

Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

December 2, 2015

9:35 am, Lang Center Keith Room

In attendance: Ben Berger, Carr Everbach, Deb Kardon-Brown, Melissa Tier (notetaker), Ralph Thayer, Rebecca Griest, Sibelan Forrester, Tao Wang

United Way

- Swarthmore representative attended a United Way (UW) award ceremony last night, was awarded the Impact Partner of the Year award
- An answer from Rich Crespo regarding his initial offer won't come until he gets confirmation from UW's potential partners for trucks & storage
- If we went with the UW option, we should take pictures of the mounds of waste and start planning for alternatives starting next year

SusCom Questions & Comments

- Why is T2T experiencing so much trouble this year?
 - A number of difficulties that have been brewing for a few years
 - We don't have enough students who can commit to being here after the academic year
 - Having the sale after the semester ends was raised as a problem by students as most aren't able to attend
 - We want the Sustainability Director to review our whole waste management system
 - Costs of keeping those students on campus at the beginning of the summer is very high
- Even though there has been negative press about T2T, there will definitely be negative press from community members about it not happening
 - It's just that it's happening in a different location (off of Swarthmore's campus) – so the new location and new time have to be very well advertised
 - Publicity should focus on the benefit to the community, including the fact that the Fieldhouse isn't air-conditioned
- Melissa spoke to Aurora, she is committed to finding long-term solutions but she supports the UW offer for just this year unless a better option is determined before the end of the semester
- Can we have an event where a municipal program picks up large electronics from campus?
 - Great idea, but we would need to look into whether Swarthmore is allowed to be a pick-up site
- Maybe we can put together a resource for waste disposal options?
 - Melissa and Adina created a basic version of this on the Sustainability website over the summer, but it still needs more detailed information for items that shouldn't go in recycling, compost, or normal trash
- What exactly are the alternatives to T2T for this year?
 - 1) Take UW up on their offer to help this year;
 - 2) Throw everything out

- 3) Find a way for Swarthmore to both rent space to store the waste over the summer and then sell the waste on-site next fall

Efficient Showerheads Proposal Updates

- Shane's new proposal was sent around and there is general approval
- Ralph has a number of the efficient showerheads already, asked Melissa if the Office of Sustainability & GAs can immediately do some testing

SusCom Comments & Questions

- We must make sure that information is clearly presented so students are aware of the change and so that any damages to the new models are reported
- Can we invite certain teams to do the testing in addition to GAs? Particularly students with long hair?

Other Sustainability Updates

Carbon Tax

- The current carbon tax proposal will be presented to the Social Responsibility Committee (SRC) of the Board on Friday
 - If approved, the next step will likely be for the SRC to formally bring the proposal to the Board at their meeting in February

Second Nature Reporting Commitments

- To review, we have decided not to move forward with the January 1 deadline for the Resilience Commitment
 - We remain interested, however, and will reconsider when either Second Nature provides more detail or when a peer institution provides a clear example
- Completion of the GHG Inventory by January 15 is not necessary but could be helpful for the February Board review of the carbon tax proposal
 - The decision will rest with Aurora and Ralph, outside of SusCom

Sustainability Spaces

- The Green Advisors have been using the back of Melissa's office as a group space – when Aurora arrives in her office in the President's hall on the 2nd floor of Parrish, Melissa may be asked to move up there as well
 - Students would no longer have easy access to the Office of Sustainability and would lose their informal student space
- Is this a moment to consider the possibility of a GA and/or other Sustainability space? No easy solution but should begin considering
 - The Bookstore is moving & other coming changes in Clothier
 - Any possibility of tying to T2T solution of a resale shop?
 - Dorm storage spaces will also be opening

Community Garden

- Jennifer Pfluger will teach a food-based biology course this spring in which students will use ‘pop-up’ plots in front of Sharples to grow edible plants
 - Is there any possibility of developing this location into a permanent garden?
- A number of years ago an ENVS Capstone completed an extensive permaculture review
- To grow food well, the plot needs to have the soil built up; the process takes a number of years
- An improved community garden is needed on campus for curricular tie-ins

BEP

- \$120 million is the absolute maximum approved by the Board & the budget is still quite above that amount
 - Last year, the Board said it would devote \$12 million to sustainability initiatives in the building – some concern about losing these initiatives
- Art McGarity & Carr very interested in instrumenting the building for sustainability research before it’s built so that it has the structural capacity for such research
 - Research conducted on BEP can be incorporated into the design of future buildings both at Swarthmore and other locations
- Can SusCom take a stance on sustainability design with BEP?

Town Center West

- SusCom & Office of Sustainability not yet satisfactorily involved with planning
 - How will the Framework be used to determine compliance?
 - Many questions remain about its sustainability standards with regard to operation of the inn, the restaurant, the store, etc.

End time 10:35

Respectfully submitted, Melissa Tier