

Baltimore Commission on Sustainability
July 26, 2011 Meeting Report

Date: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 from 4-6 pm

Location: Department of Planning Boardroom, 417 E. Fayette St. 8th Floor

Subject: Commission on Sustainability July 2011 General Meeting

In Attendance: (*Commissioners*) – Ted Atwood, Davis Bookhart, Cheryl Casciani, John Ciekot, Peter Doo (by phone), Ray Ehrlich, Lynn Heller, John Quinn, Jake Ruppert, Ali Smith, Scot Spencer, Tom Stosur, Ed Whalen

(*Staff*) - Beth Strommen, Alice Kennedy, Holly Freishtat, Abby Cocke

Topics addressed:

- Minutes approved June 2011 meeting.
- Staff Report
 - Climate Action Plan – still in final stages of contract review. Finalizing requests from City Audits Department. Planning to launch first Advisory Task Force meeting in October.
 - The Baltimore Business Energy Challenge, a project of the Baltimore Neighborhood Energy Challenge – has launched. Tom Caponiti, a former BNEC Americorps member is the Outreach Coordinator. We are working with Main Streets and will focus outreach on these 10 areas.
 - PBS will be filming BNEC activities to be included in a PBS documentary “Earth: The Operators Manual”, which will air April 2012. This is really exciting; Baltimore is one of 4 communities across the Country being documented for their community energy work.
 - Urban RFQ – review process complete, farmers chosen. Big City Farms, Five Seeds Farm, Real Food Farms, Seed & Cycle, Our Farm Next Door. Next step – match to properties.
 - All Hazards Mitigation Plan – update happening
 - Deconstruction – DGS and DHCD agreed to work with Sustainability on Deconstruction. DGS will modify bid specs. DHCD work on a pilot for job training.
 - Interns – Zena Savoy working on green purchasing policies, Tanisha Cottman is a Morgan State architecture graduate, working on deconstruction, sharing her with DGS, and we will have an intern for the composting pilot project \$1000 stipend for white paper to document effectiveness of program.
 - Dana Cooper is the new DPW rep waiting Mayoral approval.
 - Food Policy Initiative – Jamie Nash, Program Coordinator working with Holly starts on August 8th. Also same day that Holly becomes full-time City staff.
 - Public Market Healthy Food Assessment, 60 page report, presenting to Baltimore Market Corporation.
 - Working with BOPA for EBT machine at JFX market
 - United Way – conversation with Future Harvest for a farming training program
 - Vending Machine literature review
- Chair Report
 - Thank everyone for June meeting with Legislators. It set the stage for a good relationship.

- Looking to distill information from meetings and begin conversation about next year. Not trying to come out at end of this meeting with a finalized list.
- We will then talk about metrics and hear from Alice and committee.
- Will send out a poll seeing if August 23rd will still work for meeting or if we need to switch meeting to August 30th.
- Highlights from Recent Commission Meetings
 - April
 - At the Community Foundation with Mary Pat Fannon and Vinnie DeMarco
 - Mary Pat Fannon – City legislative agenda driven by funding. Willing to work with us. There is wiggle room.
 - Vinnie DeMarco – advocacy campaigns don't happen alone, need strong lead agency or partner.
 - May
 - Event with Community at Humanim.
 - Meeting itself was essentially a pep rally
 - A lot of energy around the agenda and people were surprised about how much is going on.
 - People want to be part of something bigger
 - Grateful for leadership
 - Can't do things along
 - Other comments:
 - Good idea as an annual event
 - Reinforces communication
 - Jake – met with Delegate Clippinger, no clearinghouse of information in Baltimore, and a whole lot of uncoordinated efforts. Example Patterson Park charrette. Next steps for website?
 - June
 - Meeting with State General Assembly members
 - Need and are open to advice and guidance on issues
 - Delegate Glenn took a risk sharing feelings on bag bill but invited conversation
 - No idea of the breadth of agenda
 - Other comments:
 - Davis – Delegate McIntosh brought up a good point, other thing to think about are fees. Only enough oxygen in room to handle one thing at a time. Focus on incentives. Maybe conversation is marrying with other taxes in opposite direction.
 - Green jobs: poor district it is a luxury to think about green jobs. Everyone has different ideas on green jobs. Solidify definition and promote it.
 - Scot: thread about 3 meetings is to clarify communications. Disconnect in communications. One page clear statement for people to sign on to. Pro bono communications guru to refine messaging.
- Status Report on 2011 Work Plan Priorities
 - Alice reviews updates on work plan & priorities
 - Discussion on communications activities and tools
 - New communications tools in place
 - Twitter, Facebook, newsletter, op-ed, Vimeo video channel

- Lynn Heller– reaction/question comes from a strategic planning perspective. Do we want to try, given breadth of everything going on to establish or operate in a traditional way: goals & vision works stems from those or do projects drive work?
 - John Quinn - original plan highest level. Work flow dials down to lower level and direct to take on opportunities as they come along.
 - LH – don't have a manual process to decide what we are going to accomplish.
 - Ray Ehrlich – Easy to lose track of all issues we talk about. If we are going to prioritize, stick to a framework. Lots floating around – spread thin
 - Tom Stosur – not so random
 - LH – Work staff is doing is beyond fabulous. All stem from the Sustainability Plan goals, don't know what priorities tie to. How do we bet target limited resources?
 - RE – what we have now is too much. More effective to narrow down
 - Peter Doo– Focus a bit. Look at financial impact of these things. Strategies or goals, what are the challenges, financial impacts, no or low cost initiatives. Go through and complete a business analysis approach when deciding. What happens if we don't do anything?
 - Davis Bookhart– Points to consider: what do we mean by “we”? Sometimes that is Alice, Commission, broader community. Not clear, no name attached. Who is going to do goal or work? No budget or authority to implement. What is our role to hold accountable as stewards of the Plan.
 - Cheryl – challenge: create a pulpit without authority, budget, and role. Find and hold feet to fire.
 - Davis – strong business case, which ones hold value, analysis and then take back out to community.
 - Jake Ruppert – creating narrower list of projects to pursue. Concerned about horizon and opportunities. Not concentrate on a list of many, focus on 5 or 7.
 - Lynn Heller – what extent should we be involved in deciding work plan of Office of Sustainability. Team working in tandem.
 - Ray – narrower list. Create opportunity for more comprehensive look at what is going on.
 - Themes of discussion:
 - Clearinghouse
 - Legislation
 - Narrow focus
 - Communications
 - Office vs. Commission roles
- Metrics Discussion
 - Alice has been working with a committee of Commissioners: Peter, Davis, Patrick, Mary, as well as Lorraine Doo as a consultant.
 - Looked at current metrics. Last 2 years have been good, but we all feel that we can do more, better.
 - Metrics help fundraising efforts, gauging process, driving work plans and priorities, helps to find gaps in resources.
 - Asked Holly to provide example of Greening Goal #2.
 - Uses the Goals and Strategies in Sustainability Plan.
 - Currently there are 131 Strategies that aren't being measured or evaluated on a regular basis.
 - Who is responsible? Create metrics, based on Strategies, with Agency or Organization that is lead. Get buy-in and support.

- Utilize central reporting form for ease of collection. CitiStat also willing to assist with data collection.
- Work with Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance and Jacob France Institute for neighborhood level metrics and indicators.
- Tom – tremendously frightened at amount of staff time to deliver. Translating this. It gives pause to see it at this scale.
- Cheryl – Balance with monitoring of Plan advancement first 2 years.
- Davis – lead people to take responsibility. Who is the right person to be accountable? People to do work, transfer responsibility, collecting and presenting. Who is the audience? Maybe 2 documents? Policy makers – technical document.
- Cheryl – thought to leave with. Connect two conversations. Might seem too much but this is all we are supposed to do. How do we do this, having everything else to do and not killing the few resources we have? Mindful that this is what we are mandated to do – how are we going to do it?

Upcoming Events:

- Next Commission on Sustainability Meeting: Tuesday, August 23rd, 2011, 4 PM at 417 East Fayette Street, 8th Floor