

Summit for Environmental Action

**Progress Report -
Implementation
Committees**

From 6/30/2008 Meeting



Released 7/14/2008

Context

The first meeting of the Summit for Environmental Action Implementation Committees was held on June 30th 2008. For two hours, more than 50 people discussed issues focused on improving our local environment and learning from each other. This report is meant to be a chronicle of the process of that meeting. It is also a tool for the Implementation Committee members and the wider community to learn about these committees and get connected to the issues and the committee members.

Structure of the Meeting

The first half hour was spent in an informal poster session. Attendees had time to network and visit each of the five group's tables to learn more about the actions that had taken place over the past two months. Each group provided visuals and a group member was available to answer questions from other attendees.

Nick Gladding led the next part of the meeting where a representative from each committee gave a short presentation about their group's next steps. After the presentation, the audience asked questions and provided suggestions to each group.

The final segment of the meeting was an open conversation session led by Tim Dutton. Since the Summit Implementation process is ongoing and complex, the audience had a chance to give their opinion on how the process was progressing and how it can be improved.

Attendees

Larry Altman	Bill Doorman	Raymond Kaiser	Susan Scott
Diane Andrews	Tim Dutton	Sharon Joy Kleitsch	Jennifer Shafer
Joe Barbetta	Charlie Fellmeth	Donna Krabill	Nancy Sloan
Grant Beatt	Scott Egglefield	Jack Merriam	Frank Folsom Smith
Jack Burden	Don Fitts	Michele Mician	Linda Spivey
Chuck Butterfield	Chris Flammia	Jono Miller	Bill Steen
Hope Byrnes	Nick Gladding	Julie Morris	Rich Swier
Lee Hayes Byron	Tim Graham	Art Nadel	Pamela Truitt
Grace Carlson	Athena Grant	Peg Nadel	Kim Weaver
Richard Clapp	Danni Griffith	Dana O'Mara	Bruce Zeutlin
Casey Colburn	Gabe Hamment	Terry Osborn	Stan Zimmerman
Kevin Connelly	Millie Headdy	Nina Powers	Caroline Zucker
Theresa Connor	Chuck Henry	Gary Raulerson	
Wendy Cooper	Joe Hochadel	Betsy Roberts	
Suzanne Dameron	Kate Irwin	Tim Rumage	

Attracting Green Business

Presenter: Dana O'Mara

Handouts: [Attracting Green Business Summary](#)
[Attracting Green Business Chart](#)

Summary:

The committee has been meeting twice a month for the past two months. Because the topic was so large, the committee spent time defining the issue and thinking about other organizations who were working on this issue in our area. They defined categories of green businesses: manufacturers of green products, providers of green products and services and existing businesses that implement green practices. In the next two months, the committee will address the following aspects of attracting green business: regulatory/policy measures, financing, skilled workers and education. Some ideas for moving forward include: encouraging formation of an Industrial Development Agency (IDA), encouraging formation of an R&D Sustainable park, looking into the benefits of forming a local Business Alliance for Local Living Economy (BALLE) chapter and promoting educational opportunities for homeowners and businesses and training for green collar workers.

Questions & Comments:

- The audience suggested some more names to be added to the list of organizations that are currently working on this issue. Suggestions included: Suncoast Workforce Board, Florida House Institute, Sarasota County Technical Institute.
- Someone suggested the committee look at models of technology schools in other areas who are training students for green business jobs. Suggestions included Milwaukee, Atlanta and Austin
- The audience saw an opportunity to put our un- or under-employed construction workers back to work through 'green jobs' and to use this training as an opportunity to give low-income or unskilled workers a career path.



Group Members:

Diane Andrews
Fredd Atkins
Brian Bishop
Lee Hayes Byron
Bill Doorman
Wendy Cooper
Kevin Connelly
Francoise Ducroz
Tim Dutton
Don Fitts
Nick Gladding
Tim Graham
Kathy Keh
Joan McGill
Art Nadel
Peg Nadel
Shannon Staub

Solar Hot Water Heaters

Presenter: Larry Altman

Handouts: [June 30th Report](#)

Summary:

The committee has met weekly for the last two months. The committee found that the current penetration rates of solar hot water heaters are low, presumably due to the high start up costs. They researched a variety of solar hot water programs from Florida and the rest of the country. The committee researched in-depth a 'Utility model' proposed by Regenes Power, in which a third party would own, install, maintain and acquire financing for the systems and the local water utility would market and administer customer billing for a fee. The conclusions include: to achieve a 50% installation rate of solar hot water systems within 5 years is an ambitious goal (over 20,000 systems installed per year), the initial cost is the biggest barrier to large scale implementation, whatever the model that is used, a strong marketing effort is essential for success, a different business model is required, and it is beyond the purview of this working group to propose legal changes to mandate solar hot water systems in all new residential and commercial buildings.

Questions & Comments:

- Someone asked if the work of installing & building the heaters would be bid out and perhaps be performed outside of the community? The answer seems to be "maybe." All of the work could be performed in our area, but it may not be
- The audience was concerned that the ambitious 5 year goal was limiting the options. The Solar committee did spend time reviewing if that time limit was unrealistic, but eventually came to the conclusion that while the goal may not be achieved, the method of reaching the goal would remain the same whether it took 5 years or many more.
- The group has not been able to get very much customer feedback on the actual experience of using the heaters. A couple of audience members had a solar water heater in their home, and shared that it saved them money each month and was just as effective as any other method of heating water.



Group Members:

Leo Bellil
Tom Harriman
Joseph Hochadel
Nick Gladding
Raymond Kaiser
Donna Krabill
Bonnie Nickel
Nina Powers
Betsy Roberts
Rich Swier
Gerry Swormstedt
Bruce Zeitlin

Alternative Water Use

Presenter: Tim Rumage

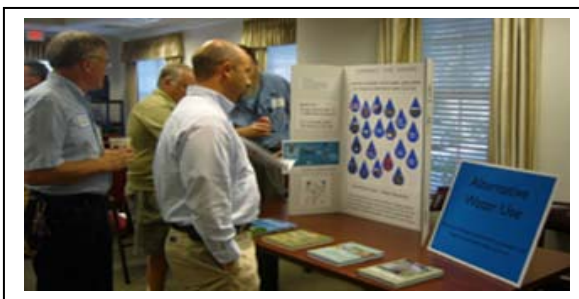
Handout: [Water Committee Handout](#)

Summary:

Resolving the water use concerns and avoiding a water crisis in Sarasota County is more of a “person problem” than a “strict-resource issue.” This means that the focus needs to be more on right water for right use and changing the mindset of local residents. To that end, this committee supports “Connecting the Drops.” The committee is looking at alternative water use on different scales: the individual, neighborhood, community, and watershed. Each of these scales will affect water reuse options – there is no single solution. Some ideas for next steps are: mandate dual plumbing systems in each house, meter wells in order to get an idea of total Sarasota County water use, shift from rain sensors to soil sensors (or ET pan measures) to determine irrigation patterns, promote cisterns, rainbarrels, green roofs, raingardens and vertical gardens, incentivize water-reuse friendly retrofits, promote more treatment of reuse water, establish net-metering system for water, establish a stormwater treatment system, and change the community’s mind about water use and reuse.

Questions & Comments:

- The audience wants to be sure that the next steps for this committee are grounded in what’s happening on a city and county level. To be successful, the committee must know what’s happening ‘on the ground.’
- One idea for dealing with the problem of potable water (from the underground pipes) being used to fight fires may be to require all new houses to include fire-sprinklers.



Group Members:

Grant Beatt
Jack Burden
Chuck Butterfield
Charlie Fellmeth
Leann Fellmeth
Nick Gladding
Chuck Henry
Roger Landry
Gary Raulerson
Tim Rumage

Low Impact Development

Presenter: Jack Merriam

Handouts: [Pictures from the River Forest trip](#)

Summary:

In the past two months, the group focused on defining Low Impact Development, and has defined it broadly to include home water systems, urban tree cover, and solar panels. The last meeting the committee held was a 'field trip' to River Forest, an example of LID in Manatee County to get an idea of how LID could be achieved in our local area. Issues for the committee to think about include how our community will train people to install and maintain LID systems and promote education about LID systems. Immediate next steps include a meeting with the Sarasota County Urban Forester that is open to the public.

Questions and Comments:

- A concern is that low impact development systems need to be maintained, and if they are put in place we must be sure to have the knowledge and conviction to do so.
- Suggestions were made to study the cities of Philadelphia and Chicago (Mayor Daly) for examples of how they enacted low impact development.
- Tying into the Green Business committee, it is important that in addition to maintenance, there are people trained to install and maintain low impact development technologies. Preferably, these people would be local.
- There was some discussion about government buildings working to be at the forefront of demonstrating low impact development techniques.



Group Members:

Claire Kanter
Dick Kanter
Ellen Maloff
Jack Merriam

Transit Oriented Development

Presenters: Julie Morris and Jennifer Shafer

Handouts: [Great Transit Connecting Great Communities](#)

Summary:

After meeting twice a month for the past two months, the group concluded that one significant barrier to implementing Transit Oriented Development (TOD) has been opposition to increased density, which is a key element for successful transit systems. A grass-roots approach involving local stakeholders could build community support and political momentum. The group decided to illustrate the outcomes and best practices of TOD through a detailed case-study of the Bee Ridge Corridor. The first step to accomplishing this is to draw neighborhood associations and commercial owners along Bee Ridge together to brainstorm and discuss how the corridor could be improved. The eventual goal of this study will be to use the results to develop a toolkit for local neighborhoods and commercial owners to collaborate on plans for “great transit to connect great communities.”

Questions and Comments:

- Some people think the Bee Ridge Corridor is a good choice for a case study, others would choose another corridor. A plus for Bee Ridge is that it is made up of large parcels (25 acres) at the major intersections, which are easier to redevelop mixed-use projects on. There will be connections to rapid bus at 41 and TBARTA at I-75, and there are schools, parks, shopping, and a hospital close to the corridor. A minus includes the many differing regulatory restrictions along the corridor.
- The audience suggested that any increased density for mixed use redevelopment along the corridor should be granted based on commitments to use solar, innovative water strategies, green roofs, multi-modal transit, and other sustainable design practices, which will mitigate the effects of increased density.
- The audience suggested incorporating small-scale projects into the plan. Suggestions included a carpool corridor or a jitney system or the legacy trail.
- Someone suggested the Fruitville corridor as an alternative to Bee Ridge (or if the idea did not gain traction among Bee Ridge residents and commercial tenants). A plus to the Fruitville corridor is the Fruitville 210 group (named for the interstate interchange, Chairman: John Krotec), which is prepared and willing to work on this issue.
- Someone suggested the downtown Sarasota rail corridor that links to downtown Bradenton as another possible corridor for examination. The plus to this is that it connects one known place to another.



Group Members:

Pat Driscoll
Millie Headdy
Julie Morris
Andrew Nouné
Jeff Orenstein, Ph.D
Terry Osborn
Sean Poust
Olga Ronay
Susan Scott
Jennifer Shafer
Linda Spivey
Frank Folsom Smith
Christopher Warn

Open Conversation

Question One: How has the process been? How do you feel about its progression?

- A criticism of SCOPE (and other efforts like this) is that there is no tangible action that results from events like the Summit. This has the potential to be different - there are obstacles here, but if we work to minimize them we can overcome them and take action.
- Solar Hot Water and Transit Oriented Development committees are laser-focused, and that is appealing. While each committee will progress at a different pace, an audience member suggested each committee working towards that type of ultra-focused goal.
- Each committee does not live in a vacuum. Everything is connected – land use precedes water quality and Transit Oriented Development as well.
- This process has provided a grassroots effort for change, and each person's duty, as a citizen, is to act to change our world.
- Let's not adhere to a goal (example was the 5 year clause in the Solar Hot Water committee's goal) that is unreasonable if we can provide a better solution in a different time period (although that seems to not be an issue with that particular example).
- There is some sentiment that most if not all of the other committees tie into the Green Business committee. Maybe that committee could host a sustainable/green business forum.
- With the big problems (as all of these are) there is no short-term solution. Maybe each committee needs short term and long term goals so as to be always producing results.
- We could set up a demo solar hot water heater house.
- We could exempt rainwater irrigation from watering bans.

Question Two: Are there any specific additional capacities that you need?

- New Beginning for Newtown initiative (Green Business)
- Include the city and county planning departments in this work (All)
- Addressing regulations is a key point. Is it possible for each committee to have a regulations point person? (All)
- Must look into and take into account best practices (All)
- An investment banking firm (All)