

Energy and Sustainability Committee Minutes
October 26, 2015
Room 325, Burruss Hall

MEMBERS:

Members Present: Vickie Chiocca (for Sherwood Wilson), Savita Sharma (for Dwight Shelton), Jason Soileau, Denny Cochrane, Ruben Avagyan, Steve Mouras, Rob Lowe, Sean McGinnis, Bruce Obenhaus, Katie Reaves, David Mellichamp, Allison Homer, Melvin Amos

Members Absent: Richard Benson, Chris Kiwis, Frances Keene, John Chermak, Tim Baird, Devita Mccullough-Amal, Sydney Lavery

Recorder: Allison Homer

Guests: Gabrielle Velo

1. Welcome

Mr. Mouras called the meeting to order at 2:05PM.

2. Approval of Proposed Agenda

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

3. Approval of September 28, 2015 Minutes

Mr. Mouras asked for changes to the September 28 minutes, and receiving none, the minutes were approved.

4. Old Business

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

Mr. Cochrane reviewed the status of the five approved projects from last year. Two projects have been completed and the other three are in progress.

The LED streetlamps are nearly finished along Washington Street. Mr. Cochrane described the difference between the old and new (LED) street lights, and Mr. Mouras added many benefits of LED lights including energy savings, brighter, longer lifespan, less maintenance, the production of white light which is better for safety and security.

Most water bottle stations for the Residence Halls have been installed. The Oak Lane Special Purpose Housing units should be done by to late mid-November.

The Office of University Planning has reached out to a local firm in Roanoke to design a Solar Recharging Table that functions like the one submitted in the original Green RFP, but that conforms to similar outdoor structures such as bus stops and bike shelters.

Mr. Avagyan asked if we are required to complete this list of projects before going into the next round of Green FFPs. Mr. Cochrane said no. Mr. Mouras added that there is an internal goal to finish projects before moving into the next round, but sometimes projects take longer to complete.

The Office of Energy and Sustainability (OES) has been aggressively promoting the 2015-2016 Green RPF Program. An announcement message was sent to the leaders of student organizations listed in GobblerConnect, and to all students via the Virginia Tech Student Weekly Newsletter. Mr. Cochrane reviewed the key submission dates and events. Proposals are to be submitted to OES not later than close of business on November 11, 2015. OES will coordinate a feasibility review of each proposal, and will present a select list of proposals to the Energy and Sustainability Committee (E&SC) at our regularly scheduled meeting on January 25, 2016. The E&SC will select a Subcommittee to review the select proposals and assemble a draft priority list for presentation to the E&SC on February 22, 2016. The E&SC recommended priority list will be presented to the Office of Budget and Financial Planning later that month.

b. Composting – Preliminary Analysis: Rob Lowe

Mr. Lowe gave an update on the initiative to replace the services of Poplar Manor Enterprise for VT's composting services. In the short term, we've received a proposal from Royal Oak facility, which is a 2 hour drive away. The facility has agreed to take our compost, but distance is an issue, and we are analyzing costs associated. For the long-term, we have hired a consultant (Draper Aden & Associates) to conduct a composting feasibility study with five different options. Another meeting was held with composting stakeholders, who are analyzing the costs and benefits of each. We looked at Kentland Farm, but it may not be an ideal site due to spacing constraints. Royal Oak is a potential option for long-term. We are considering other on-campus options. Composting is a critical component of our recycling program and accounts for nearly 25% of our principle recyclable materials. Without composting, our current 40% recycling rate would be reduced by a quarter to approximately 30%.

c. Student Sustainability Leadership Forum: Steve Mouras

On October 21, from 7-9 pm, the Office of Energy and Sustainability held its first forum with a number of student groups working on sustainability measures to enable them to meet each other, collaborate on ideas, support and resources, and connect with OES. There were 13 presenters in the first hour (OES Intern Groups, Dining Services, Alternative Transportation, YToss, SGA and RHF, Environmental Coalition, Students for Clean Energy, Roots and Shoots, and Carol Davis (Town of Blacksburg Sustainability Manager). In the second hour, there were breakout sessions with common themes for groups to find opportunities for collaboration. Overall, the event was very successful. We are planning on conducting such sessions every semester, or at least every year. There were around 50 student participants.

d. Campus-wide Sustainability Outreach: Steve Mouras

The Energy and Sustainability Committee Engagement Working Group met on October 19th. The goal was to get a "pulse" on sustainability this fall, to reach out to a broader audience to determine how they prioritize sustainability. It was resolved to conduct a brief survey to

distribute to campus prior to Thanksgiving. We will then form focus groups based on the survey in the Spring Semester, and may also issue a more detailed follow-up survey. The results are to inform the Energy and Sustainability Committee for next year.

5. New Business

a. Intern Programs:

i. Turn Down 4 Watt

Turn Down 4 Watt (TD4W) starts today and it is a three week Residence Hall competition to reduce energy and water consumption. The Oak Lane Community (fraternities and sororities) compete against each other. There are monetary prizes (\$1,000, \$500 and \$250 for the Residence Halls, and \$500 and \$250 for Oak Lane). There is no way to differentiate water use between different Oak Lane buildings, so that element is cancelled for them. There is an energy reduction section, water reduction section, and an unplugging appliances section.

ii. HallowGreen

HallowGreen, a Halloween-themed sustainability event, is this week. This event encourages behavior change by getting people's attention. The OES Student Intern Recycling Team constructed a trash monster using chicken wire and stuffed it with recycling materials that is coming out of a trash container located outside of Detrick Dining Hall. Signage tells viewers to reduce waste, recycle, and to not "feed the trash monster." There is a movie on Tuesday in AJ, and a tabling event on Wednesday for TD4W.

b. Open Discussion:

i. Tree Campus USA Recertification: Denny Cochrane

Mr. Cochrane stated that in 2008 our university was certified as one of original Tree Campus USA sites in the Nation. We received a grant for \$10,000 from Toyota Motors to purchase and plant 100 native trees. Recently Virginia Tech President Timothy Sands received a letter from the Arbor Day Foundation announcing our recertification. To be selected for Tree Campus, USA Certification an institution must have the following: Tree Advisory Committee (Arboretum Committee), Tree Care Plan, Campus Tree Planting Program, an Arbor Day Observance, and a Service Learning Project. Our Sustainability Week and Earth Week Programs play are always featured in our annual recertification application. Our Landscape Architect Matt Gart has the primary responsibility for preparing and submitting our documentation and he does a great job.

ii. Sustainability Annual Report: Rob Lowe

Mr. Lowe would like to see copies of the last Sustainability Annual Report. Mr. Mouras agreed to circulate this report.

Next Meeting: November 16, 2015-Burruss Hall, Room 325

Adjourned 2:40 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Allison Homer