

Energy and Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2010

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

President's Board Room - Burruss Hall

Present: Scott Hurst, Denny Cochrane, Rick Johnson, Rob Lowe, Madeline Schreiber, Annie Pearce, John Randolph, Tom Tucker, Mike Cutlip, Jack Davis, Sara Murrill, Alex Funk, Sandra Mullins (Administrative Assistant)

Absent: Michael Coleman, Elena Dulys-Nusbaum, Bruce Ferguson, Mintai Kim, Ben Myers, Spencer Riddile, Dwight Shelton, Sherwood Wilson

Guests: John Beach, Kevin Bishop, Angella De Soto, Richard Hirsh, Dmitri Iarikov, Jim McCoy, David St Jean, Sarah Surak

Call Meeting to Order and Welcome Guests

Denny Cochrane chaired the Energy and Sustainability Committee meeting in Michael Coleman's absence and called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. He recognized members of the Committee who are completing their tour at the end of this semester, and thanked them for their dedicated service and support.

Approval of Agenda

The Committee approved the agenda.

Approval of the March 29, 2010 Minutes

The March 29, 2010 Minutes were approved by the Committee.

Old Business

1. Green Campus Challenge Update & Procedure for Scoring

Dr. John Randolph reported 50 departments participated in a Green Campus Challenge (GCC) survey which represents nearly two-thirds of Blacksburg campus employees. Graduate Assistant David St. Jean is commended for preparing the on-line survey, for assisting departments during the submission process, and for preparing a detailed spreadsheet that contains the numerical point total and narrative information for each department. Dr. Randolph proposed forming a four-member GCC scoring subcommittee consisting of an ex officio member, faculty member, staff member, and student to review the entire survey documentation of the ten departments having the highest overall numerical score. The Committee agreed and Scott Hurst (ex officio), Madeline Schreiber (faculty), Rob Lowe (staff), and Alex Funk (student) volunteered. Dr. Randolph, Denny Cochrane and David St. Jean will provide administrative support. The goal is to announce the GCC survey results prior

to the end of the 2010 spring semester, with all participating departments being recognized on the Office of Sustainability website.

2. Lord Christopher Monckton Invitation Discussion

At the previous meeting on March 29, 2010, Chair Mike Coleman announced President Steger had been contacted by a former member of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors who had attended a presentation by Lord Christopher Monckton on global warming at Liberty University, and who thought we should consider extending him an invitation to visit Virginia Tech. President Steger asked the Energy and Sustainability Committee to review this proposal and provide feedback. Mr. Coleman requested Committee members review this proposal and submit their comments to Denny Cochrane prior to the next meeting on April 26, 2010.

Mr. Cochrane received comments from the Committee members and provided the following summary:

- a. Virginia Tech should welcome diverse ideas and provide an opportunity for the university community to discuss them. The real issue is sponsorship.
- b. The Committee does not recommend President Steger sponsor this visit as it would give the impression of an official endorsement. Lord Monckton's background appears to be political and not scientific.
- c. It was not recommended for the Energy & Sustainability Committee to sponsor this visit as again it may appear that the Committee is giving an official endorsement.
- d. It would be more appropriate for an interested student organization, or academic department to consider sponsoring this visit.
- e. If an interested student organization or academic department was interested in sponsoring this visit, it would be up to their discretion to determine the format.

Examples may include:

1. Individual presentation with only Lord Christopher Monckton.
2. Debate format with Lord Christopher Monckton and another person with opposite views.
3. Panel discussion with Lord Christopher Monckton as one of the panel members.

The Committee was in agreement with this summary. Angie De Soto suggested that the Energy and Sustainability Committee consider sponsoring this event only if there was a balanced approach with a panel discussion format. While members agreed with a balanced approach, the Committee did not feel it should be the sponsor. Following approval of the minutes, Mr. Cochrane will prepare a response to President Steger.

New Business

1. Recycling Update

- a. *Comprehensive Waste Management Plan.* Angie De Soto reported the Office of Sustainability, with assistance from Housing and Dining Services and student interns, is developing a Comprehensive Waste Management Plan for Virginia Tech. The intent of this plan is to address trash and recycling material collection requirements for all Virginia Tech units located the Blacksburg campus, and those in the immediate surrounding area.
- b. *RecycleMania 2010.* The 10th annual RecycleMania ten-week competition concluded on March 27, 2010. Over 600 colleges and universities nationwide participated. This is the fourth consecutive year Virginia Tech has participated.

When compared to last year's competition, Virginia Tech has a 6.6% increase in the cumulative recycling rate, a 7.3% increase in pounds of recycled material, and a 4.7% decrease in pounds of trash. Especially noteworthy was the significant increase in pounds of food service organics (composting) which more than tripled. RecycleMania 2010 results may be viewed at: <http://recyclemaniacs.org/Results.aspx>.

- c. *Calendar 2009 Recycling and Waste Diversion Rates.* Mr. Cochrane reported that Virginia Tech's final recycling rate for Calendar Year 2009 was 36.48%. The Commonwealth of Virginia uses a Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) formula that calculates a basic recycle rate and adjusts that figure up to an additional five percent to account for solid waste reused, for non-municipal solid waste recycled, and for source reduction credits.

For Calendar Year 2009 Virginia Tech recycled 1,887 tons of material and produced 4,107 tons of municipal solid waste (trash). For comparison, for Calendar Years 2008 and 2007 we recycled 1,522 tons and 1,464 tons respectively which shows an upward trend. For Calendar Year 2008 and 2007 our trash was 4,764 tons and 5,507 tons respectively which shows a downward trend. These trends demonstrate our recycling program is working.

During Calendar Year 2009, Virginia Tech had over 10,000 tons of solid waste reused from construction and renovation projects on campus. Examples included block, asphalt, concrete, wood, and roof rock ballast from new construction projects and major renovations that was used for fill material elsewhere on campus. In addition, Virginia Tech had nearly 1,600 tons of non-municipal solid waste recycled material from three asphalt repaving projects. These impressive figures resulted in Virginia Tech's waste diversion rate exceeding 70%.

- d. *Y-Toss?* For the fifth consecutive year, and during the period May 8-13, the YMCA at Virginia Tech, Virginia Tech Recycling, Facilities Services, Housing, and various

other university and local activities will join together to sponsor *Y-Toss*? This extremely popular program is a recycling event designed to collect used items students typically “toss” during student move-out. The YMCA inspects and stores the items which will be sold during student move-in at the beginning of the 2010 fall semester. This program reduces Virginia Tech dumping fees and diverts items from the local landfill.

2. Open Discussion

Denny Cochrane congratulated the students for their involvement in numerous sustainability initiatives this year including Earth Week 2010, the inaugural “Eco” Olympics, RecycleMania 2010 and *Y-Toss*?

Future Meetings

This is the last meeting for this academic year. The Committee agreed to review the minutes of this meeting and conduct an electronic vote for approval prior to the end of this semester. Future meetings will resume in the 2010 fall semester.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned.