scheduled people to share vehicles on a computer database.

Kevin mentioned that there is an effort to build the Zip-Car idea.

Nat gave an update on a volunteer participation conversation he recently had with Dale Valena.

Action Item: Please send in ideas, projects, etc., which could be suitable for volunteer attention. Nat will assemble the items and projects, send them out to the committee for review, and then get together with Dale and Chuck Baldwin to see what they think. d

Update on newsletter: Nat will distribute the Spring Newsletter via email.

Action Item: Robin will ask Tom Johnson if he would like to speak to us regarding energy conservation regulations in buildings.

Action Item: Mike Hoffman will invite Jack Farrell and Eric Chinburg to talk to the DEC regarding energy efficient building issues.

7. The next meeting will be held on April 20, 2009.

8. The meeting was adjourned at 5:59:15 PM.