

Detroit Green Task Force Meeting

June 28, 2010

-Minutes-

Meeting was called to order at 3:22 p.m. by Kenneth V. Cockrel, Jr., in the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, 13th Floor.

Introductions – Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

Committee Update

The Green Task Force Sub-Committee gathered information from all over the country to see what different policies are out there, and what might work for the City of Detroit.

The large issue is global change and the City of Detroit needs a Climate Action Plan. Key point for this plan is sustainability, and green building falls under that. The action plan should be first, then green policies.

Even though we are still collecting and reviewing policies and plans, there are similarities and trends emerging including:

- Green building policies are not stand-alone policies, but are part of more comprehensive climate action and/or sustainability plans
- There is a shared philosophy that local government must lead by example
- Dealing with green buildings and other aspects of sustainability has been given a certain level of priority through such actions as appointment of a sustainability director; designation of a specific office; and/or through creation of boards, commissions or authorities
- Energy efficiency and water conservation are mandated through policies and ordinances
- Various incentives are instituted to facilitate green practices
- Renewable energy is actively promoted
- An education component for municipal employees, developers and the community is integral
- Government, community, business, and institutional collaboration is integral
- LEED standards and/or certification are widely instituted
- Specific and measurable objectives within a specific timeline are set
- Mechanisms for measuring progress, successes and challenges are put in place

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- Websites, downloads, links and other information is made readily available to the public

We will continue our review and analysis of green building policies and update the Task Force as we progress. We should have more information in a month or so.

Some incentives to developers may be: expediting the permit process, reducing permit fees, and a tax abatement of a certain percent.

We need residential/renter green policies, we currently do not have anything in place that would be considered an incentive to the landlords or renters. There should be an audit of the ordinances and zoning to see if it prohibits green building.

Urban Agriculture Update – Kathryn Lynch Underwood, City Planning Commission, Khalil Mogassabi, Urban Design Unit, Planning and Development Department

We will continue to work on the urban agriculture plan; WSU and MSU will also assist in this effort. This task is a lot more complex than originally thought. Many questions need to be asked and answered such as:

- What soil tests are needed and who should perform them?
- Pesticides, what would be the chemical impacts?
- Waste water, what is the impact?
- Should the health department be involved?
- How do the community gardens feel about urban agriculture?
- Farm Bureau / MSU asking for help so the City of Detroit may be exempt from the Michigan Right to Farm Act
- Should we be looking to be exempt? Or create an amendment to the act for cities like Detroit?
- The rights of the workers that will be on the farms also need to be looked at

The law allows for writing an ordinance or code on agriculture to be approved. We will consult with other cities to see what options we may have. We need to figure out the best way to go, before we present to the City Council, we need a state strategy.

At this time nothing has been worked out as to how urban agriculture will fit into the downsizing of the city, but it is being reviewed. People think their homes will be taken so that farms can be developed and this is not true, urban agriculture is being fit into the current landscaping of the city. Leasing land for farming may be an option, that way it can easily go back to the city if it is necessary.

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What is the difference between organic and non organic? These issues are being compared but with organic there are still some chemicals that are allowed, the impact on the neighbors and animals will be researched.

Non Motorized Plan Update – Prasad Nannapaneni, DPW

We previously update:

- Master Plan was completed in the year 2006 and is available at <http://208.112.94.121/resource/attach/40/masterplan.pdf>
- Adopted by the Hon. City Council in year 2008
- Master plan identified 395 miles of bike lanes within the city. This would cost 14.6 million dollars of the 2006 money
- Master Plan identified – Project Manager appointed June 2009, Task Force to oversee the implementation
- DPW took the leadership and formed the task force comprising various city divisions/departments. The task force has been meeting on a monthly basis since 2009
- Also formed was an external task force with agencies that are outside the city, including MDOT, neighboring road agencies, private and non-profit groups. This group meets on a quarterly basis
- Based on the input from the task force members they have developed standards for the non-motorized facilities, and a map showing existing and the proposed non-motorized facilities within the city. This is a living document.

Current progress is as follows:

- St. Jean (2 miles of bike lanes between Mack and Jefferson) is complete
- Vernor Highway (2 miles of bike lanes between Waterman and Lansing) is in the works
- Conner Creek Green Way (2 miles of bike lanes on the street between Jefferson to Peter Maharas Park) is in progress
- The Corktown – Mexicantown Greenlink project will have 16.7 miles of on street bike lanes and 11.6 miles of signed bike routes, when complete
- UCCA's Midtown Loop Phase I (Kirby between Cass Ave. and John R; and John R between Kirby and Canfield)
- UCCA's Midtown Loop Phase II and III are currently being worked on

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We need to push MDOT to consider a pilot project for bike lanes on Woodward Avenue, as work is being done, pavement could be marked now. Michigan Avenue is currently being redone as well, if there is no designated parking, there cannot be a bike lane. We need to get designated parking so that we can present the bike lane issue to MDOT by August 11th.

There needs to be a place where people can call to give their input on bike lanes when roads are being resurfaced.

Deconstruction Update – Myra Lee, Young Detroit Builders

There was a workshop on deconstruction at the US Social Forum last week; it helped us to express our ideas on deconstruction.

From a policy stand point, it is hard to see how we can promote a green policy, deconstruction is expensive. Deconstruction although it may cost more initially, saves much more on future costs as well as promotes great opportunity such as, less landfill use and job opportunities. Training people for these jobs can present more Detroiters with jobs. Deconstruction has been done for years and should be a different entity from demolition. A LEED point is to divert waste from going to the landfill, once we have a policy this will all fit into place.

Permits for demolition should be flagged so that we know who to contact so that maybe deconstruction could be used in place of demolition. This is a great idea and will be looked at. In this city we need to create new jobs and deconstruction is the way to do this.

Green Purchasing Ordinance Update – Councilman Kenneth V. Cockrell, Jr.

Although this has been slow, we now have a workable draft so that it can be brought in on. We will send out the latest draft for all feedback and thoughts. July 21st, 1:30p p.m. City Council Committee Amendment to purchasing ordinance meeting.

Announcements:

- GreeningDetroit.com in connection with Uni-solar, donated solar panels to a school in the suburbs, their next project will be to donate solar panels to a school in Detroit
- GreeningDetroit.com publishes the meeting minutes on their website @ www.GreeningDetroit.com, under the Metro Communities section, under the Government section, under the City of Detroit.
- The Detroit Regional Chapter Fund in memory of Elaine Goldsmith. For donations to support the DRC Fund in memory of Elaine Goldsmith, please direct inquiries to: Kenn Rickman – DRC Chapter Chairman, 313-595-4511, 19785 W. 12 Mile Road, Ste. 239, Southfield, MI 48076.
- www.grownindetroit.tv "Grown in Detroit" is a one-hour film that follows students at the **Ferguson Academy for Young Women**, a high school for pregnant teens, as they work in the school's urban garden and learn how to grow nutritious food for their children.

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- Check Young Detroit Builders site for up coming programs and meetings in July
- Effective July 7, 2010 Mrs. Roshani Dantas will be joining our team as lead staff person in Green Initiatives and the Task Force. Mrs. Dantas has extensive environmental experience having previously worked for Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice and most recently for T.H.A.W.
- From Ken Cockrell, Jr.: thanks to all members of the Detroit Green Task Force Green Building Policy Sub-Committee

The next Green Task Force meeting is scheduled for July 22, Thursday. Date is subject to change and all will be advised if a change is made.