

PLANNING MEETING OF 3-13-01

The following thoughts are being forwarded to the Council to stimulate your thinking about our next activities and ways in which we can involve more people on the Council itself. The following ideas have been presented previously, but here they are again.

PROJECTS

Directory of Business with Sustainable Products and or Services; There are many businesses that are currently models of sustainable practices in the way they produce their products and or services. We are probably not aware of them. They should be lauded for their efforts, but more importantly patronized so they can remain in business and expand their business.

Web Master The use of paper, envelopes and stamps to communicate with is not a sustainable practice. It is unnecessarily wasteful of resources since there is a better alternative. We hope you will all join us in a paperless organization by giving us your e-mail address and by helping us find a volunteer who would help us enhance and expand the Council's existing website. We need someone to help manage it and evolve it into "all that it can be." We would like it to be a place where we can post news of meetings, suggested readings, links to related websites, pending legislation and general news of the organization that would allow one to more easily be involved.

Quarterly Forums; The issue of sustainability spans virtually all disciplines and professions. A public forum with invited speakers who could debate and discuss the issues would be a service to the entire community. Hold it over dinner with a purchased box lunch provided by a local cater. The event might take on the feel of a saloon and become a great place where people could network. A possible location might be the Café across from the College. Imagine a discussion between a representative of the Voluntary Simplicity movement and an economist who is an expert in our consumer driven economy.

Sustainability Conference - It would be an event at which a wide range of speakers could be present to present "papers" on What would a sustainable Ventura County look Like in 2020. The widest reasonable range of presenters could be invited to broaden the public's notion of sustainability. The papers could be published.

Demonstrations/Displays of Sustainability – When the organization has an opportunity to set up a public display at the County Fair, conference, etc. it would be useful to have a compelling and informative display. Interactive exercises, and tactile exhibits would be very helpful, as would handouts that would be continuing reminders of the organization's mission. We need you ideas and or research on what has been done elsewhere.

Public Service Ad for Movie Theaters - We could raise the public awareness of sustainability issues with public service ads. Placing them in theaters would be one place where there is a captive audience and where people would not expect to see such a message.

Seek Joint Projects with Other Universities - We could troll for joint projects with other schools beyond CSUN, e.g. UCSB, Cal Lutheran, UCLA, CAL POLY, etc.

Smart Growth Indicators - We could work with APCD and Bill Fulton to generate a set of Smart growth indicators that would be applicable to all the cities and perhaps have the APCD track the indicators into the future if the cities do not. These would be easier to fashion than the Sustainability

Indicators linked to SOAR that the past grant focused on and they would be more readily identified with by the public.

Quality of Life Indicators for Each City - Sponsor a forum for citizens of each community who wish to develop a set of indicators. We could host the general forums to get folks started as well as follow up events where various teams could check in with others to see how everyone is doing. The CSUN staff and students could have a role to play as advisors or specific contractors for a given community. The objective is to have each of the 10 cities develop meaningful measures of the quality of life that they hope to retain or achieve. In time these measures could evolve into more sophisticated sustainability indicators.

Measure A Evaluation - As this public advisory initiative is followed up on (or not) someone should take the time to measure the results so far. It would probably show the County doing rather well, but the cities less so. This would be a chance for the Council to use its Hones Broker status to look in on the status of the present and planned efforts. It might be accomplished by an extensive questionnaire to the cities and the County. We might get students (as a project) to assist us and a local paper to fund it with an eye towards publishing the results.

Resource Repository ; There is a growing number of resource materials (printed, video, etc.) which address new themes such as sustainable development, Smart Growth, etc. The library system is probably not ideally suited to collect and house such a collection, but the new Cal State Channel Islands University could be an ideal repository. Such a resource collection would be an asset to the community and help build bridges between it and the university. Such a collection could be the beginning of a theme for the university that would distinguish it from other schools in the system and provide guidance into the 21st century. Funds are needed to collect these materials, but a modest investment placed in the hands of capable researchers could result in a sizeable collection in short order. A reserve fund could keep the collection growing.

Comprehensive and Interactive Local Website; The new link between interest groups and the public will be increasing over the web. Such a site could provide a ready portal into the shared themes now emerging. It would be a place for local citizens, elected officials, business leaders, and non-profit groups to interact and solve problems. Existing groups could post regular summaries of their work much like the www.civinnovator.com site does. There are already resources available in the County that go untapped because they are not easily accessible by those seeking them. Furthermore, there is much to learn from other locales and their websites. Thus the local site should provide useful links to other sites in the state and across the nation (and around the world). The Sustainability Council already has a website and could with assistance and adequate funds see that it is maintained for the benefit of all.

Sustainability/Quality of Life Indicators ; If change is desired, one must measure present conditions and their evolution to determine if the desired change is actually occurring. Various benchmarking efforts (VCOG), statistical measures (standard reports on public health), etc. have been pursued, but to what degree will they influence outcomes that are important to the public and guide public policy makers. A broad based effort to establish indicators embraced by the public would help us gauge our progress.

Awards for Meritorious Efforts ; The Sustainability Council has made an award to a person who made a valuable contribution to the cause of sustainability (John Krist). Acknowledgement of many

others in different fields needs to be made and publicized so that the public and decision makers can see that change and innovation is possible. A concerted awards program needs to be established.

Sustainability Template ; There are a growing number of case studies in business, industry, government and in residences of sustainable practices. Documenting these and publishing them in tracts and/or on a local website would facilitate change on many fronts where people are willing to make a change, but do not know how to proceed. The City of Santa Monica, for instance has done a lot of work in this area.

Sustainability As Curriculum Theme at CSUCI ; If society is to change its thinking on crucial issues, it needs to be educated and it must train its members in the new ways. The university could be a leader in this regard by maintaining a relatively standard curriculum, but emphasize the importance of developing sustainable systems in whatever sectors are being taught — business, science, social sciences, environmental management, etc. We need to develop new paradigms with which to approach the future, not persist in the same old patterns of thought. A broad coalition of interests could influence the development of the university's curriculum.

Mutual Advocacy; New initiatives need the support of many groups so that decision makers can be encouraged to make tough decisions. Environmentalists need to support developers who propose Smart Growth projects and business and industry needs to acknowledge sensible environmental regulations that will promote a healthy environment for all. A system whereby different interest groups can provide this kind of support needs to be developed.

Community Issues Forum; Government sponsored forums are not always embraced by the public, but without a strong assembly of non-governmental organizations to sponsor such forums, public debate and input can be stymied. A working partnership between government and the non-governmental sector needs to be nurtured so that the public can find a comfortable place to engage in civic discussions of issues that perhaps could not be raised or resolved independently in either the governmental or private sector. Selective forums could be sponsored on important issues that perhaps are not being addressed by governmental entities. These would include by invitation appropriate interest groups and perhaps the general public.

Speakers Bureau; Many of the interest groups that share common goals would benefit by having thought provoking speakers making presentations to an assembly of interest groups. Some topics might include: building coalitions between diverse interest groups, instituting sustainable practices within government and industry, how to approach grants-giving foundations.

Comprehensive Mailing List of Interested Parties; Individuals and interest groups want to learn more about sustainability, smart growth, etc. but may not know how to plug into these local movements. Advertising a website where these parties could register their e-mail addresses would allow constituent groups to interact with these parties in an efficient way.

Smart Growth Indicators; Many local interest groups are concerned about future development patterns in the cities, particularly after the passage of SOAR measures. So far there have been clear benchmarks set from which to measure how the cities are dealing with new development. VCOG has a benchmark program which could have an addendum that specifically reviewed the extent to which cities were practicing smart growth. Identifying appropriate indicators would be an excellent way for different interest groups to work together on a project with practical application to our own communities. Furthermore, the VCOG program is an existing vehicle for such an effort.

Advisory Board for Foundation Grants ; Local Foundations may not have an advisory board to assist it in making thoughtful selections from among various grant applicants who are pursuing projects in the environmental, smart growth, sustainability, and other compatible areas. A coalition of interests could offer that service.

MEMBERSHIP STRATEGIES

Solicit Project Ideas From the Public. Using our Advisory Committee, mailing list and newspaper ads solicit input from the public as what future projects we should pursue. We could propose a number and also allow for recommendations. This approach would allow us to gauge public interest and support for our next project and as a way of identifying people who have an interest in sustainability issues who may want to join the Board or promote a project. Solicitation could be done via a post card invitation to a meeting or look at our website and a polling of which projects are most appropriate. Using the website would allow us to capture the addresses of those who visit.

Seek a Grant Writer. The position could be advertised as a paid position from grant funds if the person could serve as a project manager. Having someone on board formally seeking grants will allow us to ramp up the type of projects we pursue and thus gain more stature, experience, and advance concepts of sustainability. The presence of such a person would also encourage others to participate because they would see the Board acting as a true policy board with staff.

Student Interns` ; Gain experience and perhaps earn college credit by being an intern with the Council. One could play a valuable role in the general development of the organization or with the various projects described herein.

Hold a Series of Conversations with Selected People. We would selectively invite people to our meetings to explain what they are doing and how it is related to a sustainable future. We would become educated and we might find the speakers willing to join the Council. A variation would be to invite a number of prospective Council members to a session and ask them as "influential" people what they believe ought to be the Council's future focus.

Tri-County Sustainability Council Meeting. There is a central coast sustainability magazine out of San Luis Obispo and there is the Sustainability Project in Santa Barbara, perhaps we could promote a Tri-county conference that would be a draw to our respective communities since there may not be enough interest in any one county. Or we could simply meet with our counter parts and share ideas about projects and membership issues.