

Eugene Mayor Piercy's Sustainable Business Initiative
Task Force Meeting
7.25.2006

Present: Co-chair: Rusty Rexius, Dave Funk; Task Force Members: Khatar Khalsa, Jack Roberts, Julie Daniel, Scott Pope, Roger Ebbage, Randy Ross, Deborah Noble, Mark Miksis, Josh Bruce, Lisa Arkin, Claire Syrette, Claudia Villegas; Staff: Bob Doppelt, Ray Neff, Sarah Mazze; Audience: Charles Biggs, Bob Cassidy, Jim Carlson

Agenda:

- 1) Announcements
- 2) Review Final Report and Appendices
- 3) Identify who will talk to who in the community before Sept. 25th

Announcements:

Request that task force members attend City Council work sessions: 5:30 meeting on Sept 25th and noon meeting Oct. 11th. Co-chairs will do initial presentation.

There will be a press conference before that. It may be the week before for a Sunday story.

Mayor suggested a party.

Review Final Report and Appendices

Bob Doppelt walked through all the changes.

David Funk: People have been asking what the Office of Sustainability will do that the City isn't already doing.

Bob Doppelt: The Office will work on partnerships and coordinate Commission. We have heard that existing staff would not have time for these additional activities. This may not be true. We'll see.

Josh Bruce: Concerns from TAC about carbon neutrality?

BD: When Deborah Brewer read the whole document, she decided she liked the idea of carbon neutrality.

CS: Move info from number 3 page 11 on B, pg. 8 (between paragraph that ends 2020 and next paragraph).

LA: The short paragraph on top of page 8 is redundant with first paragraph on page 6. Drop that and insert previous 3.

DF: Prefers to leave the info as is – it stands out more.

JB: Thinks it's okay to repeat info, since people won't read the whole thing.

LF: Thinks that it fits under the limitations section – we didn't have enough time to focus on the social equity. Perhaps add a sentence or two describing it as a limitation.

JB: In the middle paragraph on page 11 (or 8?); clarify that there is a lot more information out there – rephrase first sentence.

BD: Proposal is to move some of the limitation issues to limitation section. Talk about triple bottom line screen. Include indicators here.

SP: Second paragraph, second sentence, page 8. It almost sounds as though there is doubt about increased revenues and profitability.

BD: Clarified Scott Pope's question.

CS: Expand on the sentence, "The City developed standards for the West Eugene Enterprise Zone." CS has suggestions. Propose that we include a copy of Build Oregon Responsibly pledge in the appendix.

The Task Force agreed to insert that copy and to make those changes.

P. 12: typo and fix one sentence at end of page.

CS: Lynne and Claire crafted some language on social, environmental and economic drivers for page 21. Bob has copies. The paragraph addresses Stephan Ostrach's comments on the role of unions in providing benefits.

JR: I have a problem with it because we don't want to be. The real issue is how do we meet these goals through unionization or otherwise. In the private sector, unions are dying. It isn't for us to decide whether unions are the way to achieve those goals or not. I happen to be pretty supportive of labor and think unionization is an important option for workers to have. But I think for us to put that in there,

LF: The research is undisputed – it's from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics (?). You're right that unions are not the only way to reach the goals of health care, wages, benefits, security, etc. We're just saying that unionization is one of the means of achieving these goals.

RRexius: We haven't had to compromise anywhere else in the document, and say explicitly that we couldn't come to an agreement. As a company who isn't union, that makes me think, "what

am I?” How does that statement help non-union companies reach sustainability? If I’m a three person mom and pop store, how does that help me?

CS: There’s a lot in this document that won’t reach the mom and pop store. There has been compromise in several other places. No where else in this document do we address the union issues.

KK: Not commenting on whether unions are good or bad. With sustainability, we’re trying to address. We’re trying to sell something, to get across a message. Sometimes words are polarizing, sometimes inspiring. When I hear unions, that can be polarizing. The ultimate goal for sustainability from the best point of view is that it would cover all those goals that unions are working on.

CS: They provide a democratic process. No where else in the document is there language around wages, benefits, etc.

DF: The heading is “local…” I’m concerned about using national statistics here.

JB: It seems that we’re all in agreement that the bottom line is wages, benefits, job security. Maybe we can restate the paragraph like that. Maybe we can also use non-union examples of achieving that.

RRexius: Page 11, don’t we say that we focused on social equity issues? At the very bottom.

LF: So what are particular drivers that help a community achieve that. We think that we can state that these figures show that there are higher percentages of these drivers with unions. I’m sensitive to the polarization, but you heard the response in the TAC meeting. If you want to take a segment of people that are civically engaged, you’ll polarize them by not mentioning union. We don’t want to say that everyone has to be union, just to say that

JD: This community is made up of very small businesses. Those employees wouldn’t have access to unions. It does push my buttons. I don’t own BRING, but there’s nothing BRING wants more than to provide living wages, health care, but health care is out of control and unions can’t fix that.

KK: That’s my point. It does push people’s buttons. I think sustainability is aimed at doing all the things unions are trying to do. So does it help our cause to put in a potential polarizing phrase?

DN: Many of us are small businesses, and I don’t know how many of us are unionized. We’re a reflection of the community.

RRoss: I’m not unionized, but I pay my people sometimes more than I pay myself. I’m interested in collectives. I recognize that coops have those things (health care, etc) in place. Businesses need to work with insurance companies.

RE: It pushes my buttons as well, and I'm a member of a union. If we want people to read on, I'd suggest that we leave it out.

BD: Proposal: Whether it be through unionization, cooperatives, community norms that encourage executives to meet high standards, incentives, the TF recognizes that workers access to health care, etc. are vital social equity goals.
Would that address the issue enough?

RE: I think that gives it some balance.

BD: Acknowledge unions as one way to reach those goals.

JD: Small business has no control over the price of health care. It indicates that by promoting a community standard, we can solve the problem.

CS: Community standards can make a difference if

JR: Bob's proposal is better, but the implication seems to be that we have to hold businesses feet to the fire to make them pay people well and provide benefits. Most businesses want to pay people well, etc. Adopting a standard doesn't create any more resources. Listing ways to get there makes it sound as though they're prescriptive or not the way that businesses normally get there. I think that will turn a lot of businesses off. I think that it's creating an anti-business taint on this document that doesn't have to be there.

CS: It seems that there hasn't been any mechanism offered to businesses on how to meet those standards.

JR: We need a stronger economic climate where people can create better paying jobs. It has to do with the strength of the economy. The fundamental notion that sustainability will help you compete is attractive to many businesses.

DF: JR, you said you're willing to accept what's in there.

KK: This is exactly what I'm talking about – we've spent a tremendous amount of time on this point, which isn't what the document is about. I'm concerned that the sentence will make people stop. The way Bob wrote it, it still may stop people.

JD: It's a red herring. It's to my advantage to pay people more. Turnover is the most expensive thing I've got. It's a problem that I can't pay my workers more. I agree that a strong economy is what helps me pay them more.

LA: I'm feeling uncomfortable with the tension over this and I don't think the proposed paragraph addresses the drivers. The statistics are a better fit with the drivers. I do not support the edit.

MM: I'm okay with Bob's edit. I don't have a strong feeling about taking unions out of it. They're a component of the work force and it addresses some of the issues, but not all.

BD: Add: And perhaps most importantly, helping businesses generate more resources and strengthen the economy.

SP: I agree with Kartar that we're trying to sell this document. There are so many different ways to do this. Labor is just one. If we mention all of them that's okay. I'd rather leave it out and say sustainability is the solution.

DF: I think we should leave it out and make the point about social equity.

CS: I thought your compromise sentence was acceptable. I understand that small businesses may feel threatened by unions. I think this reactive, negative thing, we want to examine that. Can we take a vote?

How many would like to see anything about unions left out: _ of group.
How many willing to accept a compromise like Bob added: whole group minus 1.

Lisa Arkin: 3rd proposal: add health care, etc. as

JR: People feel strongly about it; so we need to

RRexius: I have angst about it, because if I don't raise my hands for unions, then I'm saying I want to screw my people. Unions are a reality in our community, but not a panacea. I agree with the language, but have reservations.

JR: Say: Some of the task members felt strongly that unions needed to be identified as a method of achieving the goals... Others feel that a stronger economy is the method. We all agree that the bar should be raised.

CS and JD: Include that the inability to pay living wages and affordable health care is a problem that small businesses face.

CS: I suggested that the Office of Sustainability might look into pooling of health care.

DF: Didn't we have agreement?

JR: Why not just acknowledge that there's a difference of opinion?

DF: There isn't a difference of opinion over unions, but more over whether it has a place in this document.

JR: Clare, you believe that if unions are left out that community members are going to feel slighted/left out.

CS: We found in our research that without some motivation, businesses are not going to necessarily pass on the benefits to workers. If we have this vision of engaging the whole community, that's a great opportunity. I like the laundry list of mechanisms to achieve these goals. I think it's important to acknowledge the health care thing as a struggle for businesses and the city.

JB: Throughout this process, we've struggled with the different types of businesses in the community. There's no one size fits all approach. I like the idea of acknowledging the issue and that there are multiple strategies. Some people starting out may not know about cooperatives as an option.

BD: Will you give us permission to craft something saying that there's a difference of opinion and that everyone agrees on the social equity goals.

Yes – it will get sent out for approval.

SP: Different types of businesses use these tools differently.

CS: It's honest to acknowledge that we've had this rough spot.

Continuation....

JB: Are you still looking for examples? Contact Good Company – Bene. Look for small companies.

JR: p. 25 Change to local companies, not “companies in Eugene.”

JB: p. 27 – typo (it is)

JB: Change to “make Eugene ONE of the most sustainable midsized communities”

CS: Lane County CENTRAL Labor Council (p. 34?)

JR: Buying local only improves the economy if everyone else keeps buying nationally, etc. I'm not objecting, just ranting.

JB: Add energy providers p. 39 and all utilities by name.

BD: The appendix is likely to end up at about 100 pages, but it's a resource for people. It's likely that most people will read the final report and more importantly the executive summary.

JB: Conclusion and next steps. Do we know enough to add a timeline?

RRexius: No, it's entirely up to them.

BD: The City will print copies and we will post it on the website. In order to get copies we need to get it to them by the third week of August. We need to finish it in two weeks, Claudia will have a week.

BD: Who do we need to outreach to?

- Chamber of Commerce - Julie
- City Council: Rusty – Jennifer; Lisa- David Kelly; Deb- Bonny Bettman; Claire- Andrea; Julie- Chris ; Deb-Betty; David-Gary Pape and Zelenka;
- Local Government Affairs Group- Khatar
- Local Economic Development Committee - Julie
- Lane County Commissioners – Economic Standing Committee: Dwyer and ? – Rusty and Jack
- EWEB and other utilities; Mark and Scott– EWEB; David – EPUD; Lane Electric-
- 4J and Bethel – Randy, Claudia, Lisa, Kitty,
- LCC/UO (?) Anyone to Environmental Issues Committee? – None yet.
- Neighborhood Leadership Council – Josh and Dave
- Friends of Eugene – Deb Noble
- LEC at LCOG- Bob
- Lane Central Labor ? – Clare
- All the potential partners listed in the document

We will provide talking points by the time the document is done. You need to embellish them based on who you're trying to achieve.

The City Club will be deciding the September and October schedules at noon tomorrow – contact Rick Gates