

MINUTES

Mayor's Sustainable Business Initiative Task Force
McNutt Room—Eugene City Hall
Eugene, Oregon

June 28, 2005
1:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Dave Funk, Rusty Rexius, co-chairs; Josh Bruce, Julie Daniel, Roger Ebbage, Lynn Feekin, Siri Pretam Khalsa (for Kartar Khalsa), Mark Miksis, Betty Taylor (for Deb Noble), Scott Pope, Glenda Toling (for Jack Roberts), Randy Ross, Claire Syrett, Claudia Villegas, members; Mayor Kitty Piercy; Bob Doppelt, project team members, University of Oregon; Mary Walston, Jan Bohman, Sarita Black, City Manager's Office; members of the public.

ABSENT: Lisa Arkin, member.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mayor Piercy welcomed those present to the first meeting of the Mayor's Sustainable Business Initiative Task Force and thanked them for their willingness to serve. She said she had announced today's task force meeting at the previous day's council work session and had invited all residents to attend the task force's meetings to become familiar with what was happening. Noting the several members of the public present, Mayor Piercy suggested the task force consider whether to include a public comment period on future agendas. In the meanwhile, she invited written submissions from the public.

At the request of Mayor Piercy, task force members introduced themselves.

Mayor Piercy emphasized her belief the community could both have a strong economy and take care of its work force; it was part of the three-legged stool of sustainability. She noted the many current sustainability-related community activities and local businesses involved in sustainability. She spoke of green building practices used in the community and cited the Golden Temple as an example of a successful organic foods business that could be part of a larger sustainability niche. She believed that Eugene could "own" the topic of sustainability and be a center for sustainable businesses. For that reason, she had requested that a task force focused on a Sustainable Business Initiative (SBI) be formed and had asked Mr. Rexius and Mr. Funk to serve as co-chairs.

Mayor Piercy recalled the many meetings and conferences related to sustainability that occurred the previous year and the conversations she had with community members that led to the formation of the task force. She noted the interest expressed by several residents in the City establishing a permanent commission on sustainability and her belief the task force was a necessary step before that could occur. She said a larger community discussion on sustainability should occur so that all residents had the same information and so that education could occur about the meaning of sustainability. The task force would oversee that discussion.

Mayor Piercy reviewed the charge of the task force.

- 1. Identify priority business retention, expansion, recruitment and clustering opportunities in sustainable development that will improve the economy by generating income for local businesses and good paying jobs with benefits for employees, while also conserving the environment. In addition, identify ways that businesses not formally involved with sustainable development can benefit from the expansion of the sustainability sectors and participate in the clusters. For example, identify possible business and job opportunities and strategies for establishing industry clusters in energy efficiency, renewable energy, green building, organic and natural foods, transportation, health care, bioproducts and other fields. Identify how local firms not formally engaged in sustainability can benefit from the clusters by becoming suppliers, distributors, or through other mechanisms.*
- 2. Identify mechanisms to assist any existing local business or organization interested in adopting sustainable business practices and/or developing and marketing sustainably produced products in learning about and incorporating the measures into their operations.*
- 3. Identify financial assistance mechanisms that can assist existing organizations expand and new organizations adopt sustainability practices and/or produce and market sustainable products.*
- 4. Identify ways in which social equity measures such as good wages, adequate health care, affordable housing, and other actions can be incorporated into sustainable business retention, expansion, recruitment, and cluster development.*
- 5. Identify mechanisms to educate the general public and raise the level of awareness of the benefits and opportunities of sustainable business opportunities.*

6. *Identify strategies to ensure that Eugene and its businesses become recognized across the nation and elsewhere for their expertise and focus on sustainable economic and community development.*

At the request of Mayor Piercy, project staff introduced themselves.

2. Background, Purpose, Process, and Expected Outcomes

Mr. Funk reviewed the purpose and goals of the task force.

Mr. Funk reviewed the principles under which the task force would operate.

Mr. Funk reviewed the method the task force would use to accomplish its goals, saying that it would employ a process known as “Appreciative Inquiry.” He recommended that the task force members seek more information about the “Appreciative Inquiry” approach on the Internet. He briefly noted the four phases of the Appreciative Inquiry process: 1) Discover; 2) Dream; 3) Design; and 4) Destiny.

3. Discussion of Draft SBI Work Plan

Mr. Rexius overviewed the proposed draft work plan. He first called the task force’s attention to the working draft of the *Community Outreach Plan* and noted the sector- and issue-focused sustainable business “roundtables” that were proposed to occur, commencing in September 2005. He said that task force members would be asked to participate in at least one such roundtable and could participate in all of them if they desired. Mr. Rexius reviewed other outreach proposed to occur, which ranged from key constituencies to the general public to government officials.

Mr. Rexius noted the proposed task force time line for processing the information gathered through the initial public outreach phase of the effort.

Mr. Rexius said the next meeting was tentatively scheduled for July 28, with remaining meetings to be scheduled.

Mayor Piercy indicated that the City would also maintain a Web site on the work of the task force.

Mr. Funk noted the several technical advisory committees that would be supporting the work of the task force. He invited task force members to contact the co-chairs if they had any thoughts or comments about the process being proposed. Mr. Rexius invited questions from task force members at this time. There were none.

4. Future Task Force Meeting Dates and Times

Mr. Rexius suggested that the task force consider scheduling its meetings on the last Tuesday of the month from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

Mr. Miksis indicated he would not be able to attend the task force's July 28 meeting and asked if he should send a substitute in his place. Mayor Piercy discouraged members from sending substitutes to meetings and encouraged their attendance at every meeting if possible. Mr. Doppelt noted that minutes of task force meetings would be available soon after meetings occurred.

5. Background on Systems Thinking and Sustainable Business and Job Development

Mr. Doppelt provided a PowerPoint presentation on the topic of sustainability. Copies of the presentation were presented to task force members. Mr. Doppelt highlighted the economic, social, and environmental issues faced by the community. He contrasted the traditional approach to complex challenges, breaking the challenge into increments to be resolved in isolation, to the alternative approach, which was to build a "whole system" understanding and an understanding of the connections and interdependencies that exist. He said sustainable development used the alternative approach, and focused on ways to improve the whole system, not isolated components. He emphasized the new businesses and jobs that were being created globally as a result of a focus on sustainability. Sustainability was the goal; sustainable development was the thinking, practices, and behaviors needed to achieve that goal.

Mr. Doppelt noted the definition of sustainable development developed by the United Nations in 1987: "Development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the

ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” He termed it a useful if imprecise definition, and noted several initiatives that attempted to reach a more precise definition, including *Natural Capitalism* by Paul Hawken, Amory and Hunter Lovins and the Zero Emissions Research Initiative (ZERO).

Mr. Doppelt emphasized the need for enhanced social equity for progress in sustainable development to be made.

Mr. Doppelt discussed the “Triple Bottom Line,” which included the Financial Bottom Line, the Social Bottom Line, and the Environmental Bottom Line. He suggested that the task force keep those in mind when considering businesses and strategies to foster.

Mr. Doppelt emphasized the shift from a linear, “take-make-waste” economic model to a circular, “borrow-use-return” economic system. He called the circular economic system the next evolution in thinking about the economy. Mr. Doppelt contrasted models of the two systems and noted some sample business and job opportunities related to the circular production system.

Mr. Doppelt offered a green building as an example of triple bottom line thinking.

Mr. Doppelt said that sustainable development was all about stimulating creativity and new ideas that lead to new designs. He asked how Eugene could become a leader in the next industrial revolution.

Mr. Doppelt called the task force’s attention to a University of Oregon Web site where additional research could be found: <http://ri.uoregon.edu>.

Mr. Doppelt again reviewed the phases of the Appreciative Inquiry approach.

Mr. Rexius called for a five-minute break.

6. Begin Four-Phase SBI Process with Task Force Interviews and Personal Introductions

Task force members broke into groups of two and members interviewed each other, asking the questions listed below.

1. Your name and what you do?
2. During your time in Eugene, describe one highlight—an event or time that made you especially proud to live here?
3. What qualities exist in the community that contributed to that highlight (e.g., processes, systems, relationships, and ways of thinking)?

Following the interviews, task force members introduced the members they had interviewed to the other members of the task force.

Mr. Doppelt suggested there were two ways to approach challenge; by problem solving, which seeks to make something go away, and by creating, which seeks to bring something new into existence. He emphasized that sustainable development was about creating something new.

7. Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Mr. Rexius called the task force's attention to a homework assignment included in the meeting packet.

Mr. Doppelt called the task force's attention to the draft agenda for the July 28 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)