

## **SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC)**

Meeting Minutes: Thursday, April 23, 2015

Attending: Jennifer Ceponis, Joe Coffey, Peter Fleischer, Jillian Kasow (Chair), Scott Kellogg, Shadi Khadivi (Co-Secretary), Kate Lawrence, Randy Milano, Lori Quillen (Co-Secretary), Pete Sheehan (Vice-Chair), Ewa Sobczynska, Chris Spencer, and Bill Trudeau

Absent: Randy Milano, Frank Zeoli

1. Call to Order. Jillian Kasow called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.; SAC members were provided agendas.
2. Presentation, Nnenna Ferguson, Marketing Director, Capital CarShare (moved up in the agenda; Nnenna was not feeling well).
  - a. Capital CarShare launched last summer. They are a not-for-profit with a collaborative consumption model that seeks to make shared vehicles available to Albany residents without the financial burden of ownership. “Shift from ownership to access.”
  - b. There are currently 6 vehicles in the Albany fleet (2 Prius, 4 Hyundais) and 105 members. Membership is \$5 a month; users pay \$11 an hour or \$79 a day.
  - c. Carsharing is consistent with the City of Albany’s sustainability effort. Adoption can reduce more than a dozen vehicles from a neighborhood. Less vehicles means less cars parked in neighborhoods, free space for other uses, less wear-and-tear on roads, etc.
  - d. People who carshare are more physically active and incorporate alternate forms of transportation into their routines (biking, walking). This reduces vehicle usage and carbon emissions, resulting in reduced fossil fuel dependence and improved air quality.
  - e. Many cities have replaced parts of their fleets with car-share vehicles.
    - i. Lori Quillen inquired about the demography of Capital CarShare members. Residents under 25 and over 65 are less engaged; the bulk of users are 25-34 and 45-55, either with no children or older children.
    - ii. Ewa Sobczynska asked how Capital CarShare differed from ZipCar. Capital CarShare targets areas and populations that for-profit businesses might overlook, such as Arbor Hill. ZipCar is in Albany for short-term university customers, Capital CarShare is looking for long-term members that have a lifestyle in the City of Albany.
    - iii. Shadi Khadivi asked if multiple drop-off points were possible, to accommodate one-way trips. Currently, usage/membership is not high enough and there is concern cars from high use areas and could be dropped off in low use areas.
    - iv. Ewa Sobczynska asked how the SAC could help Capital CarShare. There is a need to raise awareness to promote membership. Ideally, they would like to put more cars in parking spaces instead of parking lots. Visible vehicles would help increase the profile of the effort.
    - v. Joe Coffey is interested in how carsharing can help City departments reduce their fleets; the Water Department has 100+ vehicles. Kate Lawrence will facilitate a connection between Joe and Nnenna.
    - vi. Shadi Khadivi inquired about a not-for-profit rate. Capital CarShare should have a separate plan for not-for-profits at summer’s end.
    - vii. Scott Kellogg asked if pickup trucks would be added to the fleet. Capital CarShare would like to add a larger vehicle – a truck or van – to accommodate moving and/or families.

- viii. Jillian Kasow asked if Capital CarShare was a private company. They are a 501c3 with government funding through a partnership with the Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA).
3. A motion was made to adopt the February 26, 2015 meeting minutes. Motion was made by Joe Coffey and seconded by Pete Fleischer. The motion carried.
4. Public Comment Period. Tim Truscott announced that on Wednesday, May 20 at 7:00 p.m. Gary Feinland of the Department of Conservation will discuss organic composting. The event is sponsored by Save the Pinebush and will be held at the Westminster Presbyterian Church. No RSVP is required.
5. Communications to the SAC. There were none.
6. Brief Discussion of Subcommittee Draft Final Reports (Subcommittee Chairs)
  - a. **Peter Sheehan, Energy Subcommittee.** Subcommittee members are taking on different areas of responsibility: setting the stage with the Climate Action Plan and reference documents as a baseline, looking at how the City Energy Manager will enhance the capacity of the city, finding metrics to measure efficiency, exploring how the water turbine project can generate energy, looking into residential energy conservation ordinance and vehicle charging stations, etc.
    - i. Ewa Sobczynska thought the Water Turbine Project and the Quail Street Green Infrastructure Project were opportunities to promote the sustainability of the Water Department, showcasing energy offsets and innovation.
    - ii. Peter Sheehan mentioned that NYPA recognizes the need to upgrade the Sheridan Avenue Plant, which supplies heating and cooling for the Plaza. Discussed the possibility of a micro-grid or community solar project and a bill that would allow municipalities to purchase the depreciated value of streetlights.
    - iii. Jillian Kasow noted the bill had no sponsor.
    - iv. Jennifer Ceponis mentioned that the Albany Airport is going through the process of filing eminent domain to purchase their utility poles from National Grid, so they can move to LED lighting. The current model is expensive and energy-inefficient. LED upgrades would result in savings of 80%.
    - v. Peter Sheehan touched on the need for a more robust connection with local schools.
    - vi. Shadi Khadivi volunteered her expertise with Net Zero buildings, having worked on the first Net Zero house for affordable housing in Hudson, NY.
  - b. **Shadi Khadivi, Green Infrastructure Subcommittee.** Reminded the group that Rezone Albany would be meeting in late may and the SAC should be engaged. The Subcommittee has been assessing the VHB roadmap. Priorities include minimizing water drainage and advancing incentives that have already been strategized, i.e. adopting green infrastructure standards.
    - i. Joe Coffey mentioned that Rezone Albany has a consultant looking at green infrastructure and reiterated the recommendation that the SAC participate in Rezone planning meetings.
  - c. **Jennifer Ceponis, Transportation Subcommittee.** Activity has been focused on implementing initiative that the city has started, such as support for electric vehicles, Complete Streets, etc. Focus is on policy, guidance, and how departments can work together. The StreetFilms festival at Madison Theater was a big success in promoting sustainable transportation.
  - d. **Scott Kellogg, Agriculture Subcommittee.** The Subcommittee has been looking at food production issues as they pertain to the city as a whole, with the goal of identify areas

where there are obstacles (e.g. legal barriers) that could be removed for broader expansion of urban agriculture. Low hanging fruit includes legalizing chickens and incorporating agricultural uses in zoning code. Bigger projects include interfacing with the Albany County Land Bank to make more lots available for farming, resolving water issues, and exploring the feasibility of City composting.

- i. Joe Coffey encouraged further discussions with the Water Department demonstrating urban agriculture benefits to the community, especially if efforts are zero-runoff. He also suggested approaching the Water Board with recommendations for the existing rate structure. The Water Board is independent of the City and could benefit from a defined agricultural rate.
- ii. Scott Kellogg also mentioned the issue of compost, mulch, and wood chips – these products have been harder for Capital Roots and other community gardens to secure. Greater transparency in the allocation of this resource is essential to sustainable urban agriculture.
- iii. Shadi Khadivi noted that the Street Tree Program was coming to an end. The 5-year program allowed residents to plant a tree for \$80. It would be nice to keep this program running.

e. **Lori Quillen, Community Outreach Subcommittee.** Priorities include having the SAC as a body set outreach priorities, defining audiences, creating an outreach dissemination plan with measurable objectives, adapting pieces from the Annual Report for broader SAC messaging, and recommending an intern to assist with updating the MOES website and social media. Moving forward, a member of the Community Outreach Subcommittee should attend each Subcommittee meeting.

- i. Ewa Sobczynska mentioned the need to bolster the City's capacity to communicate sustainability success stories and resources.
- ii. Shadi Khadivi discussed the importance of conveying that sustainability was not simply virtuous, but something that could ultimately result in tangible savings – messaging should highlight economics.
- iii. Joe Coffey suggested tying into STEM education.
- iv. Lori Quillen suggested that the SAC consider an Education Subcommittee to liaise with schools.

#### 7. Preparation for the SAC's First Annual Report

- a. Jillian Kasow noted that at our next meeting we will be voting on our 2015 Annual Report and won't have a forum for substantive edits at the meeting. Throughout June, there will be an open and transparent drafting process. Report writing will be open to all and facilitated by meeting or email correspondence.
- b. Ewa Sobczynska is leading the creation of the draft report structure and outline, which includes SAC recommendations, measurable outcomes, partners, and 3-5 year goals.
- c. One-page subcommittee reports and recommendations are due to Ewa by April 29. These will be reduced to a draft annual report with a matrix of recommendations.
- d. A subset of the SAC will meet on Thursday, May 28 at 5:30 p.m. to review the draft annual report and hone recommendations and language.

#### 8. Discussion on the Energy Manager to be hired for the City of Albany

- a. Jillian Kasow distributed a list of job duties from the New York Power Authority (NYPA) report. There is no timeline for implementation; salary will be up to \$120,000 annually, including fringe benefits.

- b. Kate Lawrence mentioned that the Energy Manager would be a fulltime position with a 5-year commitment. The candidate would be initially hired for 2-years, with the expectation of a 3-year extension. The Energy Manager will be a third party employee.
- c. General SAC discussion of the job duties
  - i. Shadi Khadivi recommended that the Energy Manager serve on the SAC; Kate Lawrence mentioned that the mayor would like them to attend all SAC meetings, Jillian Kasow suggested they be a non-voting member.
  - ii. Kate Lawrence said the official job description would be out soon, with an anticipated hire in a few months.

9. Adjournment at 7:45PM

**LMQ 6/23/2015**