

SNG Environment Committee Minutes - March 17, 2008 7:00 pm

Contact Carol Greenwood, carolgreenwood@comcast.net, 724-8430 for further information.

Attending: Matt Bye, (Mpls. Energy Manager), Carol Greenwood, Rick Greenwood, Nora Helf, Roger Howley, Hal Jonson, Greg Klave, Ashley Stoffers (Augsburg student)

Introductions - February 18 minutes were approved

Updates on older projects

Current Energy Challenge Standings

Seward 93 (up from 18 on 7/26) (3rd place)

Longfellow 126 (up from 36 on 7/26) (2nd place)

Linden Hills 171 (1st place)

***We have Energy Challenge signs and 27 lightbulbs left. How can these be used to encourage more people to participate. The Minnesota Center for Energy and Environment (MNCEE) has updated the Energy Challenge website.

Check it out at: <http://www.mnenergychallenge.org/>

Solar Voltaic System at Matthews - Any updates on facilitating communication between Matthews computer and school computers? Rick e-mailed Joan Phillips to determine whether Seward had received the promised donation of PC's and whether an Apple/PC link could be experimented with at Matthews. No response as yet.

2008 Neighborhood Sustainability Conference: Connecting City & Citizen efforts for Sustainable Communities - This was a great conference with lots of resources available. If you didn't get to go and would like a conference program, Carol has several programs donated by Sean Gosiewski of the Alliance for Sustainability. AforS plans to produce more extensive resource guides in a few weeks.

Presentation by Matt Bye, Mpls. Energy Manager Mr. Bye has recently been appointed the city Energy Manager in the Department of Public Works. He's been asked to explain: what he will be looking at to map the carbon footprint of Minneapolis; what strategies he will be pursuing to reduce this footprint for city facilities and operations; what regulations and legislation might be desirable to facilitate this; and what city practices (e.g. zoning, permitting, traffic light timing, funding, taxing/bonding facilitation, and resident assistance programs) may need to be changed to encourage and assist households and businesses become more conserving and energy efficient, as well as more able to use renewable technology.

The mapping of the Minneapolis carbon footprint is very complex. Energy is supplied by Xcel (electricity), Center Point (natural gas) and a downtown District Energy facility that supplies numerous buildings [go to: <http://nrgthermal.com/Centers/Mpls/custm.htm5>] with steam and chilled water. There are 1700 Xcel accounts, and the bills come to a number of departments (possibly up to 30 different addresses). Records of city building ownership must be assembled from various departments and locations, because some facilities are no longer owned by Minneapolis. Also, between 2005 and 2006 Xcel revised their billing system, thus making the data hard to access. Likewise, vehicle fleet

ownership records are not all in one place. Usage and consumption data over several years will be needed to analyze seasonal and project usage. He believes that it would be productive to track energy usage back to 2000 and up to the current date. He will calculate BTU/s per square feet and other measures. Savings of 2 gigawatts are estimated. Many of the records are on paper rather than computerized. Data needs to be made more accessible. Matt needs to work with the finance department to develop a consistent method of tracking expenditures and usage. He plans to consult with Xcel Environmental Services, which provides consultation and management strategies for large users.

Following this data collection he will recommend energy capital improvements estimated at around \$12 million and calculate energy paybacks. Estimates of current status include \$12 million for electricity, \$3 million for gas and \$1 million for chilled water. This includes City Hall and Public Service Buildings - 4 to 5 buildings and multiple sites. The city has sold 10 out of 25 parking ramps. Half of the ramps have been upgraded for lighting. Possible strategies -- additional lighting and ventilation upgrades, substituting light emitting diodes (LED's); but various groups have their own engineering standards and their own views on the values of various technologies, i.e. LED's for street lighting.

He will be writing up a one year progress report. He'd like to make changes on a trial basis, e.g. Loring Greenway using a cold cathode compact fluorescent with a one year payback. The traffic Management group has converted most traffic lights to LED. (Not ambers, just red and green--amber doesn't work well) He'll consult with MN Center for Energy and Environment for evaluating smaller buildings, and help with installation, such as firestations. Most Xcel programs focus on peak usage periods for providing subsidies, and provide no rebates for exterior lighting. Other opportunities for reduction include sensors to turn off unnecessary lights, replacing and controlling fountain pump motors (many currently use 1970's technology). City policy needs to mandate turning off lights and computers when not in use. Need to make all new buildings LEED compliant, add 10% more renewable capacity than the Xcel mandate. Have been awarded \$2 million to install 600 KW of solar on maintenance buildings. Wind in Minneapolis not favorable for electricity generation with current technology. Currently nothing in the state energy standard dictates solar. Federal tax credits, investment credits and state tax credits could cut costs.

Street lighting is not metered or monitored, and could provide savings. The city needs to advocate dark sky compliant street lighting (focussing light on sidewalks and streets--not on the sky or into windows). He needs to set standards for buildings in regard to heating and cooling--and over half of city buildings don't have energy management software. Hopefully retrofits from Energy Service company could be paid for out of energy savings. This would be good for the school district to consider as well, particularly as they don't have staff with relevant skills, which Minneapolis does have.

He would like to look at a project with 20 homes to monitor energy usage on an interval basis (periodically over each day).

A lively discussion with many questions was held after the presentation.

Student and Staff sustainability groups at Augsburg? Ashley Stoffers

Students express interest, but she didn't know of any student groups, nor was she aware of any specific climate change organizations the college is connected with locally or nationally. She wasn't aware of any college offices that encourage sustainability. She did report that one of the students came up with an idea for a new approach to generating and using biodiesel fuel. (Brian Krohn) See:

http://augnet.augsburg.edu/news-archives/2008/03_09_08/sartec.html

Ongoing/New Projects

WE NEED YOUR INPUT ON ALL PROJECTS, BUT PARTICULARLY ON THOSE MARKED WITH AN ASTERISK***.

***Discussion of the **project outline that Roger Howley proposed** in response to suggestions to develop and promote a Seward jobs/skills bank and resource entity for homes and businesses to become more conserving and energy efficient. The original proposal was for subsidy of the \$100 audit cost and up to \$400 to help the home or business owner undertake a significant energy conservation project. The plan is to work with local contractors, and other service providers as well as utilities and finance programs for green remodeling. We need a resource in Seward to help people cope with housing emergencies, e.g. water heater or furnace failing, and to turn to for the best information re how to reduce their carbon footprint and home energy concerns.

Seward ReDesign has agreed to collaborate on a project that involves homes, small businesses, and small rental buildings (up to four-plex) to provide money and resources for energy audits, building insulation/weatherization, lighting retrofits, and other measures and to convene small businesses and contractors in these areas to discuss developing a resource guidance program.

*****MN Energy Challenge and Climate Change Innovations** - Seward ReDesign has agreed to have their grant writer Eddie Landenberger, Redesign Development Project Manager, (Carol and Roger met with him last Friday) develop a proposal to be submitted to Gayle Prest, Minneapolis Sustainability Director, by 4:00 Monday, March 24. See above.

*****Energy Fair in October/November** - This topic will be deferred unless we can come up with more community support.

*****Pete Harper, MD, at Smiley's Clinic** hopes to obtain funding to help residents in Seward and other impacted neighborhoods remove arsenic from play equipment, play areas, and yard structures that children come in contact with. If this money becomes available, how shall we promote this program? Smiley's clinic is also offering free arsenic testing to children 18 or younger who live in Seward. If you have insurance, arsenic testing should be covered, but Smiley's will help you with any issues associated with it. (333-0770)

*****Community Sustainability - working with Block Clubs** - Report back on presentations by Kathy Ward at the March 8 Sustainability Conference (and any other comments by Seward attendees).

Susan Andre and Kathy Ward, as well as adjoining neighbors, are planning three more meetings at the Birchwood to promote sustainability. The invitation from Susan

states, “ Join your Neighbors at the Birchwood Cafe on Sunday March 30 from 3:30 to 5:30 to talk about gardening, boulevard planting, rain gardens, rain barrels, green roofs, planting trees, drought resistant plants, plants that attract humming birds and butterflies and so much more. Share your experiences and ideas. Come to Learn.

Please let Susan know if you plan on coming. Reply to: Susan Andre
sla@gsginfo.com 722-0002

Subsequent meetings are planned to promote waste reduction and consumption reduction.

What are the plans to promote sustainability in other Seward block clubs? What can the Environment Committee do to support and promote similar activities in other block clubs?

WCCO is interested in televising people taking sustainability steps in their homes; at some point the block clubs adjacent to the Birchwood are expected to schedule Mayor Rybak to visit the participants, either in a home event or elsewhere, as people wish. Any more plans for this?

*****Midtown EcoEnergy and RockTenn** - Mark Sulander - Mark reports this is a crucial week to influence whether this project will proceed. He urges everyone to contact city council representatives to express their concerns before the next Council meeting. On March 30 Kandiyohi's option to purchase the property expires. They have for the third time applied for an extension (as of 3:30 last Friday) but have given no evidence of meeting the conditions of purchase, namely: 1) no signed power purchase agreements for the electricity and/or steam they will generate. 2) no analysis of the feasibility of the business plan/operating pro forma. 3) no verification of additional financing to meet the requirements of the stated business plan or operate the plant as they say they will. 4) no updated budget. 5) no evidence that they will make any profit in the nearterm (next 10 years). No progress has been made on any of these requirements since last August, even though all of this was supposed to have been completed a year ago. The property has been held off the market for two years waiting for Kandiyohi to verify their ability to meet the requirements of the purchase agreement. Some city council members may be showing special consideration for political insiders. Minneapolis once again runs the risk of being sued by a developer if they don't let this option to purchase expire, if they subsequently realize that this is a bad financial deal for the city.

Has the Environmental Assessment Worksheet by Kandiyohi partners been completed and submitted to the PCA? Mark Sulzbach reports that they need quite a bit more time to work on the EAW and the soonest a hearing could be called would be June. Mark and other people working on this believe people need to communicate opposition to the project to city officials. MEE needs to have power purchase agreements to have a viable project. Xcel would have to pay a higher rate for power from this sort of plant. House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher is believed to be putting pressure on Xcel to complete such an agreement. A series of articles on MEE have appeared in the Daily Planet. Almost 500 signatures were accumulated on the petition for the EAW. People opposing the MEE burner hope to hold house meetings in other wards and to generate communications objecting to this project in the wards of Council Members Lilligren, Benson, and Remington.

The property tax exemption for MEE expired on January 1. Rep. Karen Clark now opposes the project. Dick Cohen, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, says he

will prevent renewal of any sales tax exemption. Up to 15 incinerators are being planned for Minnesota. We will be affected also by Rock Tenn. Combustion is an old and dirty technology, and such facilities can't filter out particles smaller than 2.5 microns, the ones with the most serious health effect. The purchase agreement with Minneapolis is set to expire on March 30. It is believed that MEE will try and extend it. Some neighborhoods are afraid to oppose MEE for fear of retaliation by the city in the form of discontinued funding. It was suggested that efforts be made to lobby members of the Minneapolis Community Planning and Economic Development Board (CPED).

Hub of Heaven Community Garden - Lee Colby has been invited to the April Environment Committee to update us on her plans for the coming season.

Peace Garden - Representatives from a variety of SNG committees and interested neighbors met with Anna Sonmore Costello to discuss her needs for the coming season. She primarily needs funding, so if anyone can think of some good civic, foundation, or corporate sources (and you have a contact), let Anna know. She has lots of great ideas for the coming season working with local youth on growing food, learning about nutrition, cooking, sampling, and selling produce. Last year the kids produced an excellent newsletter. They are thinking about other written projects for this year.

Lawnmower Project from last year's CCI Grant Program - Bernie Waibel has been contacted requesting names, since part of the agreement with last summers lawnmower recipients was that they follow up with usage reports, and many received their mowers late in the season, with little grass to mow due to the drought.

Watershed Cleanup on April 19 in honor of the 38th annual EARTH DAY, April 22. The Earth Day Watershed Cleanup will be held from 9:30 a.m.-noon on Saturday, April 19, at 36 cleanup sites located throughout Minneapolis. Check out 24th St. & River Road) Volunteers can come to any of the cleanup sites but are asked to check-in at the site's check-in table before starting work.

Seward's check-in site will be at 24th Street and West River Parkway and the major area of concern will be along the river, both on the street level and along the riverbank. If there are a lot of volunteers, they'll be directed towards the Seward/Longfellow section of the Midtown Greenway.

Earth Day provides both volunteer experiences and environmental education for Minneapolis residents. The cleanup draws attention to the water quality improvement needs of our lakes and the effect individual actions have had on urban water quality.

In 2007 over 2,000 people removed more than 17,000 pounds of garbage at 25 cleanup locations around Minneapolis. The event was ranked one of the best Earth Day cleanup events in the country by the Earth Day Network.

For more information about the event or if you are interested in helping coordinate the 2008 cleanup, call 612-230-6484 or visit www.minneapolisearthday.com.

Arbor Day on the Midtown Greenway Saturday, April 26th

The area east of Hiawatha Avenue where the Midtown Greenway connects to the new bridge will be the site of the 2008 Arbor Day event. Volunteer to help plant oaks, aspens,

small fruiting trees and evergreens--greenspace for LRT riders to view and shade for trail users. The design features the beauty and environmental benefits of native plants and will make a grand green gateway to the neighborhood. The event is sponsored by the Midtown Community Works Partnership, Hennepin County Regional Railroad, Tree Trust, the Midtown Greenway Coalition, LCC and other partners. Be sure to mark your calendars and contact Theresa Nelson at theresa@midtowngreenway.org to volunteer.

Seward Garage Sales Days, May 16 and May 17 - A great opportunity for ReUse Seward Garage Sales Days have been set for May 16 (Friday) and May 17 (Saturday). The registration fee is once again \$12, which covers SNG's costs to advertise and gets your house on the official garage sale map passed out to buyers. For the first time this year, you'll be able to register electronically and pay the fee through SNG's on-line donation system. Registration forms will also be available at the SNG office. Registration starts the beginning of next month. If you have questions, contact SNG at admin@sng.org or 612-338-6205 extension 119. We need to get information about Re-Use opportunities (e.g. Freenet, Goodwill, etc.) to participants who have leftover items after the Garage Sale.

*****Possible Speakers - Who should we invite?**

Schedule for April: Permaculture - Growing native perennial food plants in the urban garden and natural ways to improve soil fertility with less effort - speaker to be arranged from Permaculture Collective.

Schedule for May: Dave Zumeta - MN Forest Resource Council - Re emerald ash borers, what you can do to support native birds, the role of trees in urban and outstate wooded habitats, the effects of climate change on trees, etc.

More presentations about MN GreenStar? Attendees at the Jan. 13 meeting at Philipp Muessig's found it very interesting. We need to consider more promotion of this program. Check out the website at Buck Brothers Construction featuring a Minnesota Green Star project in Seward. See: http://buck-bros.com/homeowners_corner/index.php?m=02&y=08 for the ongoing story.

Any other ideas? Field Trips? How about the LEED platinum home in Minnetonka? (Live Green Live Smart: <http://livegreenlivesmart.org/>)

Updates on older projects (continued)

Windsorce - The real cost of purchasing green power from Xcel has gone down over the past year. The fuel cost credit (a refund of the fuel cost charge) has been as high as \$25 some months, depending on usage. Actual average cost is running somewhere around \$.88 instead of \$2.00 per 100 kWh of wind. This month I paid \$.55 per 100 kWh of wind. (The nominal charge is \$3.53.) A lot less than we pay for lattes. The SNG Environment page has a link for you to sign up on Windsorce. 38th Ave. challenges other streets to sign up for Windsorce. We've got a lot of folks on our street who are at 100% wind.

Morningstar Coffee - Update from Daniel Huff: "Robin asked that I send along the latest update on Morning Star. We have received information back from

Morning Star Coffee regarding their operating procedures. Morning Star has determined that at least part of the odor problem was from starting the after burner too late into the process. They are now starting the after burner earlier which will hopefully correct the odor problem. Additionally they have contracted with a consulting engineer to review the machines at the facility. I will let you know of those results when we receive them. So far Morning Star is in compliance with our most recent requests to them. We shall see how the change in process impacts the odor problem. I'll keep you up date."

Daniel Huff, Supervisor, Environmental Services, Department of Regulatory Services, City of Minneapolis, 250 South 4th St., Room 414, Minneapolis, MN 55415 office: 612-673-5863 cell: 612-386-4810 fax: 612-673-2635"

According to Robin Garwood, Dan Huff went out due to a complaint on March 12 to inspect.

Environment Committee Website - What can we do to make it more useful, attractive, and user friendly? A mini-survey was sent out but nobody responded. We'll try it again. Suggestions for pictures were offered at the January 13 meeting. (Canoe trip, King's Fair, solar panels, rainbarrel workshops). <http://www.sng.org/env.html> Sheldon Mains and the rest of the SNG Board want to upgrade the overall website and mailing lists/data base. What links do we want to add? Some updates have been added.

Purchase of the Hub of Heaven Community Garden plot - Scott Vreeland is researching the possibility of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) buying the community garden land; in this case there would be no property tax. The Development Committee has been asked by the Garden Coordinator and participants to look into whether SNG can buy the land and some kind of provision can be negotiated to keep the property tax to a minimal amount. We will continue to follow this process. We need to check out insurance, whether it would be covered by an SNG policy, and whether we should be given right of first refusal if the Park Board, having acquired it, decides to sell it.

Other News - Announcements & Events:

The tunnel under 35W to provide safe passage for bike traffic between downtown and the U was approved by the City Council.

ReDesign is applying for funding to enhance bike and pedestrian traffic on 24th St. E. CM Cam Gordon is applying for funds to improve 29th Ave. Requests may also be made to improve 38th Ave. south of Brackett Park.

SNG Crime/Safety planned to apply for Graffiti Prevention Grant funds on March . The C&S Committee is wondering rather participants in the Hub of Heaven Community Garden would be interested in making suggestions for vines or other plantings that would discourage graffiti vandals. Ross Gabrick and Kathy Sikora chair this committee.

Low Cost Compost Bins - Robin Garwood reminds us that Hennepin County is again offering low-cost covered compost bins and recommends them for food composting. Food should be mixed with dry leaves for best results. Go to:

<http://www.co.hennepin.mn.us/portal/site/HCInternet/menuitem.3f94db53874f9b6f68ce1e10b1466498/?vgnnextoid=d577bbf4099fc010VgnVCM1000000f094689RCRD&vgnnextfmt=default>

There are examples at the community garden Hub of Heaven. They cost \$35 and must be pre-ordered by April 1. (One to a household). They can be picked up at the Re-Use Center, 2801 21st Ave. S., Minneapolis 724-2608 Apr 19-22, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (later on some days). Phone them for more specific times.

Robin provided the text of the city composting ordinance which DOES allow food composting. See Minneapolis Ordinances,

<http://www.municode.com/Resources/gateway.asp?pid=11490&sid=23>

Lead Abatement Grants available Do you live in a home or apartment building built before 1978? Do you see chipping or peeling paint? If so, your family could be at risk for lead poisoning. You may qualify for free services. Contact Sustainable Resources Center at 612-872-3282 for more information.

Low Cost Trees - Make Minneapolis (and your yard) a greener place by ordering a tree! 1,000 trees are available for just \$25 each through the City Trees program

The City of Minneapolis is making 1,000 trees available to city residents for planting this spring. Minneapolis funds the City Trees program, which is in its third year, to provide a low-cost way for folks to help build the city's urban forest.

Research has proven that trees are a valuable investment and improve urban quality of life. Healthy trees increase property values, help improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gases by absorbing carbon dioxide, save energy, keep the city cooler, provide homes for wildlife and help manage storm water.

To make the City Trees program a reality, Minneapolis partners with Tree Trust, a local nonprofit that works to improve the community environment.

Ordering a tree: The trees cost \$25 each, and are approximately 6-to-10 feet tall with a 1 inch trunk. Residents can order one tree per household, and the 1,000 trees will be made available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Residents can choose from five tree varieties, including Bicolor Oak, Fall Fiesta Sugar Maple, Pagoda Dogwood, Japanese Tree Lilac or Welchi Juniper.

Orders can be placed online between March 11 and April 11 by visiting Tree Trust at www.treetrust.org or by picking up an order form from your neighborhood group or local library. Tree pick-up dates are May 10 and 11 from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and May 12 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the former Franklin Middle School East parking lot at 1501 Aldrich Avenue N. Volunteers will be available to help load your new tree and complimentary bag of mulch in to your vehicle.

Information will be available online and at the tree pick-up site that will explain how to plant a tree the right way, how to care for it, and the benefits it will provide. For more information on how to order a tree, contact Tree Trust by visiting www.treetrust.org or by calling (651) 644-5800. You can also contact Tree Trust to receive hard copies of the applications if you would like to be able

to distribute them to your group. It is anticipated that the 1,000 trees will again go quickly so please encourage people to call as soon as possible.

Birchwood Cafe - Tracy is getting estimates from Randy's disposal and Eureka Recycling to compost organic wastes, including paper and coffee grounds. The expectation is that this will reduce her waste management costs. She will keep us up to date on how this is working. Thanks to Tracy for being a pioneer in trying this project. Depending on her results, other businesses should try it.

High School and College Students - If you have one or know one or are one - Environmental organizations at high schools and colleges are growing and becoming more active. To find out more and join, contact:

U. MN - EcoWatch, Ecowatch@umn.edu

Several other area colleges have groups as well.

High School students contact YEA MN, www.yeamn.org

Twin Cities Green Drinks is part of a global non-movement. Join your eco-minded neighbors at Green Drinks! If you have concerns or an interest in the environment, this is an opportunity to chat with a diverse group of folks who have a variety of environmental interests and experiences. Drop by and let's get acquainted. Next meeting Wednesday, April 9, 2007, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm Red Stag Supper Club, 509 1st Ave. NE, Minneapolis, 612-767-7766. (The prices are high but the ambiance is great.) This event repeats every month on the second Wednesday until Friday January 1, 2010.

Cafe Scientifique - Tuesday, March 18, 7:00 Bryant Lake Bowl - Global Warming & Environmental Equality - a speaker from the Headwaters Foundation

March 22 is World Water Day - Are you wondering whether there are pharmaceuticals in Minneapolis water? (AP reports) According to a press release from the city Information Office, "Minneapolis' tap water was among those reviewed [in the AP research] and tests found only very small amounts of caffeine. I'm pursuing further information about what tests were conducted. The Minneapolis Water Works uses microfiltration to process most of our water. Also, check out the Outside the Bottle Campaign, which Mayor Rybak has signed on to.

http://www.stopcorporateabuse.org/campaign/think_outside_the_bottle_pledge?source=gc5

A Renewable-Energy Solution to Global Warming, Seminar Mar. 27 - Presented by: Mark Z. Jacobson, Thursday, March 27, 2008, 4:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.
University of Minnesota Twin Cities – East Bank, Room 1130 Mechanical Engineering Building, 111 Church Street S.E. Minneapolis
The seminar will air live on the study's Web page and be posted for later viewing. This seminar will compare potential vehicular solutions to global warming and air quality, including vehicles fueled with ethanol, wind- or solar-powered battery electric vehicles, hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, and gasoline vehicles. In his research, Professor Jacobson found that ethanol-fueled vehicles did not improve—and possibly worsened—air quality relative to gasoline, which is already a significant health hazard. Hydrogen fuel cell vehicles were found to improve air quality significantly compared with gasoline regardless of the production method of hydrogen. Wind-powered

battery-electric vehicles were as clean as wind-powered hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, but about three times more efficient. Wind-powered battery vehicles required 30 times less land area than corn ethanol and 20 times less land area than cellulosic ethanol for powering the same vehicle fleet.

GardenWorks 4th Annual Community Garden Spring Resource Fair, Mar. 29
9:00am – 2:30pm First Christian Church, 2201 First Avenue South, Minneapolis

Will Allen from Growing Power in Milwaukee is kicking off the Spring Resource Fair, highlighting his organization's innovative work on bridging cultures through gardening. Activities for the kids, workshops, and engaging educational displays during the day. Raffle prizes, music and food top off the fun! Details and directions at www.gardenworksMN.org or call GardenWorks at 612-278-7123.

March Calendar events were e-mailed out. April events will be e-mailed last week of March, (with a few March events thrown in).

9:00 Adjournment