

MAYOR'S SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT - 9AM – 4PM MAY 30, 2009
RAW REPORT OF SESSIONS - PREPARED 4PM MAY 31, 2009
 UPDATES & COMMENTS & ADDITIONS AT
WWW.HARRISONBURGSUMMITS.COM

Yesterday, 160+ people representing 120+ organizations created an agenda with 30+ topics and submitted 20+ reports at www.HarrisonburgSummits.com. The theme was sustainability, the action was driven by engaged citizens. This is a current snapshot of the reports – more will added, edited, and commented on at the website – visit!

Thank you to everyone who attended and created this event. It was an honor to be the convener for such a committed, passionate, and talented group – just as it is a honor to be your mayor. See you soon!



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Time/Location: Clementines 11am

Convener(s): Eric Curren Scribe: Charles Hendricks & Lindsay Howerton

Attendees: Erik Curren, Lindsay Howerton, Richard Baugh, Charles Hendricks, Michael Wong, Nabila Nanji, Tip Parker, Thomas Degner, Tip Thomas, Sheree Boland, Susan Crosby, Leah Rosenwasser, Lallon Pond, Benjamin Meredith, Derik Trissel, Tom Owens, Bagsby Pharr, Larry Hoover, Sally Newkirk, Josie Henning

We need to take baby steps, talk to local government, work together to address issues as a group rather than waiting on local government.

The price of energy is going to go up. Peak oil has passed and we are going to have to adapt.

Even if price of energy was not rising, we need to deal with the climate change that is in front of us. This is scary stuff, what can local governments do to impact these issues and make the Valley an even better place to live. Interested in energy, quality of life, local food production, clean energy, green jobs, issues in the valley. How can we change the way we are viewed by our local delegates and the impacts of the issues that can enhance our quality of life in the Shenandoah Valley.

Green Jobs are everything from blowing insulation, to creating components for wind turbines, and production of solar panels. The issue of clean coal is a marketing tool that the industry has created. Have you ever seen a clean coal plant?

Sally: Vision of people creating their own energy, wind turbines on roof tops, solar panels on your home. What happens if your power goes off, if you have your own energy plant, you can protect yourself.

Van Jones is the Green Czar for Obama. Exhibit at the National Building Museum that talks about green development and green jobs. Solutions for wind turbines on small houses shown. Implementing curbside composting illustrated. How can we manage our waste and sustain our community? This exhibit starts to investigate these issues.

Green jobs is about creating jobs and putting people to work. There are great solutions that are just waiting to be taken to those looking for jobs.

There are many really good local opportunities for local jobs – geothermal is an excellent idea for our area. We need an incentive program from the local government that will allow for better more affordable sustainable solutions.

We need to find jobs and community ways to protect our streams and wildlife while we are creating these new industries.

There is a tradition of green jobs in the valley. People that have been and continue to protect our environment. Time have changes, would you eat a fish out of a local stream?

Can the green jobs movement create as many new jobs as the internet boom? We are past that peak, and there are still millions of jobs and opportunities. We know high tech, let's be a world leader. Many local areas missed the internet boom in the valley. There are not a lot of high paying internet jobs in our area. People come here to retire here, but not for high paying jobs. Times are changing.

From a real estate perspective, this area is booming. There is a lot of red tape that is holding us back in the area.

Richard: We need to bug our local representative to make them understand the need to change the approach that we need to take on a larger scale. There is a tangled web of things that might hold back our change. There are government responsibilities that must be met, Harrisonburg has to stop their impact at the city line. How do you bring in all groups

and get everyone on the same page. We need to make sure our elected officials stay on a learning curve and see the big picture. We need to make sure that they work for us and let us know who is responsible and can make change that is effective.

There are regional and federal boards that look at larger planning issues, but both groups struggle with what to do. There is progress that can be made getting government entities to work together.

Can we get city council to appoint a green task force to look at how to get all these local groups together and work towards a common goal.

We need unified action from the citizens to get movement to happen. Social change and government change is almost always revolutionary.

Benjamin:Micro / Macro conversation that is ongoing. We need a bridge between the two. Citizens can talk about the Macro, but they work on the micro level. What can I do tomm to create a micro job that is focused on green.

Eric:Take action for your own life. Recycle, rain barrel – good start, but not enough. We need government action to change the big picture. Local government is confusing – city, county, state – how do we understand who does what. In the 70s we had a chance to get off oil and we blew it. Solar panels were taken off the white house when the administration changed. If we had not blown it, we would have high speed rail, local food production, and local energy creation. This is our second chance to get it right. We have to find ways to get through the red tape. The building industry can have a major impact on this change. We can sell McMansions to hummer clients, or we can look at issues of building local, join the Sierra Club, and organize to make citizens to what government needs to do. The Civil rights movement was not started by the government it was started by the citizens.

What are the specific things that government can do to make change? We need a local task force to look at what other cities are doing to implement best practices. Long term loans for doing energy improvements are a good idea. Those benefiting from the energy improvements will pay more taxes with some of their energy savings. They still come out ahead the system is funded through savings.

Eric: SB1212

Charlottesville Mayor – allows local communities to set up a loan fund for energy efficient improvements on your own properties. Loan fund – local government loans you money, you pay a small addition to your property taxes each year. You get the solar panels for free, your property value goes up, you create jobs.

Why not use a private bank?

Tax credits are out there but are not known about. How can we get the information? There are advantages out there that we can take advantage of.

Individual retirement plans are a source of funds. They buy bonds or stocks. There is no financing for those in this room to flow their money towards green initiatives. How can we create these income streams that will allow for solid stable income streams over the next 20 years.

Younger generation gets excited about issues like melting polar ice caps. It will impact us longer because we are younger generation. Green jobs are talking about opportunity that lifts all boats. We need to be inclusive. How can we get more people involved and allow anyone to participate? Can we take this meeting to Jim Webb and show them that this is a real idea and real movement that they need to understand and take serious.

Young people need to understand that this issue comes down to politics.

Access to all people is important. It is not just about a few people it should include everyone. Solar Richmond is a good example that had a bond initiative that allows for getting solar panels on homes that also trained those that needed a job a new skill. People that once did not have a bright future are now leaders in the movement and understand a specialized skill and are moving into a higher wage level. Sustainablesouthbronx is another group that is training young generations. There is a debate should they built more prison housing or implement more job training. Where should the money go?

This is about putting people to work and getting everyone involved.

We need to find ways to bring stimulus money into those communities that don't necessarily trust politicians. Youthbuild could be a good means to introduce a new opportunity .

2525 at JMU – connection to agri development. Shenandoah Valley can be a demonstration community for the country to show responsible development. We have water, we are close to DC, we have solar potential. We need a work force that can implement this technology. We need to make education accessible to everyone.

Solar manufacturing plant is opening in Staunton. Taking cheap solar panels. Gets rid of up front cost limitations. Tax incentive will help make solar affordable for everyone. Trailer parks with solar panels. This can greatly impact the poor communities in the valley. The whole valley has good broadband capabilities that is just waiting.

Letter to the editor are a good source to get information out to the community.

Is there a way to tighten up the building code to encourage better weatherization. Seniors waste information because they need more lighting.

Richard: good example of a good idea. There are merits. That will involve many steps to get it to happen. What if – people in the community comes forward to push this agenda.

Citizens are now recognizing that we don't have to do things we have always done it. We can think through issues and create community groups to force change. More votes are better than less votes. We as a community have the power to set the rules the way that we want to see them. The elected official is sometimes limited to make a change, but communities can make the change. You elected me to make things better, now make me do it.

Our economy is only a subset of the earth systems. If we cannot breathe or have safe water, it does not matter if we have more money coming into the economy. Are we going to find green ways to consume more energy. Or are we going to try to live well consuming less?

Growth vs no Growth is a false choice. We don't need growth for growth sake. We see the results of that. It is our community, we have the right to set the rules to have the community that we want. Let's be deliberate about what we want. Harrisonburg government has not have much will to say no to anything. You cannot get the train to stop on a dime. We need to manage our growth, listen to our citizens, and understand what is needed and desired. Our votes matter, those appointed officials matter. Growth is not real estate development. Growth is about all the things we do as humans in our environment. It is all related to our consumption. We need to get back to living simpler. We need to allow our habits to bother us and find ways to change them. We need to look at the production side and the consumption side.

Environmentalists are usually a group that looks at making you feel guilty. We should instead look for opportunities and talk about the positives of going green. If you are looking to transform, you need to start with baby steps.

Eric Curran for Delegate www.ericcurran.com

Time/ Location: Dodger 12:15

Convener(s): Nabila Nanji Scribe: Charles Hendricks

Attendees: developers, politicians, architects, citizens: Nabila Nanji, Charles Hendricks, Derik Trissel, Karl Shank, Larry Hoover, Pete Bsumek, Mickey Arefaine, Sheree Boland, Josie Henning, Phill Henning, Johann Zimmerman, Benjamin Meredith, Anne Lorimer, Tip Parker, Travis Layman, Randy Jones

What can we do to get developers to implement sustainable strategies?

Green building programs that are available for builders

Earthcraft Virginia

Energy Star

LEED

Allows a framework for builders to measure how green their building is, they have 3rd party verification, yes you are building to this standard or you need to improve in this way.

Is it more expensive to go green – depends on where you are starting? There are many local builders that are all ready meeting the standards, but don't know more about the system. It does not cost more to use the system. There are many people that are willing to pay more for certain systems to be used to get a feedback.

Habitat House has an added cost of around \$3000 per house to achieve earthcraft certification. It is not a substantial added cost. The monthly payments may be higher, but the energy cost are lower. Why are we letting consumers buy houses that are more expensive that are bad for the environment.

The education issue is what is needed to allow for the public to make better choices. The public will demand it and the government will then demand it.

We need to create "place". Many cities don't consider the spaces between people. How do we inhabit a public space if we are not creating any public spaces. We are just building structures with no consideration to the areas around the building. You can create a street as a place and a courtyard as a place.

Richard: smart growth is a bad term. What is the difference with the type of growth that is needed in Harrisonburg? There is an expanded zoning ordinance in Harrisonburg that tries to encourage positive development. Some of it has been on the books for a number of years. The economic downturn and a flood of inventory has slowed down seeing the results of these changes. Why do we have a system of oddly formed residential developments in Harrisonburg. We encouraged it. We limited the number of units in our buildings, we limited where the use could be. The map dictated the profit and controlled the cramming process of putting the inventory in oddly shaped laid out buildings through our zoning ordinance. The result is the older development community that does not like change. They are worried that they cannot make money in the new model. They don't want risk through innovation. We need to be open to change. Smart growth is about planning for and encouraging the type of development that you want. Everyone is for "smart growth". Having a conviction to say no to the things that are not working or don't do what you need them to do – that is true smart growth. You have to be willing to say No. There has traditionally been a lack of willingness to look at the problem and say NO.

Eugene: If we create place, people will pay more to live in a nice place.

Developers sometime will not be open to these new concepts. They want a sure thing.

Civil engineers often design the planning, but don't understand urban planning.

Is there a way to encourage the developers to do better developments?

Zoning and land use plans matter. We have more land zoned and planned for a certain type of development than we really needed. How do we deal with property rights? How can we stop bad zoning that already exists? If the property is not already zoned that way, you can then hold them to a higher standard. There has been a resistance to stopping the big guys because they are needed to keep the economic engine moving forward. There was a lack of willingness to enforce issues on the smaller developer that were not forced on larger developers.

Ordinance on street café's in the city: it was in a grey zone. The city passed an ordinance that encourages cafés within the city. You need to work with community development in order to get them to happen. Because it was officially encouraged – they are now popping up. Young developers will know they can make more money if they are shown through council encouragement.

Builders association – smart growth community discussion has happened. There is an issue with lack of wanting to change.

Does the value stand up over time if you develop a better community that offers open space. Is there a way to get local banks to fund these better solutions?

What are the solutions? Is there a way to move in the right direction.

Does there have to be incentive programs to make it happen?

The local zoning ordinances exist in Harrisonburg that will make these developments happen. In order to provide the appropriate green space, you can now increase your density. You have to present green space options to achieve these bonuses.

You have to give the property owner some economic incentive to get the developers to do the right things.

We need the city of Harrisonburg to commit to reducing the carbon footprint of the city. We need a city position that focuses on this issue. The sierra club is encouraging the city to appoint a committee to look at these issues. If we create this kind of committee, then we can look at real time solutions that can make a positive change in the future. This can be the step forward to make these changes happen. Our goal is to have the first meeting a year from now. This is the perfect opportunity to make a real change.

The last update of the comp plan had all these concepts in the plan. The election cycle changed the energy behind the movement. We began to give developers more flexibility. The implementation of the expansion ordinances passed with no issue. The implementation of limiting development was road blocked. There needed to be a way to be "fair" to the development community. A special use permit is now required, delayed implementation by three years. This incentivized those with properties that met the criteria to move forward quickly. There is probably only 1 undeveloped plot of land that still exists now.

Are we now over built when it comes to student housing? Many new housing units are coming into the market. There is a projected growth of JMU by 20% over the next several years. There is a demand for a variety of housing at various levels.

Density is important to create good development, but that does not equal sprawl. Urban exchange is a good example of how this can happen.

End of this year into next year, the next round of updating the comp plan is happening. You have a majority of council that is pushing to use that as a meaningful guide. Show up at the meetings, speak about the issues that are important.

You have to hold the public officials to the plan, participate in the creation of the plan, and then you can see results that you want to see. This is the way to make change.

We need a citizen group that meets regularly to discuss these issues. Healthy community council already exists. It is about a healthy community. This group does not stop at the borders. There is a call for citizen action. We need to hold our leaders to account. Can it be a commission sanctioned by the political body.

Can we use existing organizations to fill this role? Neighborhood associations that are meaningful organizations. Grass roots ideas can be vetted at the neighborhood level. Finding the right people to talk to and breaking down the lack of communication between organizations is the difficult issue. We need to create an organization / way / mindset of open communication.

SHARED RESOURCES, INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY BUILDING, ENERGY INDEPENDENCE (TRANSITION TOWN)

Cally's 12:30

Convener(s): Beth Schermerhorn/ Adam Campbell

Scribe: Kim McGoff

Attendees: Beth Schermerhorn, Shari Scofield, Kim McGoff, Liem Doan, Sarah Frick, Earl Martin, Soula Pefkavos, Suzi Carter, Kurt Rosenberger, Joanna Gray, Andrea Gram, Pelham Beck, John Otenesac, Adam Campbell, Tom Benevento, John Otenasek

Shared Resources, Intentional Community Building, Energy independence (Transition Town)

Vision of what Harrisonburg :

- Houses that come together: share vehicle, tools, property, minds, time, meals.
- Closer community that is self reliant oil free
- Deal with issues in community to deal with conflict as comes up

Contagious as problems in the world get more serious and people see things are working.

Transition/Transformation Framework – identify an action group that can take it from ideas to action.

The Transition Handbook From oil dependency to local resilience by (Transition Town) (modeled after England) ; provides shared language; starting place

Next step ideas:

- Read Transition Town Guidebook, have book club to talk about ideas, have a meal, begin taking action,
- We need to establish accountability, leadership
- Interested establishing reading/action group... Beth, Soula, Tom, Adam,

- Ideas; Potluck / Book group to welcome interested; get clear purpose and goal of group; and evaluate what is working (and what is not) with group. Get each interested person's intention; reading group... need to get to action discuss
- Want to reach out for others that are interested – reach out to your friends
- Research were else it is working (Bookchin)

Intentional Community Group formulation:

- Monthly potluck – last Sunday evening of the month (5:00pm), starting June 28th
- Bring your own dinner ware
- Beth and Sara offers their home as “hub” of group; Shari offered home;
- Have large group break--up into small group discussion and actions (consider breaking Transition Framework into small pieces/sections of head, heart, hand... read it then discuss what do we think?, what have we done?, what could we do?)
- Create a regular tempo, and allow the group to form
- Use Transition as a framework, but do what works for Harrisonburg (community, skills, needs, of citizens and the participants)
- Consider modeling after “eco--action” list serve
- Be sure we welcome for diversity

SUSTAINABLE MEDIA

Artful Dodger 12:15:00

Convener(s): Brent Finnegan

Scribe: Holly Cooper

Attendees: * Chris Edwards * Robin McNallie * Bruce Lundeen * Bruce Ritchie * Brent Finnegan * Holly Cooper

To start a conversation about sustainability in community media.

As funding for local news becomes scare and newspapers across the country scale back or close altogether, who will report local news five to 10 years from now? What can we do to create a sustainable news network?

Potential courses of action:

- * Local news media may succumb to this trend—local news source gone or outsourced
- * Do nothing
- * Form steering committee

Possible business models:

* For profit LLC

* Make Hburgnews.com subscriber only or ad supported (not preferable)

* Nonprofit (501 C3)—own, or incorporated under another nonprofit umbrella; example—Minnpost.com, created by editors, sells ads on site, covers statewide area; Knight Foundation grant funding (for nonprofit)

What might be included:

Website

Twitter

Facebook

Monthly print update

Latino/immigrant news

Breaking news (with a paid editor or reporter)

Community-submitted news (video, photo, story, Tweets)

Satellite versions (Broadway, Elkton, Bridgewater editions or sub-pages)

What we need:

Steering committee (media professors, teachers, contributors, businesspeople, lawyers, nonprofit workers) to create mission statement, executive summary

How to do it:

First meeting to be held Thursday, June 11, 6 p.m. at Clementine

To attend, or be notified of meeting changes:

hburgnews@gmail.com

POLITICAL AWARENESS & ACTION

Old Dominion Coffee Co. 12:15pm

Convener(s): Cathy Strickler Scribe: Rob Fortier

Attendees: Laura Dansby, Jeff Tang, Nancy Beall, Rob Sinclair

Summary of the highlights of the bill from the Environmental Defense Fund (www.edf.org), and reviewed talking points drafted by the Sierra Club (www.clubhouse.sierraclub.org).

Discussed ways to strengthen the bill, and ways communicate interest in the bill to our elected officials, including writing post cards.

Its very important to contact your congressman and senators right now to strengthen this bill, because big coal and oil have weakened it in its current form.

What is important to focus on:

- 1) You want the strongest bill that will meet the science of the issue
- 2) Don't give away carbon credits to oil & coal companies. They should pay for their pollution.
- 3) Emphasize how important this issue is to you, and why! Think about children, the earth. It's a survival issues, a national defense issue.

SVEC (ELECT COOP) SHAREHOLDERS MEETING

Old Dominion Coffee Co. 1:30:00

Convener(s): Cathy Strickler

Scribe: Rob Fortier

Attendees: Jan Trettner, Bruce Ritchie, Bishop Dansby

SVEC shareholders meeting is coming up on June 11th. This is a call to action. Please attend if you are a shareholder! You can attend and ask the CEO and Chair of the Board to not support the construction of the proposed Surry County Coal Fired Power Plant.

Consortium as a whole has to vote up or down on the coal plant. Each co-op sends 2 electors to Virginia Electric Co-Op Consortium Board of Directors meeting.

What C-CAN is asking is for shareholders to go to the shareholder meeting on June 11th

To attend, you have to tell Co-op you are going by June 9th by 4:30. You have to bring an electricity bill to prove you are a customer. Pre-bbq at 5pm. Guests pay \$4.

CEO and Board President are on the ODEC board.

If you can't go, you can try to email them by going to www.svec.coop

Bruce: I've learned how expensive our electricity really is. Most people will focus on the money and the cost reduction solutions will matter to most people.

Plant will cost \$6million

\$20,000 cost for each member

People can write letters to the editor.

"This thing has got to be stopped."

There are 2 issues – 1) they bought some real estate, and they have to make changes to their by-laws. But there hasn't been a mention of this.

Myron Rummel mrummel@svec.coop is one of the voter's at the consortium meeting. Fred Garber is the other voter.

What goes into their supposed need for this new plant? Is it consumption, or new customers? We have to know how they rationalized the need.

We don't know, but Chelsea Harnish can provide more info. Chelsea@chesapeakeclimate.org

What is the solution? Efficiency is a big part. But is it enough? Seems like wind power and other solutions could play a part in this area.

Jan Trettner, previously worked on energy & environment public policy issues in Washington DC, for National Conference of State Legislatures. She's a good community resource.

After this gets passed by the co-ops, I believe the proposal goes to the state corporation commission.

They're saying efficiency comes first, then wind and solar solutions.

This all comes down to govt incentives, doesn't have anything to do with the Co-op itself.

In this case, the Co-Op wants to build their own power plant, not buy from others.

A lot of states have avoided new coal plants by increasing efficiency.

Read the book "Big Coal", by Jeff Goodell. It's a great history and expose.

INSULATING HOMES

Daves 1:30:00

Convener(s): Earl Martin

Scribe: Benjamin

Attendees: Ralph Graves, Thomas Deguer, Johann Zimmerman, Daniel Brumbaugh-Keeney, Harvey Yoder, Pete Bsumek, Leah Rosenwasser, Charlie Strickler, John Reeves, Troy Lucas, Liem Doan, Kurt Rosenberger, Adam Campbell, Earl Martin, Sam Nickels, Suzi Carter, Benjamin Meredith, Welby Lehman, Charles Hendricks

Tom: interested in learning about insulation, came from Baltimore to be here, how does citizens of Harrisonburg take care of local problems

Adam: interested in taking part of the initiative, has done some energy assessments

Johanne: funding issues to weatherize buildings for needy, energy company initiatives? Cut demand by weatherization was a strategy as opposed to building a new plant. Combine with a youth employment job training strategy

Daniel: community works hire homeless folks to do this kind of work

Harvey: reduction in new construction, are there additional people looking for work that could help with insulating

Sam: Food Co-op – grant writing, stimulus money

Pete: Sierra Club, rise in people being kicked out of their houses because of the rise in energy costs, state bill to fund weatherization programs,

Leah: office on children and youth, program for job skills training, youth build, low income families home assistance interests, relationships between housing authority and JMU, Gus Bus as a communication tool

Troy: Lucas roasting company, solar technology as it can be utilized in winter to help heat homes, supplement heating costs, habitat for humanity – money to buy materials, need creative thinking

Welby: architect, habitat for humanity volunteer, energy efficient mortgages, can financial sector still make these available, roll efficiency improvements into a mortgage,

Charlie: Habitat relief work, willing to help

John: rebuilding together, home rehab and repair, Christmas in april – old name, funding from foundations and churches, get referrals from folks with small trailers, need help getting insulation up to par, volunteers that work with church groups to do the work,

Benjamin: home inspection company and energy audit company, do this everyday all day long, spark in Charlottesville works with low income groups to do energy audits, need to increase building science understanding.

There is a movement to get a group together to coordinate local volunteers and efforts for weatherization. SPARK will be a good starting point to find out if there is local money available to do the easy things. Recognize the small items that you can do to increase energy efficiency. Find extra money for larger projects in the future.

Low interest loans for weatherization from banks? Is there a creative approach to get money.

USDA and other funds that are available through non-profit organizations that are essentially low income loan funds – HRHA is shutting down right now. There may be a way to tap into these programs in order to benefit the community. Need to be willing to put staff resources into the effort.

The Housing authority of Hburg is rehabbing to earthcraft standards. More energy efficient, comfortable for those inhabits. They are ahead of the curve, thank them.

Earthcraft energy bills are extremely low. Small changes make a huge difference.

Let's start an internal group that keeps this effort going forward.

Valley program for aging services – creates all the referrals for rebuilding together.

Are there any standard for measuring energy efficiency? Leakage amounts? There is nothing in place for existing construction.

PRESERVING SHENANDOAH MOUNTAIN AS A NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

Artful Dodger - outside 11:00:00

Convener(s): Lynn Cameron

Scribe: Lynn Cameron,

Attendees: Laura Dent, Dan Downey, Anne Nielsen, Bruce Lundeen, Lynn Cameron

We talked about how important national forest land on Shenandoah Mountain is to the City of Harrisonburg and to us individually. Shenandoah Mountain is the mountain west of the Shenandoah Valley.

Laura mentioned that she was married in the forest near Dry River just last year and expressed interest in protecting the area.

Dan is interested in protecting water quality and has a particular concern for trout streams, especially the Dry River.

Anne wants to see Shenandoah Mountain protected because of all the many plant and animal species that live in the area. Some are threatened, endangered, or rare. She also appreciates the value of mature forests in absorbing carbon and purifying our air.

Lynn hikes on Shenandoah Mountain and serves as co-chair of Friends of Shenandoah Mountain (www.friendsofshenandoahmountain.org).

The group talked about what is special about Shenandoah Mountain:

- It is one of the largest tracts of wild land left in the Eastern United States.
- Provides high quality drinking water for Shenandoah Valley residents, including Harrisonburg, Staunton and several other towns. Skidmore Fork is the watershed for Switzer Dam, from which Harrisonburg gets a large portion of its water.
- Encompasses 5 National Forest roadless areas and Ramsey's Draft Wilderness
- Is noted for its exceptional scenery and outstanding opportunities for solitude
- Has a large, substantially unfragmented forest ecosystem teeming with wildlife. Home to neo-tropical songbirds, black bear, native trout, and rare species
- Provides abundant recreational opportunities, including primitive and developed camping, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, rock-climbing, and birding
- Includes High Knob, Flagpole Knob, Reddish Knob, Hone Quarry, Todd Lake, Confederate Breastworks, Staunton Dam, and more
- Has a network of 150 miles of trails, including the Wild Oak National Recreation Trail and a portion of the Great Eastern Trail. The historic Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built many of the trails.
- Has one of the best trout streams in the region.
- Purifies our air

- Supports our tourism-based local economy

Lynn described a Friends of Shenandoah Mountain proposal to seek Congressional designation of the portion of Shenandoah Mountain between Rt. 33 and Rt. 250 as a National Scenic Area with core areas receiving the stronger protection of Wilderness designation. Here is the proposal in a nutshell:

Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area - approx 115,000 acres, Augusta, Rockingham, and Highland Counties, between Rt. 33 and Rt. 250.

Includes the following proposed Wilderness areas:

- Skidmore Fork Wilderness - 5,228 acres, Rockingham County (This is the watershed for the Harrisonburg municipal water supply.)
- Little River Wilderness - 12,490 acres, Augusta County
- Lynn Hollow Wilderness - 6,168 acres, Highland County
- Bald Ridge Addition to Ramseys Draft Wilderness - 6,550 acres, Augusta County

All private land is excluded from the Proposal, and current roads would remain open for access.

A National Scenic Area established by an act of Congress would permanently protect scenic, cultural, historic, recreational and natural resources of this special place. Logging, mining, additional roads and permanent structures would not be allowed, but hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, and camping would be permitted, as well as mountain biking and scenic driving. A Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area would be great for the local economy and would safeguard Harrisonburg's drinking water.

Wilderness designation by Congress provides the strongest permanent protection for roadless areas, like Skidmore Fork and Little River that have outstanding natural characteristics. In Wilderness areas the forces of nature are dominant. These are places where we humans can get away from the hectic pace of our lives and enjoy the natural world. You can hunt, fish, hike, camp, and ride horses in Wilderness.

In summary, a Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area with core Wilderness areas would contribute to sustainability in numerous ways. It would support a high quality of life for Valley residents, provide clean drinking water, support tourism-based economic development, provide an array of recreational opportunities, and would support a healthy forest that is home to a wide variety of plant and animal species, some found no where else on earth. It would ensure that the area continues to meet our needs today and would protect the area in a way that would meet the needs of future generations as well.

A National Scenic Area would complement efforts by the City of Harrisonburg to protect water quality on its land along Dry River.

TRANSITION TOWNS/MAYOR'S AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Court Square Lawn 11:00:00

Convener(s): Pete Bsumek and CJ Broderick

Scribe: Pete Bsumek

Attendees: Pete, CJ, Adam Campbell

Pete Bsumek and CJ Broderick Informed the group about the history of the Mayor's agreement on Climate Change and the steps that the city has already taken, and what needs to be done.

1. Emission inventory of city. (Done)
2. Develop and action plan (to be done—some piece mill actions taken)
3. Input improvements (make changes and see how they impact change)
4. Implement larger action plan

Pete and CJ will post detailed information on the proposal (sign on letter to city council, news articles from other towns that have had success, websites with more information, etc.). This will be done ASAP.

We discussed a desire to work with city staff to create implementation so that they do not feel "put upon."

Adam Campbell spoke of creating a Transitions Town reading & action group. Pete and Adam combined these two groups because they felt that the grassroots community building aspects of the the proposal for city council complemented each other.

The goal of Transition Town grassroots work is a way to lead the city by example, build community as the Transition Towns group works to help create sustainable spaces (houses/yards/etc.) via volunteer work.

For more info on Transition Towns see the 12:15 Transition Towns report.

We developed an action plan for helping the city pass a resolution to promote coordinated action on decreasing the city's carbon footprint and building sustainability in general. Basically, begin conversations with city council members, create a summation of the proposal, engage city employees in conversation, and post details on the plan to the Summit Bog.

TRANSPORTATION/SMART GROWTH/TRANSITION TOWNS SUPER GROUP

Court Square Lawn 11:00:00

Convener(s): John Eckman Scribe: Pete Bsumek

Attendees: John Reeves, Heather Ream, George Curran, Eldon Kurtz, Karl Shank, Grayson Prichard, Lisa Boland, Randy Jones, Adam Campbell, Peter Dula, John Eckman, Johann Zimmerman, Tom Benevento, Eugene Stolfus, Jan Trettner, Earl Marin, Nancy Heisey, Ben Wyse, Kurt Rosenberger, Paul Yoder, Gerardo Hernandez, Travis Layman, Welby Lehman, Holly Cooper, Alan Finks, Daniel Uribe, Cindy Hunter, John Otenasek, Eddie Bumbaugh

Several groups dealing with the above topics combined for an initial meeting. Break out groups on specifics were then convened.

John Eckman convened the super group.

Kim Sandum, CAP (Community Alliance for Preservation) updated and informed the group on Transportation Plan issues:

There is a transportation plan created by Harrisonburg/Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) this is how federal money is spent locally on transportation. It covers Bridgewater, Dayton, Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. Representatives from each of these entities draft the pan.

The process is revisited every five years. The plan covers Bike paths, Rail, Busses, Roads, etc.

She encouraged people to participate in the process—often she is the only citizen at the meetings. Go to the CAP webpage for more information and updates.

Alan Finks a member of the Harrisonburg Planning Commission about the 2009 city planning process and creation of the comprehensive plan. You can get information of the planning process and the meetings for public input at the Harrisonburg city web-site.

Harrisonburg.va.gov

Eddie Bumbaugh, Downtown Renaissance, reminded the crowd that the city is rewriting the plan for downtown comments are due before July 2. Contact Eddie at Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance.

He also informed us that a recent presentation compared priorities for planning from the 20th to the 21st century: Priorities:

20th Century: Autos Mass Transportation Land use Bikes Pedestrian

21st Century: Land use Pedestrian Mass Transit Bikes Autos

We broke out into smaller groups.

Rail Alternatives to I81 Expansion

Park and Ride improved Communication

Bike & Pedestrian path improvements

Transition Towns/Mayors Agreement on Climate Change

IMPROVE & INCREASE RECYCLING IN HARRISONBURG / CITY-WIDE COMPOST BINS

Spring House on Court Square 11am

Convener(s): Page Shields, Bishop Dansby

Scribe: Donald Thomas

Attendees: Page Shields, Bishop Dansby, Jeff Peace, Cathy Strickler, Rachel Fulk, Tamlyn Ogden, Tony Lopez, Heidi Lestar, Laura Dent, Gene Hart, Kemper E., Laura Dansby, Doug Hendren.

To be added.

CREATING A VIBRANT AND LIVABLE DOWNTOWNS

Blue Nile 12:15-1:30

Convener(s): Eddie Bumbaugh

Scribe: Welby Lehman

Attendees: Eddie Bumbaugh, Tina Nussbaum, Sarah MacDonald, Laura Dent, Welby Lehman, Kim Sandum, Jan Trettner, Justin Pruett, Troy Lucas, Eldon Kurtz, Kendra and Cameron, Alan Finks

It was noted and commended that this session was being held in a building that was slated for demolition not long ago.

Harrisonburg and Rockingham Co. have good community events, i.e. Valley Fest, First Night. Could we do more events to draw more people here, integrating the population that lives here and from further out? Some smaller events (appropriate for the economic situation) are planned. The goal is not simply bringing in tourists but vibrant downtown will exist when people are living and working in it rather than just coming for events.

What development is happening on the north end of downtown? A mixed-use development (60 affordable units, 6 market-rate units) is going in the old Burger House lot. The developer was happy to follow proposals from the "vision" for downtown that called for preserving the street by moving parking to the core. The city planning office has been working at changing zoning to be more friendly to mixed-use developments.

Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance has been focused on bringing living units and jobs to downtown before retail. We are near the point when there are enough people (living/working) to support retail development. HDR has also supported facade enhancements and infrastructure like the new brick sidewalk as a way to encourage downtown growth.

It was commented that it's too bad the "friendly city" signs went down when the new way finding signs went up, especially in the minds of the Friendly City Food Co-op (understandably). One reason for this is the city was advised to minimize sign "clutter".

Has there been discussion, or should there be, about the identity of downtown Harrisonburg? Should there be an identity? What does that mean? What types of people are we targeting? Harrisonburg has an eclectic supply of buildings in it's downtown (also new construction is going to happen). We shouldn't try to be something we are not. We are not entirely "historical" and we're not solely geared towards tourism (which is good). Finding a catch-phrase for downtown is hard. We have a unique relationship with JMU. City/county residents, students, workers and tourists should be targeted in that order.

Mixed-use development is great for business says a business owner. The downtown has definitely seen an increase in visitors (just ask the visitor's center).

The downtown wish list includes:

- 1) Grocery store; Friendly City Food Co-op is committed to downtown. Everyone sign-up!
- 2) Pharmacy; this has been explored and we may see one in a year or so
- 3) Hotel/Conference Center; anyone with \$50 million come on down!
- 4) Community Gardens; actually some already exist. Could be on a green roof
- 5) Open/restore Blacks Run

How do we want heavy truck and rail traffic to be addressed in the downtown? Don't put a bypass in the county. Plans for routing through truck traffic around downtown are being studied. If freight-rail was rerouted, the existing rail line would make a great bike/predestrian thoroughfare (this is decades away). Passenger rail in the downtown is desirable. Should we be considering a transportation center downtown for easier public access from I-81, 33 east, or other regional sites?

What's happening with vacant buildings around court square? Many things have been planned and propped. Some things are out of public hands.

HDR is doing a great job. Many things that were brought up are coming soon, were addressed or at least considered. The future looks bright.

TRAFFIC LIGHT IMPROVEMENT TO REDUCE CO2 EMISSIONS AND STREAMLINE TRAFFIC FLOW * IMPROVING BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Court Square Lawn 1:30:00

Convener(s): Bagsby Pharr, Tony Lopez

Scribe: Joanne Karunakaran

Attendees: George Curran, Tom Domonske, Alan Finks, Joanne Karunakaran, Erich Knight, Tony Lopez, Anne Lorimer, Grayson Pritchard, Bagsby Pharr, Jeffrey Tang

Question: Where are our sidewalks? How are we accommodating cyclists?: City planner (from City Planning Commission) said new roads will have sidewalks. Harrisonburg's roads not originally designed to pay for/include sidewalks; planners now re-evaluating this.

Need: Improved timing of traffic lights. There is often a wait at stoplights disproportionate to the traffic passing. This is a both a waste of time and gas.

Suggestion: cameras (many installed but not all are activated) to monitor traffic according to flow.

Question: Is this a monetary issue? Pressure gauges under road v. cameras? Suggested : Cameras - but there are complaints. Complaints: Still not timed correctly if they ARE working!

Suggestion: Turning off car at light to avoid idling.

Opposition: Illegal

Suggestion: Link intersections, the way they used to be.

Assumption: Traffic flow seems to be coordinated to enhance flow in and out of JMU.

There are new traffic flows that need to be anticipated and accommodated.

Good: City's Bio-diesel busses – but they are mostly run for James Madison.

Suggestion: Let's get more people using the bus system!

Opposition: Inconvenience, inefficient connections

Suggestion: Talk to person in charge of city lights

Suggestion: Traffic Circles, as used effectively by a number of European countries.

Opposition: Besides public difficulty to adapt to new traffic pattern, greatest difficulty is putting them into already-developed areas (very costly).

Discussion: Rosetta Stone employee noted that they work best at intersections of compatible roadways, rather than at a major road encountering a minor street.

North - South travel seems quicker and less interrupted than East-West travel, observed JMU faculty member.

Discussion on potential issues of road extension to Erickson Ave.

Q. from JMU faculty member: Are rideshares (carpooling or a shuttle service) in place for (3,000+) RMH employees to new location?

Opposition to idea: \$2,000 cost!

RMH proposes more parking spaces instead.

Discussion on parliamentary processes for procuring change and need for taxes for transportations sector to be allocated very specifically.

RAIL SOLUTION ALTERNATIVE TO I81 EXPANSION

Court House Lawn 11:00:00

Convener(s): Ralph Grove Scribe: Ralph Grove

Attendees: Ralph Grove, Justin Pruett, Eugene Stoltzfus, Phil Henning, Kurt Rosenberger

Ralph Grove described the Rail Solutions

(<http://www.railsolution.org>) "Steel Interstate" pilot project, which is to build a dual-track multimodal railway along the I81 corridor from PA to TN instead of widening I81 to handle the expected growth in freight volume through this corridor. This pilot would be a model for expanding rail transportation nationwide, which would be much more energy efficient than increased truck transportation. The immediate goal is to get communities along the I81 corridor, including the Harrisonburg city council) to sign on to a resolution (<http://www.railsolution.org/uploads/PDF/RESOLUTION-I-81Corr.RailFed.Dem.pdf>) supporting a federally-funded study of the project, a necessary preliminary step to implementation.

Similar transportation issues were also brought up, including the need for passenger rail for Harrisonburg (a link to Washington DC, for example), and encouraging high-density growth at transportation hubs along I81.

Many suggestions were made as to how to prepare the resolution as a proposal for the city council.

RECYCLING / COMPOSTING

Spring House 12:15:00

Convener(s): not sure

Scribe: Ralph Grove

Attendees: Ralph Grove... others ... (conference organizers have the full attendance list)

Recycling

* Harrisonburg city crews no longer accept cardboard, but Green Earth on Kraetzer Rd. (<http://www.greenearthcompany.com/>) has on on-site recycling center.

* The city had planned to set aside funds for a Materials Recycling Facility (MRF), a plant that would separate recyclables from trash. Current financial conditions have made it necessary to put these plans on hold, however.

* We should continue to emphasize the importance of recycling, and of measures that reduce the trash stream, such as reuse and reduced consumption

Composting

* The New Community Project is collecting coffee grounds from various sites for use in garden composting

* Leaves picked up by city crews go to a composting facility on South Main St.; It is believed that residents can purchase composted leaves there

* Organic materials collected at the county landfill are mulched, but is believed not to be available for the public; they may be used in landfill operations, as cover

* Compost bin units are available for purchase at the Harrisonburg Farmers Market

PARK-N-RIDE/BULLETIN BOARDS

court sq lawn 11:00-

Convener(s): bruce ritchie

Scribe: bruce ritchie

Attendees: Nobody attended this meeting except myself. There were several other good meetings at the same time. Cindy Hunter expressed interest and told of her students who dealt with rural transportation issues in Elkton area.

A significant contact was made toward exploring the issue of Park n ride and rural transportation/carpooling. There is plenty of room for more participation from interested people. Please contact Bruce Ritchie (me) at mtnprivy@yahoo.com or call 209-1920.

CLEAN WATER, ESP. BLACK'S RUN AND DRY RIVER

Liberty Park 12:45:00

Convener(s): Kemper Eagle, Dave Garner, John Reese

Scribe: Kemper Eagle

Attendees: Kemper Eagle, John Reese, Dave Garner, Jeff Peake, Lynn Cameron, Harry Yoder, Dan Downey, Pam Yates, Mike Wong, et al (see signup list, correct mistakes)

Discussion started with Dan Downey giving background on the city's 1400 (+? up to 400 acres additional) surrounding Dry River. The 1.2 billion acres of water provided by Switzer Lake flows by gravity down Dry River to the City intake and on to Harrisonburg, one of the cleanest water supplies in the state and country.

All agreed we need to protect this special supply from several abuses it has suffered in the past. Dry River is the longest continuous native brook trout stream in the state (32 miles), but as Dan pointed out, its name points out a

problem it suffers from, nearly drying up in stretches in summer droughts. Other problems have been noted such as off-road vehicular traffic IN THE STREAMBED and in stream crossings and riparian land areas, mud holes formed, occasional illegal tree cuttings, and general neglect, including trash in and along the stream.

Dan pointed out the City is blocking illegal vehicle traffic road access, placing signage on allowed useage, etc. What can citizens volunteer? Mud bogs should be reseeded, preferably with native plants. Mike Wong suggested Dry River be put in City comprehensive plan. Lynn C suggested short trails be constructed for family hiking. Harry Yoder suggested using composting toilets.

Eagle asked what the group desired for useage of the area for the future-suggestions: hiking, fishing, bicyling.

Dave C brought up Black's Run; sewage smell still in parts, city needs to upgrade system. We need to change peoples' MINDSET toward conserving individual water use like in eg. Germany. John Reeves noted in Europe people use 35 gallons/day, in US, three times that. He said reducing water consumption would reduce use of water from Shenandoah River, etc., which is less pure thus needs more pretreatment before potable use, also reducing water means less wastewater treatment which makes wastewater treatment plant less expensive!

Dave SUGGESTS: more use of rain barrels. Pam? SUGGESTED city could set up a demonstration rain garden and demo use of rain barrels, composting -Liberty Park suggested for demos. Dry River area also SUGGESTED as a demonstration area, also general for ecology for grade, high schools, even colleges. SUGGESTION: let college students design demonstration areas. Also, get help from Canaan Valley Institute on designs.

Friends of Shenandoah Mountain proposing to make Dry River area part of a wilderness area, goal to get support to get scenic area introduced as a bill. Would give perpetual protection of our valued water supply area.

Eagle: SUGGESTION; More active City control of Dry River would increase out-of-area fisherman use with resultant economic boost to Harrisonburg and area.

Dave: Black's Run near his home is fed by springs which keep nearby stretch water temps in 60s-if e. coli, etc. were controlled, maybe BR could support trout?

Group: Feel free to add any ideas I missed,

and thanks for your input.

Respectfully, Kemper Eagle

CHILDREN ARE AN IMPORTANT RENEWABLE RESOURCE

Clementine's 12:15:00

Convener(s): Lee Van Orden

Scribe: Lee Van Orden

Attendees: I gave the sign-in sheet to one of the organizers. I would not want to leave anyone out. Sorry:-)

The quote of the day regarding Harrisonburg's Sustainability Summit came from Gene Hart who said "All of these issues interrelate. And when they don't, we have to make them interrelate."

The concept of our youth being a valuable renewable resource was the focus of our group.

- Good things are happening in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County including the new E.D.G.E. events being held by the Youth Advisory Council, supported by the Healthy Community Council.

(Next Healthy Community Council meeting--June 9, 8-10am/Detwiler Auditorium-VMRC)

- The Gus Bus is providing fun, educational opportunities in a non-threatening way to youth in our community.
- Camp Kaleidoscope promotes love, hope and healing to our most vulnerable youth. Camp K is a summer day camp for children with a special focus on children in foster care.
- Concerns were raised about the lack of children's services available locally.
- A gentleman said "It is immoral to give up on these kids."
- We need to have job-skills related programs.
- A concern is the number of non-citizens who are afraid to request services. Same for children who are in kinship care. (Children living with extended family members and not usually receiving public assistance)
- Art and Music and Fun are important elements for children.
- Studies show that children suffer when green space is unavailable.
- The book The Courage to Teach by author Parker Palmer was suggested as good reading.
- We need to ensure that issues regarding vulnerable youth are on the radar screen of decision-makers in our community. We need to unite so that sub-issues do not cause the message to be lost.
- There are no children that we can afford to write off as "lost". If we simply focus on "return on investment" and "cost/benefit analysis", it makes sense to invest in children early.
- More attention needs to be placed on prevention. Foster care prevention, substance abuse prevention, pregnancy prevention.
- An attendee, a special education teacher, observed children are open and willing to learn. Teachers are not just teaching educational material, but also having to teach morals and values in school.
- Teacher salaries have prevented good teachers from seeking employment locally.
- Concerns were raised about the "New Freedom Commission" and medicating children too early and "Teen Screening" in order to medicate teens unnecessarily.

The general consensus of the group was that our children are a valuable resource in our community. They are an untapped source of energy that could be used for many good purposes. They embrace more readily the concept of taking care of our planet and our community. The special ed teacher indicated that her students take recycling very seriously. A parent indicated that her 7 year old innocently embraces the notion of the importance of "green living". We could learn a lot from their example.

If you help ONE child survive tough times, they may grow to help a thousand.

An individual who works with The Office on Children and Youth reiterated the importance of developing job skills in youth.

Dave's Taverna 11:00:00

Convener(s): E. Knight

Scribe: Erich J. Knight

Attendees: Jeff Tang, Steve Baren, Clair Kent, Charlie Strickler

I have been advocating for Biochar biofuel technology for three years world wide, but have also supported these local programs.

This is a Valley story; A Black Revolution for Valley Agriculture & Energy

I have involved;

at JMU; Wayne Teel (Environment/ISAT, my field study) & Rob Prins (Engineering, building reactor at JMU Farm) ,

A planed 10 Acre permaculture / composting / biochar, Fruit, herb & produce Farm at the new campus of Rockingham Hospital to feed patients & JMU students

6 Professors of Agriculture at VT,

In Dayton, at Oren Heatwole's Farm, Pyrolysis of poultry litter to char with VT

and

My Biochar Field trials in McGaheysville, with JMU & Houff Feed & Fertilizer Co. and local farmer Kieth Sheetz, and a sister study by Dr. Paul Hepperly of Rodale Institute in PA.

Here are the links and hall marks of the development of this technology;

Biochar Soil Technology.....Husbandry of whole new orders of life

Biotic Carbon, the carbon transformed by life, should never be combusted, oxidized and destroyed. It deserves more respect, reverence even, and understanding to use it back to the soil where 2/3 of excess atmospheric carbon originally came from.

We all know we are carbon-centered life, we seldom think about the complex web of recycled bio-carbon which is the true center of life. A cradle to cradle, mutually co-evolved biosphere reaching into every crack and crevice on Earth.

It's hard for most to revere microbes and fungus, but from our toes to our gums (onward), their balanced ecology is our health. The greater earth and soils are just as dependent, at much longer time scales. Our farming for over 10,000 years has been responsible for 2/3rds of our excess greenhouse gases. This soil carbon, converted to carbon dioxide, Methane & Nitrous oxide began a slow stable warming that now accelerates with burning of fossil fuel.

Wise Land management; Organic farming and afforestation can build back our soil carbon,

Biochar allows the soil food web to build much more recalcitrant organic carbon, (living biomass & Glomalins) in addition to the carbon in the biochar.

Biochar, the modern version of an ancient Amazonian agricultural practice called Terra Preta (black earth, TP), is gaining widespread credibility as a way to address world hunger, climate change, rural poverty, deforestation, and energy shortages... SIMULTANEOUSLY!

Modern Pyrolysis of biomass is a process for Carbon Negative Bio fuels, massive Carbon sequestration, 10X Lower Methane & N₂O soil emissions, and 3X Fertility Too.

Every 1 ton of Biomass yields 1/3 ton Charcoal for soil Sequestration, Bio-Gas & Bio-oil fuels, so is a totally virtuous, carbon negative energy cycle.

Biochar viewed as soil Infrastructure; The old saw;

"Feed the Soil Not the Plants" becomes;

"Feed, Cloth and House the Soil, utilities included !".

Free Carbon Condominiums with carboxyl group fats in the pantry and hydroxyl alcohol in the mini bar.

Build it and the Wee-Beasties will come.

As one microbiologist said on the Biochar list; "Microbes like to sit down when they eat".

By setting this table we expand husbandry to whole new orders of life.

This is what I try to get across to Farmers, as to how I feel about the act of returning carbon to the soil. An act of pertinence and thankfulness for the civilization we have created. Farmers are the Soil Sink Bankers, once carbon has a price, they will be laughing all the way to it.

One aspect of Biochar systems are Cheap, clean biomass stoves that produce biochar and no respiratory disease. At scale, the health benefits are greater than ending Malaria.

A great example;

The biochar Fund is also doing amazing work in the developing world;

<http://terrapretapot.org/>

Also , I would like Rebut the BioFuelWatch folk's recent criticisms with this petition of 1500 Cameroon Farmers;

The Biochar Fund

<http://biocharfund.org/>

and to explain their program;

http://biocharfund.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=26&Itemid=46

The USDA-ARS have dozens of studies happening now to ferret out the reasons for char affinity with MYC fungi and microbes, but this synergy is solidly shown by the Japanese work, literally showing 1+1=3

Senator / Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar has done the most to nurse this biofuels system in his Biochar provisions in the 07 & 08 farm bill,

<http://www.biochar-international.org/newinformationevents/newlegislation.html>

1. Charles Mann ("1491") in the Sept. National Geographic has a wonderful soils article which places Terra Preta / Biochar soils center stage.

2. <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/09/soil/mann-text>

Biochar data base; TP-REPP

<http://terrapreta.bioenergylists.org/?q=node>

NASA's Dr. James Hansen Global warming solutions paper and letter to the G-8 conference, placing Biochar / Land management the central technology for carbon negative energy systems.

<http://arxiv.org/ftp/arxiv/papers/0804/0804.1126.pdf>

The many new university programs & field studies, in temperate soils; Cornell, ISU, U of H, U of GA, Virginia Tech, JMU, New Zealand and Australia.

Soil Carbon Sequestration Standards Committee. Hosted by Monsanto, this group of diverse interests has been hammering out issues of definition, validation and protocol. The past week, this group have been pressing soil sequestration's roll for climate legislation to congress.

<http://www.novecta.com/documents/Carbon-Standard.pdf>

Along these lines internationally, the work of the IBI fostering the application by 13 countries for UN recognition of soil carbon as a sink with biochar as a clean development mechanism will open the door for programs across the globe.

<http://www.biochar-international.org/biocharpolicy.html>.

Reports:

This new Congressional Research Service report (by analyst Kelsi Bracmort) is the best short summary I have seen so far - both technical and policy oriented.

http://assets.opencrs.com/rpts/R40186_20090203.pdf .

This is the single most comprehensive report to date, covering more of the Asian and Australian work;

<http://www.csiro.au/files/files/poei.pdf>

Given the current "Crisis" atmosphere concerning energy, soil sustainability, food vs. Biofuels, and Climate Change what other subject addresses them all?

This is a Nano technology for the soil that represents the most comprehensive, low cost, and productive approach to long term stewardship and sustainability.

Carbon to the Soil, the only ubiquitous and economic place to put it.

Cheers,

Erich J. Knight

Shenandoah Gardens

540 289 9750

North American Biochar Conference 2009

Sunday, August 09, 2009 - Wednesday, August 12, 2009

<http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?eventid=684390>

I will be attending the meeting in Boulder thanks to the folks at EcoTechnologies Group

<http://www.ecotechnologies.com/index.html>

Biochar Studies at American Chemical Society Huston meeting;

Most all this work corroborates char soil dynamics we have seen so far . The soil GHG emissions work showing increased CO₂ , also speculates that this CO₂ has to get through the hungry plants above before becoming a GHG.

The SOM, MYC& Microbes, N₂O (soil structure), CH₄ , nutrient holding , Nitrogen shock, humic compound conditioning, absorbing of herbicides all pretty much what we expected to hear.

578-I: <http://a-c-s.confex.com/crops/2008am/webprogram/Session4231.html>

579-II <http://a-c-s.confex.com/crops/2008am/webprogram/Session4496.html>

665 - III. <http://a-c-s.confex.com/crops/2008am/webprogram/Session4497.html>

666-IV <http://a-c-s.confex.com/crops/2008am/webprogram/Session4498.html>

Company News & EU Certification

Below is an important hurdle that 3R AGROCARBON has overcome in certification in the EU. Given that their standards are set much higher than even organic certification in the US, this work should smooth any bureaucratic hurdles we may face.

EU Permit Authority - 4 years tests

Subject: Fwd: [biochar] Re: GOOD NEWS: EU Permit Authority - 4 years tests successfully completed

Doses: 400 kg / ha – 1000 kg / ha at different horticultural cultivars

Plant height Increase 141 % versus control

Picking yield Increase 630 % versus control

Picking fruit Increase 650 % versus control

Total yield Increase 202 % versus control

Total piece of fruit Increase 171 % versus control

Fruit weight Increase 118 % versus control

Homepage 3R AGROCARBON: <http://www.3ragrocarbon.com>

Also:

EcoTechnologies is planning for many collaborations ; NC State, U. of Leeds, Cardiff U. Rice U. ,JMU, U.of H. and at USDA with Dr.Jeffrey Novak who is coordinating ARS Biochar research. This Coordinated effort will speed implementation by avoiding unneeded repetition and building established work in a wide variety of soils and climates.

<http://www.EcoTechnologies.com>

Hopefully all the Biochar companies will coordinate with Dr. Jeff Novak's soils work at ARS;

<http://www.ars.usda.gov/pandp/people/people.htm?personid=24434>

I spoke with Jon Nilsson of the CarbonChar Group, in their third year of field trials ;

An idea whose time has come | Carbon Char Group

He said the 2008 trials at Virginia Tech (now in the third year) showed a 46% increase in yield of tomato transplants grown with just 2 - 5 cups (2 - 5%) "Biochar+" per cubic foot of growing medium.

<http://www.carbonchar.com/plant-performance>

Most recent studies out;

Imperial College test,

this work in temperate soils gives data from which one can calculate savings on fertilizer use, which is expected to be ongoing with no additional soil amending.

http://www.iop.org/EJ/article/1755-1315/6/37/372052/ees9_6_372052.pdf?request-id=22fb1902-1c23-4db8-8801-2be7e2f3ce1b

The BlueLeaf Inc. and Dynamotive study are exciting results given how far north the site is, and the low application rates. I suspect, as we saw with the Imperial College test, the yield benefits seem to decrease the cooler the climate.

The study showed infiltration rates for moisture are almost double. The lower leaf temperatures puzzles me however, I thought around 21C was optimum for photosynthesis.

BlueLeaf Inc. and Dynamotive Announce Biochar Test Results CQuest(TM) Biochar Enriched Plots Yield Crop Increase Ranging From Six to Seventeen Percent vs. Control Plots

<http://www.usetdas.com/TDAS/NewsArticle.aspx?NewsID=13603>

The full study at Dynamotives site;

http://www.dynamotive.com/wp-content/themes/dynamotive/pdf/BlueLeaf_Biochar_Field_Trial_2008.pdf

Low Tech Clean Biochar;

<http://holon.se/folke/carbon/simplechar/simplechar.shtml>

LOCAL FOODS - BACKYARD CHICKENS

Earth & Tea Cafe 11:00 a.m.

Convener(s): Brian Martin Burkholder

Scribe: Brian Martin Burkholder

Attendees: Brian Martin Burkholder, Ted Butchart, Ellen Butchart, Andrea Gram, Justin Van Kleek, Pelham Beck, Lara Sokoloff, Harvey Yoder, Pam Yates, Troy Lucas, Kim McGoff, Beth Schermerhorn, Noel Levan

Local Food Initiatives

Healthy Food Choices on a Small Budget

Backyard Food Sources: Backyard Chickens in the City

Local Food Initiatives

Healthy Food Choices on a Small Budget

Several people expressed their interest in these themes/issues:

- Growing our own food on 5,000 square feet – self sustaining, reducing carbon footprint
- Social justice – being inclusive with low income citizens as consumers
- Green Right – greening the entire market (Andrea Gram)
- Transition toward a local food economy such that it is environmentally sustainable
- We eat way too much meat
- Backyard gardens can increase a sense of community
- What about going to the school systems to educate teachers and students about sustainable food practices? (It is happening – example – Friendly City Food Co-op recently showed the movie Two Angry Moms followed by discussion with food service directors from area schools and universities. They are also meeting with folks at Keister Elementary about food sources
- Perhaps there could be a demonstration plot at every school – moving from something mowed to something hoed. Children and families are missing out on some basic “low-tech” growing and sustainability skills
- At the Politics of Food Conference in Raleigh, NC, a teacher developed a back-to-earth project developing a community garden and using it to teach basic skills and academic subjects such as using seeds in mathematics
- How about selling seed packets instead of cookie dough for a PTA fundraiser
- New Community Project is working with projects across the city
- Not all food can be grown locally (ie. coffee beans) but the Lucas Coffee Co. is working to create efforts that support the local producers around the world in their own context
- Growing your own food is less expensive in the long run. Many people don’t know how to grow their own food or raise chickens for eggs
- Everyone DOES need to grow at least some of their own food
- The aspect of neighbor helping neighbor can’t be over emphasized – sharing seeds and things such as irrigation
- It’s better to have organic gardens in our backyards rather than having too much lawn. Using compost (leaves, etc.) rather than chemical fertilizer is important. If there are worms under the leaves or a few inches down in the soil, it’s a sign of a healthy lawn and garden. The worms also help to aerate the soil
- Rain barrels are an important resource as well

Backyard Food Sources: Backyard Chickens in the City

- Overview of the local initiative for keeping small flocks in backyards within city limits

- Backyard chickens can contribute to a sense of community – especially if they are shared between yards/neighbors
- Concern about the care given to chickens kept in backyards
- See SeattleTilth.org for approaches to chicken coop tours. Etc. in Seattle, WA
- “It’s strange that large industry could/would have the power to keep me from having my 2 chickens in my backyard.”
- Perhaps we can’t “sell” backyard chickens as being
- Backyard chickens create a way to connect with your food
- Chickens can also reduce insect pests around the garden
- Chicken owners can tithe some eggs to Our Community Place or a food pantry to help contribute to the needs of people with fewer resources
- The City Chicken Information & Discussion Event to be held Tuesday, June 2 from 7-8 p.m. at the downtown Massanutten Regional Library was announced.

NOTE: There was a second gathering of people interested in or concerned about the Harrisonburg Backyard Chicken Project held at Earth & Tea Café at 1:30 p.m. Notes from this gathering were taken by Nicholas Stoddard.

BACKYARD CHICKENS IN THE CITY

Earth and Tea Cafe 1:30:00

Convener(s): Brian Martin Burkholder, Tom Benevento, Nicholas Detweiler-Stoddard

Scribe: Nicholas Detweiler-Stoddard

Attendees: MuAwia De'mes, Kai Degner, Eldon Kurtz, Nancy Hendren, Justin Pruit, Tom Benevento, Nicholas Detweiler-Stoddard, Peter Dula, Ilsa Ackerman, Simon Dula, Lucen, Sherri, Cassandra, Nate, Sarah, Nik, Mary

[Note: Session largely informational; discussed various understanding of chicken issue rather than being action, recommendation oriented]

Reviewed origin of Harrisonburg Backyard Chicken Project (HBCP):

- Formed late fall 2008 when handful of citizens received eviction notices for hens
- Group researched and formulated possible pro-chicken regulations to ask city to consider
- Group took request to city council in spring. City planning commission suggested any ordinance fall under animal control rather than zoning (largely so that could be easily repealed if did not work out and so that animal control officer could handle enforcement)
- City council recently asked city attorney and staff to formulate sample proposal; will then receive first reading at council, opportunity will be given for public comment

Summarized regulatory specifics suggested by HBCP:

-6 chickens max.

-no roosters

-registration and nominal fee for chicken owners, education materials disseminated at time of registration

-require chickens to be enclosed if yard not fenced/wings not clipped (not allowed to run-at-large), suggest movable coops versus stationary

-allow 1 additional chicken allowed for every 1,000(?) sq ft of property space above a set minimum

Reviewed important aspects to consider in a successful ordinance:

-It recognizes the importance of the ordinance being clearly stated and easily accessible to the public, which will help ensure compliance and reduce violations.

-It satisfies the needs of most stakeholder groups and acknowledges that some stakeholders on both sides of the issue will be unwilling to compromise.

-It does not discriminate against certain populations, such as those of lower incomes who can not afford high permitting fees, or those with smaller property sizes.

-It allows for flexibility and provides choice, such as giving chicken keepers the right to choose their own coop design and building materials.

-It allows for citizen input and participation in the ordinance forming process to assure that the ordinance fits the needs of, and is supported by the community.

-It recognizes the role chickens can play in developing a more sustainable urban environment.

Reviewed and discussed primary concerns and objections given thus far regarding possibility of backyard chicken allowance:

-Increased cost to city (in animal control enforcement)

-Biosecurity risk (to commercial poultry, to humans)

-Property value loss because of unsightly coops, messy chickens

-Nuisance complaints (odor, noise, running at-large, pests)

-Agricultural animals have no place in city, belong in country only

-Concern that allowing chickens will set precedent for allowing others ag. animals (goats, pigs, cows, bees, etc)

-Problematic waste disposal (how much produced? what to do with? will it contaminate watershed or be a health hazard?)

Open discussion regarding participant concerns and ideas:

--Outlined reasons for keeping of urban chickens: one small element of sustainable living, food production.

--**Movement to keep chickens is thriving national movement, but Harrisonburg in unique situation with proximity to large poultry producing counties. USDA Vet and VA state Vet sent letters of concern about backyard chicken possibility because of perceived disease threat to multimillion dollar local poultry industry**

--Chicken industry does contribute largely to local economy, is a big lobbying factor in decision

--While many in city support (as shown by great number showing up to council meetings) also many strongly opposed.

--Clarified amount of waste produced: 3-4 hens equivalent to large dog, additionally waste is safe to use on gardens, compost, yard etc (pet waste is not). Avian excrement has higher water content, breaks down much quicker than mammals, can be raked up and thrown on compost if needed. Limit of 6 hens keeps waste, smell minimal

--was noted that fertilizer from a few chickens would be much safer for watershed than chemical fertilizers used on lawns by many

--participant suggested regulating coop style so as to ensure aesthetic appeal

--participant expressed concern that even if human avian flu originates from commercial facilities, simply having more people with small flocks increases chance of human to chicken contact (noted that areas of high incidence of human H5N1 are in Asia where lots of backyard flocks)

--participant recently in Portland, OR where 4 chickens allowed, lots have them, most people exceed 4 but is not enforced. Noted that the chickens are hardly noticed, not a nuisance.

--Portland's registration process requires owner to notify neighbors in certain radius; question raised "what do you do if one objects? (seeking to simply notify neighbors of intention or seeking to have full approval first?)

--Permit/Registration process allows "point of contact" opportunity that can improve proper keeping of hens, compliance with codes. Those applying for chickens can be given educational material, etc

--Mayor noted that fee suggested by HBCP too low, but raising too high will discourage ownership and negate cost-effectiveness of hens. Noted that fees will likely not be able to be high enough to offset administration and enforcement costs.

--Mayor noted that people evaluate city chickens through many different value sets; which values should council prioritize and base decision on?

--If chickens would be allowed, may encourage others to ask for allowance of other animals, but city council would look at each one as long and hard as have looked at chickens. Suggested that council not vote against chickens simply b/c of possibilities of more groups asking for more animals.

--discussed understanding of chickens as "agricultural." Those in support not likely to define as such because not for commercial scale production. Raised for own food source, not profit--much like raising own food in garden is not "agricultural"

Mayor asked for informal poll in favor, opposed, uncertain; 15 Participants split roughly evenly. Given opportunity to sign petition in favor if desired.

Participants encouraged to continue providing input on concerns and ideas for most responsible, effective regulations for chickens. HBCP will host public opportunity for further discussion of this nature at public library, Tuesday June 2 7-9pm

INCREASE BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

SW corner of Court Square lawn 11:15:00

Convener(s): Tom of New Community Project

Scribe: Lisa Boland

Attendees: List was sent around at time of meeting. I do not have this information.

Agenda

- Pedestrian, bicycle
- Increase pace of projects
- Low hanging fruit
- Bridges for bikes and pedestrians
- Priorities of projects bike paths and pedestrian trails
- Existing paths more bike friendly
- City bike plan
- Revise
- Driver education of bikes
- Enforcement of traffic laws pertaining to bikes and pedestrian
- Increase bike accessibility to schools
- Consider earlier childhood education may increase bike friendly behavior
- Incentives for businesses

Ben Wyse gave background for 2005 city plan which merged bike and pedestrian onto one line item. Bike and pedestrian line item given a small budget in 2005.

Presently, SBC meeting once a month to increase funding for line item.

Key to factor in plan is funding. For example , the city can adopt a bike and pedestrian plan as policy and the policy may not be funded.

Grant funding enables the construction of projects.

Example. CDBG Grant is federal money that is funding the Washington Street sidewalks.

If the city is given federal money then policies adhere to MPO.

Grants can be a long and complex process.

Questions raised regarding the partnership of JMU and EMU with the bike plan committee. Transportation Demand Coordinator

Action projects:

Car Free Carrier Dr and Bluestone Dr.

Institute for Stewardship of the Natural World

Contacts: Lee Elshman and Dr. Broderick

Shenandoah Bicycle Coalition

Low cost projects that are a safety priority

Ex. Man St X with Port Republic Rd. Change stop light patterns so that bikes and pedestrians are given a cross signal separate from car traffic.

Contact Transportation Safety Commission -Tan

Maryland Avenue presently without bike lanes and no sidewalk.

Old Furnace Road needs wider flat top

Questions regarding minimal dimensions required by federal law for roads to include bike paths.

If traveling in towns with bike paths then get out the measuring tape and record the width of the bike lane and measure from center of road to edge of car lane.

Could roads not wide enough for bike lanes be marked with VVV, Recognized symbol to Share the Road with bikes and pedestrians.

Lower speed limit to 15 mph in school zones

Safe route school initiative

Streets included are South Ave, Maryland Ave and the city is funding the bike lanes.

Watermen Elementary

Charlie Chenault- Design and Construction Manual bike path from edge of Hillendale from Dogwood entrance to HHS.
Approx cost \$500,000

Key to projects are

CITIZEN PRESSURE

Increase neighborhood involvement

Better bike access on Chicago Ave and bike path leading to HHS are reasonable projects

Rails to Trails evolve into Rails with Trails

Invite GM to partner with JMU and RMH in green projects such as

Two person segway

Consider plan for all two lane and one- way streets in Court Square Quadrant to be designated as one bike/scooter lane and one car lane,

Guerilla biking activities

Late summer early fall public comment meeting

Look for notices in local newspaper, SBC website, local bike shops

POTABLE WATER- WHY WASTE, MESS ITS SOURCES OR IGNORE DRY RIVER?

Liberty Park 12:15:00

Convener(s): John Reeves/Sally Newkirk/Kemper Eagle+Trout Unltd.

Scribe: John B. Reeves

Attendees: Kemper Eagle got the attendee list; total was at least 13

Lynn Cameron, Harvey Yoder, Michael Wong, Sally Newkirk, Dave George, John Reeves + others

A- Potable water- why waste in City? Sustainability issues/ questions:

1-Switzer reservoir {~2.0 billion (?) gals. capacity} water is *top in quality, taste & for health (*lowest practical trace chemicals/ runoff pollution/ etc.).

2- From 1981 to 2006, City water "sold" go up 85% (3.01 to 5.60 MGD-avg.)

3- What's recent water usage per person? How does industry affect this?

City's Switzer water is quite *valuable- any waste/ conserv. ideas here?

How do droughts (*more are coming) and recent usage trends inform/ guide needed planning for City's sustainability? Are surface rivers- North River and new (*costly) intake on Shen. River- the best sources--or more long term?

4- Now: estimate "equivalent" 45,000 people in 2006 ~ 124 gals/day/avg.

or, estimate ~25% is industry/ commercial; so usage ~ 93 gals/day/avg.

5- Many areas have lower usage; what's Pros & Cons of reductions here?

In the UK, water usage about 35-40 gals/day/avg. Prices are much higher!

In much of Europe/Asia/ Australia, high quality potable water is carefully conserved; only used where needed for health/ safety/ etc.; other grades of water are used for flushing/ lawns/ no human contact.

6- For my wife and I, water usage < 40 gals/day/avg. with lots of garden use.

7- Push for conservation @Charlottesville in drought gained >30% reduction *quickly, with no capital costs. Lessons? Usages now to previous?

8- Many opportunities for conserving- rain barrels; min. flow showers & "navy" showers, 2-flush toilets & composting toilets--long list of ideas. Many model cities are out there and savings could be done at no or minimal costs. With *rising sewer/ BNR treatment costs, potable water savings yield more than 2X \$ savings in sewer costs and simpler to operate treatment plants.

9- Water and sewer rates should strongly *encourage conservation. After a minimal amount of water per household/ month at a cheap rate, then more usage should NOT gain any reductions in rate. Large users need to pay the freight;

rates should factor in enough extra \$ to fully cover needed O & M and depreciation costs so that too old infrastructure/ their failures aren't common.

10- Are \$ expansion capital and O&M costs for Shen. River intake really needed right away? Need to ensure that: a) usages are lowest practical, b) current water & sewer and sewer mains to North River WWTP infrastructure is ready & sustainable in broad sense.

B- Whole water shed above Switzer reservoir (via Friends of Shen. Mtn. initiative) and between Switzer and Riven Rock potable water intake (via initiatives reviewed by Trout Unlimited and being developed by City) must have a key goal of the best water quality practical.

1- Dry River section below Switzer is City property- so shouldn't it be fully in City Comprehensive Plan plus fully protected with City Regs. and Ordinances from all degradation (as recent ATV and motorized damages).

2- Water shed below Switzer should be assessed for practical, family-style loop trails that might in many sections be usable by mountain bikers (per work so far and continuing by IMBA reps./local mtn. biking coalition people.

3- Water shed below Switzer might be usable for several educational projects and venues, such as the field trainings for all 6th and 7th graders of City; plus all City school students should know and see our very valuable drinking water source and why its protection and management is so crucial for our future.