

Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes
11/13/14
8:30 a.m., Sharples Main Conference Room

Attendees: Chris Chalaka, Shinae Yoon, Hayden Dahmm, Joy Charlton, Deb Kardon-Brown, Tao Wang, Carr Everbach, Tom Cochrane, Eric Wagner – Co-Chair, Laura Cacho, Stephen O’Hanlon (notetaker), Mark Davis

Ecosphere update:

Hayden & Chris talked about COP Conference in Peru. Chris is going to attend, along with 4 faculty/staff (Betsy Bolton, Laura Cacho, Giovanna DiChiro, Ayse Kaya) and several other students. Departing Dec. 6th and staying for several days. Funding is from the Mellon Foundation, the Lang Center, and the Director of Sustainability’s Climate Fund. There was also brief discussion of how the event would be publicized by those attending.

Yesterday, Mountain Justice held a press conference announcing that Swarthmore’s largest fund manager, Cambridge Associates, is willing to help institutions like Swarthmore divest from fossil fuels. For years the Board of Manager has said they cannot divest.

Some students from Ecosphere met with Lekey, the Sustainability Intern, to talk about how the IC’s values can relate to sustainability. Hoping to bring some of those ideas to the Monday “Big Ideas” meeting.

Update from Green Initiatives Working Group:

Green Initiatives proposal by two students to design an electric car port. A very detailed proposal, asking for a budget of \$8,500 for one charging port or \$10,000 for two. The Green Initiatives subcommittee met and felt that it was a good use of the fund; it is the only proposal submitted so far. Carr, who is the students’ advisor, explained: The idea is to use the grid as a sort of flywheel. The cars would take power from the solar panels when the sun is shining and be off the grid when no sun shines. It will be carbon neutral or producing electricity for the grid. The charging device would allow a car like the Leaf to go from nothing to full in 4-6 hours. Working with a local supplier to get supplies at wholesale prices. Potential locations: near field house/Matchbox or behind the science center. The science center might be more valuable for faculty while near the Matchbox/field house is more visible. Laura: There is a real need for this. Numerous of people have emailed me asking when we would be installing electric car chargers.

Eric: On face value it seems like a good idea. I have two questions. Carr, from your perspective, do you think this is an appropriate use of the Green Initiatives fund?

Carr: The green initiatives fund no longer needs to have payback, so I think it is.

Eric: Do you think this is going to be viable given it is a student project?

Carr: Some senior projects are embarrassments, but I don’t think that will happen with this. I think there is a high probability of success and almost no chance of it leading to a long-term detrimental impact.

Deb: We also have electric vehicles owned and operated by the campus.

Mark: I think that we should be sure to do a lot of outreach about this.

Laura: I am more worried about people concerned about equity. People might be upset that people with electric cars getting free charges.

Carr: the GE hardware we have has the ability to add a machine that would allow us to measure and eventually charge for individual usage

Hayden: I like the idea of having a more visible location. That will be as important as the Town Center is built.

Tom: Are we able to track how much energy is produced?

Carr: Yes.

Joy: What I like about this is that it is integrated. It is taking place in a class, with a professor, to help educate the campus.

Deb: It also gives students an incentive to innovate because this project got funding.

Carr: There also will be external review from people outside the College Community to ensure quality.

Discussion of the "Sustainability Justice" issue and potential workshop. Not being considered for regular funding through the College, but it might be funded through other means.

Also, there are two students working to create a greenhouse that students can use to demonstrate features of passive design. We can discuss this later in the spring as the project is not very far along yet.

Hayden: I have an idea to make the sometimes abstract ideas of energy and water consumption more concrete. There might be a visual or other means of showing the amount of energy/water/etc that we are consuming. Idea is to make sustainability visible on the campus in an artistic and compelling way.

Discussion of a sustainability symposium in Feb.

Laura: We are bringing in seven experts on sustainability. I am working with a consultant to design this charrette. The basic idea is an intensive workshop process. The experts would be lecturing to the campus community and also be helping us with the proposals by directly applying their expertise. We are having a call next Tuesday at 1:00 pm. If you are interested in joining this process next week, let me know. I would love to see a broad selection of people attending the discussions and talks. We have proposed two nights: Wednesday and Thursday.