

Baltimore Commission on Sustainability
August 30, 2011 Meeting Report

Date: Tuesday, August 30 2011 from 4-6 pm

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

Subject: Commission on Sustainability August 2011 General Meeting

In Attendance: (*Commissioners*) – Ted Atwood, Davis Bookhart, Cheryl Casciani, John Ciekot, Ray Ehrlich, Lynn Heller, Keith Losoya, Patrick McMahon, Ruth Ann Norton, John Quinn, Jake Ruppert, Ali Smith, Scot Spencer, Tom Stosur, Mary Washington

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

Topics addressed:

- Minutes approved July 2011 meeting. Scot moves and Tom seconds, motion passed.
- Staff Report
 - Green Infrastructure – moving forward
 - Mayor’s Office of Employment Development & Green Jobs Coalition
 - Clarifying workforce development
 - Job training
 - Green economy and green jobs – broader definition of a green job
 - Transform Baltimore – re-released on September 19th, revised draft, landscape manual will be attached to it. Open for additional comments.
 - DGS Biomass study – organic waste materials to use for energy production
 - Urban Agriculture – still working on RFQ and CASA re: training program
 - Holly introduces Jamie Nash, new Baltimore Food Policy Initiative Coordinator
 - Healthy Food Assessment: 6 Public Markets are in food desert or within a block of one and 72% of businesses in markets are carryouts. Only 1 farmer in all of the markets
 - Launched Healthy Food Menus at Broadway Market first
 - Get Fresh Baltimore in Schools
 - Future Harvest, United Way working on healthy food access in Central Maryland
 - Climate Action Plan – still working on finalizing contract approval through BOE
 - Baltimore Business Energy Challenge – up and running, working on recruitment, finalizing materials
 - Department of Transportation Sustainability Plan – operations plan, DOT received grant money to develop plan, they have contracted with Ned Tillman and Sustainable Growth, LLC to manage the development of the Plan. Beth and Alice will work closely with them during the process, and hope that there are some items that could be replicable to other agencies.
- Chair Report
 - Important to note that all work undertaken by the staff is going on and will go on whether Commission has hands in it or not.
 - Question tonight is to look at “what might be the short list?”
 - Being a visible steward is our role. We are stewards.
 - What are the things we want to be visible? That we want people outside of the room to see.
 - Ray & Peter suggested that we do a business analysis, cost benefit of decisions we make

- Example: Trees
 - February tree issues brought forth
 - Developed a tree letter
 - No consensus
 - Trees were then cut
 - Mary stepped up to handle response
 - We are stewards of the Plan. Plan says we are going to double tree canopy. If we don't step up to be stewards then who will?
- Generate thoughts and those will need to meet basic tests
 - Has to relate to a goal in the Sustainability Plan
 - Something needs to be solved
 - Interest on part of Commissioners to spend time on the issue
 - Actions that can be done now
 - Benefits outweigh costs: can't emotionally choose something
- Reminder of Vinnie DeMarco's 6 steps (but we are not a Vinnie DeMarco and turning into an advocacy organization, important to note as part of the larger process):
 - Evidence based support
 - Do polling
 - Build powerful coalition
 - Make extensive media appearances/hits
 - Make issue an election issue
 - Advocate before legislators
- Priorities Discussion – open floor
 - Lynn Heller
 - What are EmPower MD goals?
 - John Quinn: 15% reduction by 2015. John will do one page summary on EmPower MD
 - Ruth Ann Norton
 - Sustainability Plan did not have benchmarks
 - Have Commission tie to the GHHI Compact that the Mayor has signed
 - Ted Atwood
 - How do we know where we direct the efforts?
 - Which is more concern? Air quality in house or air quality in community?
 - Cheryl notes that there is really strong leadership on GHHI and not a leadership vacuum.
 - Lynn Heller
 - Stumbling block: care a lot, all incredibly important but thinking about impact. Can we ask Beth to get a brief sense on where is stormwater, plastic bags or other areas she finds important.
 - Not just Annapolis issues, also City Council and Mayor.
 - Beth Strommen
 - Should be asking: where is energy? Where are problems? Barriers? Helping City achieve goals.
 - Plastic Bag issue: 5 cent fee has a direct relationship to MSW permit
 - 100% trash removal from harbor due to trash TMDL
 - Plastic bag use dropped 50% in D.C.

- CBT leading the charge to introduce completely revised bill that funnels money to jurisdictions with trash TMDL
 - Stormwater \$30-\$50 million per year over 10 years
 - Don't have capacity to borrow it
 - State was going to pass a stormwater utility and it puts us on equal footing with everyone else
 - Commission is a neutral group of experts, can help remove barriers
- Scot Spencer
 - In spirit of brainstorming, what about deconstruction?
 - Issues, problems, benefits
 - Unemployment rate in Baltimore 2x higher than any other jurisdiction
 - Closing loop on economic stream, recycled reclaimed materials pay for employment opportunities
 - Cleveland example
 - John Ciekot
 - Design tools that cut across issues
 - Neighborhood screen on metric to assess their neighborhood sustainability. How are we doing it? Maybe tweak neighborhood definition
 - Design instrument for economic investment. Development towards Sustainability Plan or quality of life investment
 - Cheryl Casciani
 - Tom & Beth really excited about Green Infrastructure vision
 - Alice Kennedy
 - Fracking
 - Abby Cocke
 - Next Generation Park – surface parking turned into large park
 - Keith Losoya
 - Urban Agriculture
 - Leader on this and green jobs associated with it
 - Mary Washington
 - Trees, green infrastructure, local jobs & economy
 - Are we hiring locally? Are we training people locally?
 - Whatever we are doing, it needs to be engaging Baltimore City residents. People need to be a part of that
 - Lynn Heller
 - What is history on commuter tax?
 - Tom Stosur – dead on arrival.
 - Mary Washington
 - We have the best academic institutions and a lot going for City. We need to come from position that we are an asset, not just a city of crime, dirt and trash.
 - Tom Stosur

- Green Infrastructure is a game changer
- Scot Spencer
 - Weak market city
 - Don't have inclusionary zoning law
 - Every issue does not require legislation
- Cheryl Casciani
 - In response to Lynn's question on water issues
 - City needs a revenue strategy
 - Senate in past session chose not to introduce. Commission did a lot of teeing up but it did not go anywhere.
 - Water advocates are ready
- Lynn Heller
 - Sense of where momentum will be at State and City
 - Have more data about where to put risk, time and energy
- Ted Atwood
 - Evaluate agency efficiencies
- Mary Washington
 - Vacant lots, absentee not maintaining, large suite of things around green infrastructure
 - Stormwater, how long would it take?
 - Cost benefit analysis, know what we have in losses
 - Next generation benefit – where are children and grandchildren benefit
 -
- Comment from citizen audience member Geoff Stack:
 - 2 roles for Commission
 - Bad Cop: holding the lint position on problem issues
 - Area of potential grander visions
- Davis Bookhart
 - Better of in 20 or 30 years. Good smart management perspective. Provide something different. Where should the City be?
- Comment from citizen audience member Howard Aylesworth
 - With no authority and no budget how does City view Sustainability? Another check on the box? Other is that it has to be infused by ethic and how City works.
- Holly Freishtat
 - Policy – different ways to approach Policy. Big P and little P
- Mary Washington
 - Agrees with Howard Aylesworth. How to influence internally. Authority can make statements about examples: Grand Prix, more funding for forestry. Authority comes from fact that we have done a lot of work.
 - We already have the authority – we can use it to be influential
 - We have built a really good base for people to take us seriously

- Next Steps and Follow Up
 - Beth & Mary: Green Infrastructure and BES for September meeting
 - GHHI Compact: arrange to sign at September meeting, send scanned copy to Commissioners to review ahead of time
 - Alice & Ruth Ann Norton: GHHI metrics
 - John Quinn: one page EmPower MD primer
 - Who is willing to plan conversations? Has to be some willingness to put in time and be prepared to help.

Upcoming Events:

- Next Commission on Sustainability Meeting: Tuesday, September 27, 2011, 4 PM at 417 East Fayette Street, 8th Floor