

MINUTES FOR THE GREENBELT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY MEETING

Monday, March 16, 2009 – Community Center, Room 114

Members present: Jim Kelly, Ed James, John Lippert (chair), Mary Chapman, Konrad Herling.
Staff liaison: Luisa F. Robles. Guest Speaker: Angela Spencer, Linda Martin, Jonnee Bentley, and Joseph Fernandez from the Obama Energy Team for College Park and Greenbelt.
Excused absences: Matt Berres, Maggie Cahalan, Marti Galvin. Absent: Joyce Griffin.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm.

1. *Committee's name clarification.* Members voted on how to write their committee's name: Green ACES (with a space in between Green and ACES) won unanimously.
2. *Guest speaker and visitors.* Angela Spencer from the Obama Greenbelt/College Park Energy Team addressed the committee. Angela lives on Hanover Parkway and is a legal secretary. She is the spokes person for the Obama Energy Team in College Park and Greenbelt. In early January, they gave a presentation at the New Deal Café where information on Obama's energy platform was distributed. They want to have another meeting in May, perhaps at Beltway Plaza, where they'll educate the public about energy issues and hand out literature. Obama's Energy Team wants to encourage people to perform energy audits at home. They want to present to school children so they can pass on the information to their parents. They also want to talk to apartment complex managements so at least one person on staff per each complex would be aware of what they can purchase/manage for energy efficiency. Such staff people could even become LEED certified. Angela said that their group is interested in helping educate people and to encourage everyone to "pass the word." She is available to help in anything Green ACES would want to do energy related. Angela distributed some literature with information on "the Maryland Home Performance with Energy Star Program," which talks about home energy audits, installation of energy efficiency improvements, contractors, etc.

A long conversation ensued between Green ACES members and the Obama Energy Team members. Green ACES gave the Obama team suggestions on people to contact: Steve Kane of GCAN, Lore Rosenthal of Voluntary Simplicity, and the Democratic Club in Greenbelt.

John Lippert shared information about his blog on energy efficiency and gave us the URLs: www.eere.energy.gov (Energy Savers Blog). www.eere.energy.gov/calculators (Energy calculators). www.eere.energy.gov/buildings/energysmartschools (Schools).

John talked about the Solar Home tour. It happens on the first weekend in October. Homeowners open their houses to visitors to share information about solar systems and other energy saving features. John has been buying wind energy for many years now. He distributed some information on PEPCO costs for different energy services. Regarding nuclear power, he mentioned that Uranium is a finite resource, and it will get expensive as we start running low. Also, there is always the problem about how to dispose of the nuclear waste. Furthermore, nuclear power plants would be wonderful targets for terrorist attacks.

Mary Chapman commented on the fact that the Earth has a limited amount of resources and a carrying capacity that we have overpassed. We have an overpopulation problem. Unless we talk about overpopulation, we are not addressing the right issue. Being more efficient in energy

and materials usage is very important, but we also need to talk about how many of us are here on Earth.

John commented that around 50% of people still don't think global climate change is an issue. Konrad mentioned that at a Cities meeting he attended, it was said they would take certain actions "because they make sense." For example, not being dependent on foreign oil, and being more energy efficient in order to save money; so one can address these issues from different angles, such as from a national security one instead of from a global climate change one.

John mentioned that some friends of his just bought a TV and it did not cross their minds to look for the Energy Star option. Many people don't think about how their daily actions affect the environment. It is imperative that we do something to generate awareness of how every day behaviors affect the environment. Regarding outreach and educational opportunities, members suggested having a page on Facebook where people could post You Tube videos, and have applications that will help people become smart energy consumers. A campaign like this would need money. MD energy administration might have some grant money for which we could apply.

Luisa distributed the "*Suggested Lifecycle Changes to Reduce Your Carbon Footprint*" for the group to discuss. Since there was not much time left to choose a T-shirt design winner, the group decided to talk about this at our next meeting.

3. *Earth Day T-shirt Design Contest.* Designs were displayed on the tables. Definite non-winner designs were selected and put back in their envelopes. At the end two designs remained. With only four voting members present, there was a tie amongst the finalists. Luisa was instructed to scan the designs and email to all Green ACES members to have a full vote.
4. *Cool Capitol Challenge.* John said he still needs the information from the new PW building to run some numbers and have some estimates. John and Konrad talked about the difference between LEED certification and LEED equivalency.
5. *Potomac River Watershed Cleanup:* Luisa attended the volunteer training on February 18 at REI. She distributed information on how to prepare for the cleanup. All sites have been registered and supplies were on their way. Due to budget constraints the Ferguson Foundation won't provide gloves for everyone. We need to ask volunteers to bring their own.
6. *Chesapeake Bay Restoration Consumer Retail Choice Act of 2009.* Luisa distributed literature regarding this act and asked Green ACES to look into it. Konrad said they would have to make a recommendation that day. Members said that was not enough time. Some said it would be a good idea to charge the five cents per bag at the grocery store since it would certainly encourage people to bring their own reusable bags; but they were not sure about charging for carryout places and other establishments. Furthermore, how would this impact low income people? There are too many questions to consider in such a short amount of time.
7. *Earth Hour reminder.* Green ACES is hosting a flashlight walk on Saturday, March 28 at 8:30 pm. Meet in front of the New Deal Café. Gift certificates to the Café will be given to the first 15 people to arrive.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.