

Sustainable Blacksburg

Minutes—Board of Directors Meeting—26 March 2012

(Minutes approved by the Board on 09 April 2012)

Time & Place: 7:00 p.m. at the Blacksburg Motor Company

Board Members Present: Bill Claus; Rob Lowe, Jerry Ford, Tim Colley, Don Langrehr, John Randolph, Kimberley Homer

Board Members Absent: Jackie Pontious, Bob Shubert, Ann Raridon, Susan Garrison, Glenn Skutt

Guest: Mason Cavell

Agenda Item # 1: TREASURERS REPORT

Dave Roper transferred signature authority and Quicken files to Jerry Ford in mid-February. We have just under \$3,000 now with \$25 per month going out for Internet service at Price House and some SEC filing fees.

Agenda Item # 2: INTRODUCTION TO CAFE² – Mason Cavell, Business Development Coordinator

CAFE² was created by a Department of Energy grant. It is a trade group, representing energy contractors in the New River Valley and Roanoke. They do capacity building and serve as a clearinghouse for rebates and incentives. The Town of Blacksburg and the City of Roanoke are issuing block grants. Roanoke is supporting major retrofits for six homes. Blacksburg is offering \$500 rebates and \$2500 zero interest loans to households who qualify as being below 80% of the median area income. (This amounts to \$37,500 per household in our area.) There are also incentives directly from the Department of Energy (DOE), including \$15,000 forgivable loans through Freedom First Credit Union. Claus asked about announcements. Mason said that they are having 18,000 post cards printed, and they may contract for a billboard on Rt. 460, and have promotional materials in front of Kroger and at the Farmer's Market. CAFE² is also reaching out to realtors and appraisers. CAFE²'s web site is at <http://www.cafe2.org>.

Agenda Item # 3: SB's PARTICIPATION IN 2012 SUSTAINABILITY WEEK

The Executive Committee (EC) recommended that SB be a sponsor, rather than a full partner, in Sustainability Week. Bill read **Ann Raridon's** comments which are included here:

"During the last SB General Meeting it was announced that SB would not be sponsoring Sustainability Week this year. This announcement came as quite a surprise to me since I understood (and it was in previous minutes of either the Board or the EC) that the Board itself would make this decision and the Board has not yet met to make such a decision. However, I assume that the Board would follow the recommendation of the EC tomorrow night anyway, especially since two of the most active members in planning for SW recently will not be able to be there.

"Nevertheless, I want to make known my strong objections to this decision. It is absurd to me that SB is not going to continue to be a co-sponsor of its own signature event. Since SB plans to sponsor some events, it is not clear to me how it is perceived as being so much additional work to participate as a sponsor for the week itself. I understand that the Town and VT are planning to go ahead with the week and think that SB should be a co-sponsor. With someone else leading the effort, it should be manageable for SB to participate. I agree wholeheartedly that SB has put more resources into planning the week than is reasonable, but I think that was a result of poor organization and trying to do more than is reasonable. Time should be devoted to planning a few quality events (which it sounds like is going to happen anyway) and to advertising. Events beyond what can reasonably be accommodated during the week should be planned for other times.

"I think the idea of a sustainability makeover is a winner and that it should be the premier event on the Saturday ending SW. Last year, members asked for more service project ideas and although SB agreed to that plan there really haven't been any. I think this is an event that the community would really rally around and would show SB actively doing something in support of its name. Unlike some of the previous Saturday events, it is a cause worthy of giving up a Saturday morning for.

"I hope the Board will reconsider this "decision" and agree to continue to co-sponsor SW. I would urge each of you to consider your own involvement with SW and on what basis you are voting to discontinue sponsorship."

Discussion. Randolph expressed sympathy for two of Raridon's points. Sustainability Week is an award winner, and it's the one Virginia Tech, the Town of Blacksburg, and Sustainable Blacksburg do together. He added that Virginia Tech's Office of Sustainability is also having trouble doing so much. Colley pointed out that the business community also participates, and that Jeffrey Weiseman might be willing to serve as a businessman and a Sustainable Blacksburg member. Ford remarked that we use up all of our sustainable human capital—six months of work—on one sustainability week, and the volunteers get burned out. He noted that Virginia Tech and Town of Blacksburg employees are paid to do planning work, but SB members are volunteering in addition to their regular jobs and responsibilities. He asks, "Do we want to have a presence 52 weeks out of the year?" Langrehr attended the EC meeting where this issue was discussed, and he said it was clear to him that SB wasn't pulling out of the Sustainability Week event—just the planning effort. Randolph added, "Creating something is more valuable than maintaining. Creating something new will generate more interest."

Elizabeth Gilmore, a SB representative since the beginning of SW, has resigned. Claus also resigned from this committee, but he has offered the 2012 committee any of the files that he created and used during 2011. Colley asked how SB will go about suggesting events if we are not part of the steering committee. Claus said that the steering committee (also called the SW planning committee) sends out a general request for events. For example, Dave Roper would like to have a library program on electric cars during Sustainability Week, perhaps on the day of the Sustainability Fair. Ford commented that the Sustainability Fair took a lot of effort in the past, and is less viable now.

Motion, Discussion, and Vote. Homer moved that, "*SB will NOT provide participants to the SW planning committee this year, for developing a Sustainability Week, but we WILL provide some programs for Sustainability Week and provide a liaison in the person of Dave Roper.*" Langrehr seconded this motion. Colley asked if Virginia Tech and the Town of Blacksburg know what the SB Board is considering. Claus said that Garrison has attended some meetings and has discussed this possibility, but no one has volunteered yet to chair the SW steering committee. A vote on this motion was called, and it passed unanimously.

Agenda Item # 4: PROPOSED PROGRAM PLANNING FOR 2012

Background. Two predominate ideas have been proposed during the last 12 months. First, that SB establish a *Program Committee*. Our Bylaws says that such a committee *may* be established. This committee would then have oversight over all programs established by SB. However, some feel that such a committee would be too much work for just a few active volunteers, especially if SB were to develop many different programs during the year. Second, others have expressed the idea that people, especially those interested in different types of sustainable activities, might form *small, focus groups* to plan and carry out specific activities that might accomplish one goal in our community. The formation of each small focus group could be considered and approved or rejected by the SB Executive Committee as part of SB's activities for each calendar year.

The SB Executive Committee has recently met and approved the **second** approach for 2012, however the EC wishes to have the final decision made by the entire Board of Directors.

Current Events. In anticipation of receiving approval from the Board for the “team” approach to program development, we have begun to set up the following functional teams.

- Library Events Team –Claus & friends - Planning four events: Trees; Bees; All-Electric Vehicles; and Greening the Holidays
- Blacksburg Tours Team – Lowe (Team Leader), Spencer Riddile, & Barry Robinson
- Financial Resources Team – Ford (Team Leader), Shawn Whiting & April DeMotts
- SEEDS Recycling Team – Derry Hutt (Team Leader), April DeMotts & Dan Zhu
- Greening Social Events Team – Langrehr (Team Leader), Jackie Pontious, Ben Harder
- Sustainability Make-Over Team – Phil Callicott and Sarah Gibbs (Team Leaders), and Himanshu Tiwari
- Booth Team – Claus & Friends (TBD)

Board Discussion. Claus mentioned that some teamwork is well under way, with volunteers engaging in activities that are of interest to them. Randolph said that he would like to add an *Energy and Climate Team*, which he is willing to lead, and other members concurred. Homer said she would like to help with the *Booth Team*. Colley asked about the Financial Resources Team, and Ford explained that it is for fundraising, through donations and sale of materials like cloth shopping bags and water bottles. Colley and Randolph suggested that a *Communication Team* would be useful, and Lowe said VT students might help with developing a portal or something similar.

Motion & Vote: Ford moved that the naming of “Team” and “Committee” be used interchangeably to conform with the bylaws. Lowe seconded this motion, and it was approved unanimously. By this time, it was well understood that the separate, focused, team or committee approach was favored over having one separate Program Committee during 2012.

Agenda Item # 5: DISCUSS ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Because of time constraints, this agenda item was postponed until the next Board meeting.

Agenda Item # 6: OPEN DISCUSSION

This agenda item was also postponed until the next Board meeting.

Agenda Item # 7: ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Scribe: Kimberley Homer 552-3106