

ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING

September 28, 2015

Room 325, Burruss Hall

MEMBERS:

Members Present: Kayla Smith (for Sherwood Wilson), Debbie Greer (for Dwight Shelton), Jason Soileau, Denny Cochrane, Ruben Avagyan, Steve Mouras, Rob Lowe, Sean McGinnis, Tim Baird, Bruce Obenhaus, Katie Reaves, Devita Mccullough-Amal, Allison Homer, Melvin Amos, Sydney Lavery.

Members Absent: Chris Kiwus, Frances Keene, John Chermak, David Mellichamp, Richard Benson.

Recorder: Emily Schosid.

Guests: Emily Schosid, Katy Shepard, Rial Carver

1. Welcome & Introductions E&S Committee Members; Review Charge

Mr. Mouras called the meeting to order at 2:03PM; all members introduced themselves. Afterwards, Mr. Mouras presented the official charge for the Committee, and asked the members to think about how we can best meet our charge. Mr. Baird asked if we are able to change the charge; Mr. Mouras said that we could do it, but that it would have to be approved through the Commission on University Support and ultimately University Council. He said that it is possible for us to give some thought to whether we would like to change the charge, since our mission may have changed since the committee was founded. Mr. Baird pointed out that the current charge offers a very narrow definition of “sustainability” would be, and Mr. Mouras noted the charge refers to “energy supply and use” and “resources” which can be confusing. Mr. Soileau pointed out that Ms. Smith would know the most about the process since she is in the Office of the Vice President for Administration. She informed the committee that if a change was desired, the committee would put forth a proposal, which would have two readings at Commission on University Support and then two readings at University Council. Mr. Mouras said that this could be an item for the committee to consider this year.

2. Approval of Proposed Agenda

Mr. Mouras asked for changes to the agenda, and receiving none, the agenda was approved.

3. Approval of April 27, 2015 Minutes

Mr. Mouras asked for changes to the April 27 minutes. Mr. Mouras said that an omitted name was corrected. Ms. Greer asked for Mr. Shelton’s name to be corrected in the “members” section, as it was originally misspelled. Receiving no other corrections, the minutes were approved.

4. Presentation on 2015 Annual Sustainability Report to BOV

Mr. Mouras gave the same presentation that was prepared for the Board of Visitors at their August 2015 meeting. The presentation included information about the Climate Action Commitment, the Energy Action Plan, STARS Gold certification, new LEED certifications on campus. Mr. Avagyan asked if VT has any requirements to certify existing buildings. Mr. Mouras said that it has been discussed, but the University has generally decided to only LEED certify new construction and major renovations. The

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energy plan that Mr. Avagyan presented does a number of the actions that would happen to retrofit existing buildings to meet LEED standards. Mr. Mouras continued the presentation to show sustainability events, sustainability programs, Green RFP projects, and sustainability awards.

4. Old Business

a. 2014-2015 (old) Green RFP & 2015-2016 (new) RFP; Status: Denny Cochrane

Mr. Cochrane reviewed the five approved projects from last year. Two projects are already complete and the other three are in progress. The LED streetlamps are currently being installed. The water bottle stations in the residence halls are currently being installed. By the end of that project, every residence hall will have a unit. The solar table project is nearing completion; the university planners need to decide on a location, and the unit needs to be built at a local firm in Roanoke. The OZZI machines were purchased and wrapped in a green cover that talks about the Green RFP program. The water bottle refill stations for academic buildings has been completed.

The 2015-2016 Green RFP has been officially released. The official memo went out to all of the student leaders listed on GobblerConnect, along with other media outlets. The big change for this year's program has to do with schedule. The proposal deadline is now in mid-November, instead of October. This will push the review process back by about a month. Mr. Avagyan asked if there was a cap on the amount of money that can go towards the Green RFP in any given year. Mr. Cochrane said no, there was not. He also reminded the committee that the university prefers to see energy-related projects.

b. Composting Challenges; Update on Consultant: Rob Lowe

Mr. Lowe gave an overview of previous composting efforts. For several years, VT sent its compost to Poplar Manor Enterprise, but this company went out of business in April 2015. We found another compost company near Wytheville, VA, but they are only able to process about 20% of our compost load. So Facilities Operations, Dining Services, Sustainability, and Environmental Health and Safety started a committee to find a better solution, which includes seeing if it is feasible to have a compost facility on campus. We hired a consultant (Draper Aden & Assoc) to look at the various options for composting both on and off campus.

c. 2015-2016 Energy initiatives: Ruben Avagyan

Mr. Avagyan started his overview by discussing the difference between the Office of Energy Management and the Office of Energy and Sustainability. The Office of Energy Management deals with buildings systems and infrastructures inside of those buildings, whereas Office of Energy and Sustainability looks at behavior change through PR and other methods. Mr. Avagyan then discussed the Energy Plan, which was completed over the summer, and has been split into 5 phases over 5 years (ending in 2020). The goal is to reduce utility costs, comply with state mandates for energy reduction (15% energy reduction by 2020), support the Climate Action Commitment, and establish funding and organization for the plan going forward. Phase 1 was granted about \$2.56 million to upgrade the north chiller plant, to purchase and implement an energy management tool, to install steam meters on buildings, to retro-commission various buildings, and to perform detailed energy audits on "Energy Hogs" buildings. Mr. Avagyan showed the committee the top 10 buildings to focus on—"Energy Hogs" that currently use 20% of the total energy on campus.

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d. Single Stream Recycling at VT Update: Denny Cochrane

Virginia Tech now uses a single stream recycling system. This simplifies recycling for the user, since they no longer have to sort their recyclable waste. It also simplifies recycling for collections crews because there is only one recycling stream to be collected instead of two. For indoor collections, it was decided that VT would take advantage of existing recycling bins, and new lids were bought and labelled for the academic half of campus. Since July 1, there has been an increase in recycling tonnage, trash tonnage, and a significant reduction in the waste rejection rate. On September 30, a new recycling contract will begin, and will replace the outdoor recycling dumpsters.

5. New Business

a. Sustainability Week Wrap-up Report: Emily Schosid

Ms. Schosid gave a brief overview of Sustainability Week events from 2015, including Caught Green Handed, Campus Tree Planting, Movie on the Drillfield, and edible plants on the Huckleberry trail. This was the 9th Sustainability Week event, in partnership with the Town of Blacksburg.

b. Student Sustainability Leadership Forum: Katy Shepard

Office of Energy and Sustainability is offering an opportunity for student groups to come together and meet each other and OES, talk about what their major concerns and goals are, talk about what their missions are, and brainstorm about how to work together for a more sustainable campus. OES sent invites to student groups we knew about, but if there are other groups that need to be present, please forward that information to OES. This event is open to all students who are interested in Sustainability. The event will take place on Oct 21, 7-9PM, Surge Building, room 109.

c. Open Discussion; Goal(s) for this year: Steve Mouras

Mr. Mouras said that every year he asks the committee what they would like to focus on. OES could continue to give information briefings, but would prefer to focus on doing what the committee is most interested in doing, and create a more engaged committee style. One approach might be to learning more about the campus' attitudes and concerns about sustainability. To that end, Mr. Mouras suggested forming a working group that will put together a series of focus groups. Mr. Avagyan, Mr. Lowe, Ms. Mccullough-Amal, Ms. Homer, and Ms. Shepard volunteered for the working group. Ms. Schosid volunteered to be the chair of the working group. This working group will get together and discuss more details about how to better gauge sustainability attitudes on campus and how that information can better inform the activities of the E&S Committee, and then report back to the full committee next month.

Mr. Baird asked if the Charge was a limiting factor for the work of the committee. Mr. Lowe said he did not think it was a limiting factor since committee meetings have been more one-way communication from various groups to the full committee. Mr. Baird said that perhaps the findings in the working group can feed into a decision about what the charge of the committee should be, if different than what it currently is. Mr. Mouras said that in the interest of time, this topic can be tabled until next month, when the working group has reported on initial thoughts.

Next Meeting; October 26, 2015 - Room 325, Burruss Hall

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Adjourned 3:01PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Emily Schosid