

Attendees:

Judy McGuire (Chair)
Dian Seidel
Suzanne Parmet
Stuart Sessions
Betsy Johnson
Daniel Button
Warren Rizzi (Staff support)
David Lublin (Council Liaison) absent (out of town)

1. Climate Corps Proposal

Dian Seidel, Warren Rizzi, and Daniel Button prepared two documents (see attached):

- A reflection on last summer's climate corps experiment
- Options for next steps

Discussion included the following facts and suggestion:

- We don't know when Pepco's program is likely to start – may be soon – may be later
- It might be possible to link climate corps with the energy audit program
- Climate Corps kids could help homeowner with changes – like light bulb installation, wrapping water heater, programming thermostat

We agreed to postpone action until February with hopes that we will know more about the Pepco schedule at that time. [Subsequently Dian suggested that we invite available Climate Corps members to make an open presentation to interested residents. Now scheduled for Jan. 6.]

2. Energy Audit Incentive Program

Warren has a list of 33 names signed up for the audit.

Some homeowners have asked for solar to be included in the program.

We decided that Judy will talk informally to Kirk Renaud of Common Cents Solar and explain the goals of our program and invite Ketch Ryan and Kirk Renaud to our next meeting to plead their case if they insist that solar be included in this pilot program. [Judy subsequently spoke with Kirk who agreed not to press for solar in this round but to discuss this if there is to be a new round on incentives. Further discussion with Ketch Ryan revealed that the State of MD is considering requiring energy audits before solar is installed.

Judy suggested that we have an evening presentation by energy auditors to town residents. We agreed that would be good to do in January when heating bills are high. [this is now scheduled for Jan. 28; snow date Feb. 3]

2. Mid-term update on the Carbon Assessment

Stuart stressed that we need data to determine if we've made any progress in the last year since the assessment was completed. We have data from the 13 houses that climate corps visited and we will collect more data from them next year to see if the changes they instituted made a difference. There is also data posted by Pepco and Gas and Oil companies that can be used and correlated with degree day data. We can also ask people who have had energy audits to share their data. Stuart will put together a mid-year follow up assessment.

Next meeting date Dec. 22 (if meeting with solar folks is necessary) otherwise Jan. 26

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM

Submitted by Betsy Johnson

Memo

To: Climate Protection Committee

From: Climate Protection Committee Members Dian Seidel, Daniel Button and Warren Rizzi, Management Assistant

Date: 11/12/09

Re: Climate Corps Summer 2009 Reflections- Residents

Background: During Summer 2009, the Town of Chevy Chase sponsored the Climate Corps program, in which high school and college students provided home energy checkups to Town residents to suggest ways in which they might conserve energy to help meet the goals of the Chevy Chase Challenge (the Town's climate action plan). Fourteen visits were conducted by the 8-member Corps; teams of two students made the visits during June, July and August 2009. Dian Seidel and Daniel Button contacted the residents by phone or email during September and early October for feedback on the experience. This memo summarizes residents' responses to a specific set of questions and their general comments. It complements Warren Rizzi's memo of 9/29/09 summarizing the reflections of the Climate Corps volunteers.

1) Was the checkup useful?

Most found the checkup useful. Many were already taking energy conservation steps and so did not learn a lot of new information. Nevertheless, they felt the checkup was worthwhile as motivation to do more, as a source of information about carbon and dollar savings, and as a source of information about best practices in energy conservation. Some expected the visit to be more akin to a home energy audit, addressing issues such as insulation, appliance efficiency etc. Everyone felt they learned something. One resident felt that it was insufficient and that he came away from the session wanting more out of the checkup (this may be beneficial in hoping that the resident will get a home energy audit.) He thought the work was too passive in that all the work was completed at the kitchen table instead of going through each room thoroughly. This could have involved the resident more in the process and made the check up more interactive. The students should be sure to recommend that a resident should get a home energy audit at the end of the check-up.

2) Were the students punctual, helpful, and sufficiently knowledgeable?

Residents were overwhelmingly positive about the Climate Corps members and praised their professionalism, efficiency, training, earnestness and courtesy. Several noted that the college students seemed more confident and tended to take the lead in the

conversation and that the high school students played a supporting role. (This was what we expected and the reason we paired college and high school students.) Some said it was very appealing to have young people addressing this issue with residents.

3) Were you expecting follow-up information or help, and if so did you receive it?

Most were not expecting follow-up (e.g., answers to questions that were not answered during the visit). Some suggested that it would be good for Climate Corps or Town staff to contact resident a few weeks after the visit to see if there were any questions or concerns and as a reminder to take the actions indicated during the visit.

4) Have you made any changes in your energy consumption since the visit; have you had any difficulty implementing the suggested actions?

Most had made some but not all the changes.

5) Do you have any suggestions for improving the program?

Start earlier in late spring to make use of college students whose summer vacations begin in May and to reach residents who are not in town later in summer. Follow-up Climate Corps visit with information about home energy audits. Provide a list of places to purchase the recommended supplies (light bulbs, low flow showerheads, etc.). Go room to room rather than having conversation in one location. (This was the way the Corps was trained to conduct checkups and was generally done, but at least one visit was done around a table.) Demonstrate the Watt meter with appliances in the home.

6) Would you recommend a Climate Corps checkup to neighbors?

All responded positively.

7) Testimonials (for use in future Climate Corps publicity): These were solicited via email after the phone calls. We have permission to quote these individuals.

“I found your program very helpful. I thought we knew a lot about home energy, but we are wrong. Your students are so professional and showed a lot of respect for us homeowners.

Thank you for your excellent service. We are anxious to improve the house energy.”

--Sue and Bob Mather

“The visit from the two students from the Climate Corps was both an interesting and educational experience for us as Town residents. They were on time and very focused while doing their survey. We provided copies of recent utility bills which they studied and commented on. At the end of the survey, we all sat down and discussed their findings and they left us a written copy of their report. We would encourage all Town residents to participate in this free evaluation of their homes.”

--Dave and Terry Eason

Climate Corps: Options for Next Steps
Prepared by Dian Seidel, Daniel Button, Warren Rizzi
2 December 2009

Background

- Summer 2009 was the inaugural season for Climate Corps (CC), a program designed to provide Town residents with home energy “checkups” by students.
- The program has two main goals: (1) reduce carbon emissions from homes by educating residents on easy ways to conserve energy and (2) educate and motivate young people on energy conservation issues.
- 8 students (4 college, 4 high school) participated. All but 1 were Town residents. They were selected after responding to recruitment notices in the Town listserv and the Forecast. They applied in writing and supplied references.
- CC had one ½ day training session, conducted by several Climate Protection Committee members and Warren Rizzi (Town Management Assistant), and one ≈2hr dry-run of a home checkup.
- During late June-mid August 2009, CC conducted 15 home checkups. Members were paid for training sessions and checkups.
- Feedback from CC members and from residents receiving checkups was very positive. (See memos summarizing follow-up conversations.) However, most of the residents were already taking energy conservation steps and so the net effect of CC on energy use was probably small.
- Total cost of the 2009 program was approximately \$800, less than the \$5,000 budgeted for this activity. This included payments to CC members, supplies for the home checkup tool kit, compact fluorescent light bulbs to give residents, CC t-shirts for members, and refreshments for the training and information sessions.

Current Status

CC is in hiatus for the school year. Plans for next summer are uncertain. The Climate Protection Committee and Town Council need to determine next steps. These decisions should be motivated by the two program goals above.

Important External Factors

- PEPCO may soon offer free (low cost??) home checkups/audits to customers, which would probably cover much of the same material as CC. Suzanne Parmet is monitoring PEPCO's progress. So far, the start date for the program has not been announced.
- We have explored whether any of the four college-aged 2009 CC members is interested in participating in summer 2010, with possible expanded responsibilities. After speaking with the older Climate Corps members, the four college students, all but one voiced

interest in taking on further roles in the program, although they were not sure what their commitments would be this summer. This position is not viewed as a priority for the students but something they would like to do if they are in town and can work it in their schedule. It seems there is potential to have at least one of the college students assume a greater role, but there are certain outside factors that could negate this possibility. The home energy audit incentive program that the Council recently approved could work synergistically with CC and so should be closely coordinated.

- The effectiveness of CC will ultimately depend on our ability to connect with those residents who are not currently on the energy conservation “bandwagon”, which involves marketing. This issue pervades many of the components of the Chevy Chase Challenge.

Options for the Future

We present options in the table below, with associated pros and cons, to facilitate discussion. Other options were considered but rejected. In developing these options, we have considered various issues such as:

- Effectiveness of CC in reducing the Town’s carbon emissions
- Effectiveness of CC in educating and motivating young people
- Connections between CC and the home energy audit component of the Chevy Chase Challenge
- Possibility that PEPCO will offer home checkups/audits that are similar to CC checkups
- CC as a summer or a year-round program
- CC as a student and/or adult team
- Re-engaging with BCC High School
- Working with students living outside the Town

No.	Option	Pros	Cons	Recommendation
1	Discontinue CC	Saves time, money and effort for other elements of the Challenge.	Loss of local flavor to home checkups. Loss of educational component for Town youth.	Consider strongly if other programs supersede CC in mission and effectiveness.
2	Year-round program, coordinated with home energy audit subsidy program	Maintains momentum during the school year. Provides comprehensive energy conservation plan to residents (with CC covering the behavioral changes and easy	Difficulty in engaging students during the academic year. Unlikely to find college students, and high school students were less effect than college students in summer 2009.	Not recommended, unless there is a compelling reason to maintain a full-year program.

		technological changes, and audits covering the more expensive appliance and home envelope issues).		
3	Summer 2010 CC similar to 2009 program but coordinated by a paid student, a veteran from 2009.	Emphasizes student responsibility, energy, and learning and so may be more dynamic and creative. Provides more appealing summer employment for one student. Might require less of Town staff and CPC involvement.	Somewhat risky with less control	Preferred option if a student coordinator can be identified.
4	Summer 2010 CC modeled after 2009 program	Relatively easy to structure the program. Low risk.	Requires significant adult involvement for recruitment, training, coordinating visits	Pursue this option if Option 3 is not possible (due to lack of student coordinator) and if volunteer and Town staff are available and willing.