

## **Climate Change Committee meeting January 28, 2008**

In attendance: Rob Enelow, Carla Graeff, Dedun Ingram, Betsy Johnson, Judith McGuire, Elizabeth Mumford, Christine Real de Azua, Dian Seidel, Stuart Sessions.

### (1) Survey update and budget:

The Committee heard from Stu Sessions about the status of the survey that is key in establishing the baseline emissions of the Town. Some 120 surveys have been filled and returned. Stu indicated that he had initial concerns about how representative those answers might be, and therefore checked the information against that from the Census for the Town. The survey will be used to estimate residential and transportation energy use, by plugging in programs that capture and estimate most aspects of greenhouse gas emissions.

Funding to pay the two researchers (\$1,200 in the budget year) is now exhausted, and more will be needed to take the full study to the finish line. Judy indicated that the Committee should estimate how much it would need for other elements of the climate change action plan, including hiring a facilitator for a process similar to that used by the Town for its “visioning” exercise. Rob and Judy will also clarify where the Committee’s budget now stands, and in particular whether the \$1,200 for the survey processing was in addition to the \$2,500 budget allotted to the Committee.

Update: The town of Chevy Chase does not allow for carryovers from one fiscal year to the next. Rob and Judy have been informed by Andi Silverstone that the committee has spent \$696 on the interns and has \$1904 remaining for this fiscal year. We can request additional money for a specific purpose.

### (2) Status of coordination with Environment and Community Liaison Committees for Earth Day preparations.

The Committee discussed various options for Earth Day, ranging from educational and festive activities for children and families to a discussion among Town residents regarding a Climate Change Action Plan for the Town. It was in the end agreed that with so many educational activities proposed in the area and downtown, the “value added” might best lie in presenting the survey (which should be ready by then), setting goals for greenhouse gas reduction, and getting consensus on the gross outline of an Action Plan. This would take place around the time of Earth Day. A facilitator would be needed and we will need to assure adequate budget for the workshop costs in addition to the budget for the analysis and finalization of survey results.

The idea will be to solicit input from residents based in part on notional proposals for the most likely emissions reduction activities. These proposals would be prepared and discussed in advance by the Committee. The Committee agreed that a full range of proposals would need to be examined, ranging from simple initiatives that residents could privately undertake, to incentives provided by the Town, to Town government operations, to changes in policies and regulations from Town.

The following list is not exhaustive, and more volunteers will be needed to explore, research and propose actions. Each person would prepare a fairly well developed proposal that includes something about costs, financing, and what would be the emissions reductions expected.

At the meeting the following commitments were made:

- Presentation of survey and the “bang for the buck” (in emissions and dollars) of certain obvious follow-up actions, e.g.
- Encouraging urban forests; preserving tree and green space and examining the relative advantages of different kinds on plants on CO<sub>2</sub> absorption (Stu)
- More energy efficient streetlights (Judy)
- Solar panels for large buildings in town Town CCES, 4H, and Leland Center (Judy)
- Town-based professional composting (Dian)
- Changes in Town building code and regulations to encourage and require more efficient buildings (Christine)
- Subsidy/incentive for home energy audits (Stu)
- Energy conservation at Leland Center (Betsy)
- Other items unassigned: greening the town motor fleet, innovative transportation options (shuttle bus to Bethesda; commuter connection), increasing green space through land use ordinance; tightening further Land Use Ordinance (LEED), requiring energy efficiency from contractors; changing behavior of town staff to save fossil fuel (bikes); requiring car registration, charging for it and giving sliding scale based on emissions; and others on list of possible actions from Mayors’ agreement, or TBD by the Committee.

### (3) FAR Proposal

The Committee discussed the FAR ordinance proposal from the point of view of climate change. Judy and the Committee asked Rob why the Council and Land Use Committee had not included environmental/energy considerations such as exploring LEED or Energy Star requirements or incentives as part of the proposal. The discussion was not conclusive—why for example are those not simply part of “design” which is something that the Town has the authority to regulate? Dedun Ingram, who sat on the Land Use Committee, stated that LEED was rejected because it was deemed too preliminary and unenforceable. After discussion

Energy Star, Dedun agreed that this would be an acceptable addition to the Land Use Ordinance.

In any case, given the attacks on the present proposal, the discussion turned to more immediately strategic issues of how to voice support for the proposal and make specific amendments for its improvement.

Dian made the point, which was supported by all, that since the Town had made a commitment to reduce its climate change causing emissions, and since housing and transportation are the two largest sources of such emissions, it was incumbent upon it to establish building standards that would help achieve those emissions reductions.

It was agreed that, at a minimum, Judy would make a presentation on behalf of the Committee to the Town on the FAR. The presentation would explain the Town's commitment to reducing emissions, the importance and benefits of such an ordinance, and recommend the following amendments or highlight the following points:

- Amendment: should a building reach a FAR of 0.4 or more, the building **MUST** be Energy Star certified. This is a requirement, not a voluntary standard.
- Amendment: below a FAR of 4, establish a voluntary standard for energy efficiency/Energy Star
- Highlight: strongly support the cap of allowable square footage at 5,000 feet
- Highlight: support the baseline FAR of .3, noting that it is already very generous given existing averages, and, if anything, the Committee would urge that the ordinance establish a tighter FAR altogether
- Amendment: include a provision establishing that the Town will revisit efficiency and environmental building requirements as these are rapidly evolving and becoming mainstream in construction and buildings across the country;
- clarify the conservation easement standard and explore expanding it to include land and agreements on privately owned lots and not just Town property

Judy is to circulate the proposal to all members before submitting it to the Town Council.