

Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 15, 2011, Sharples Dining Hall Room 4, 8:30 am

Attending: Camille Robertson (LCI), Kathryn Wu, Erin Lowe, Joy Charlton, Nicole Selby, Linda McDougall, Eric Wagner, Nadine Kolowrat, Mark Davis, Debra Kardon-Brown, Carr Everbach

As the group members were gathering, Carr asked Linda about compostable (paper) plates, which had been ordered previously but were not re-ordered due to the difficulty of their blowing around the compost pile. Camille asked how expensive a shredder would be, and Nicole noted that a compactor might work to compress the plates enough so that, when wetted, they would stick together. Linda estimated the volume of plates as 2 full cans/day from Essie May's and 1 can each per day from Kohlberg and Science Center, for a total of about 90 gallons daily. Debra suggested a biodegradable mesh bag to contain them while they mush together. Carr reported that he had begun work with a student over the summer using a discarded electric lawn mower to make a shredder, but that this idea was put on hold due to summer's end and student unavailability. Carr said he would look into the other options. In the meantime, Linda will use up the compostable plates she already has on hand.

Nicole reported on the successful transition to single-stream recycling at Swarthmore College, starting just this semester. Stickers to be pasted over the old ones have run out and need to be reordered. Debra suggested taking off the old lids but Linda expressed concern that increased contamination by garbage would occur if there is not a top with a round hole in it to signify recycling. Nicole mentioned that some EVS employees have told her they regret not having plastic liners because they are splashed by liquids when emptying the single-stream containers. Other EVS staff members, however, have praised the change. Debra suggested a waste-liquids container placed on or near the bins into which cups can be emptied. Linda suggested that our recycling hauler, Jack Clarke, might have a video showing what happens to our recycling once it leaves campus. Documenting the fate of our recyclables might be a good student project. It was generally agreed that SusCom should invite Patty Shields, EVS director, and Jeff Jabco, Director of Grounds, to a future SusCom meeting to discuss how we can help with single-stream recycling.

Eric asked the fate of the Renewing Fund item for sunlight-activated light switches and motion detectors in bathrooms and hallways. He finds many lights left on in certain areas in Athletics. Carr noted lights left on in bathrooms in Hicks and Trotter. Ralph, who could not attend, will be asked about this at the next meeting.

The SusCom student members were asked about the new Swat EcoSphere umbrella group, about which a Swarthmore Gazette article had been written recently. Kathryn explained that there is one listserv for all the green groups, and Camille noted that there were about 400 members enrolled. Clara Fang (the new ESC)

and Peter Collings (chair of ENVS) have agreed to attend monthly dinners with EcoSphere students. Camille, as part of her LCI duties, will compile a weekly digest, which will be edited by Clara and sent out over the listserv. Nadine noted that there is a Swarthmore Bulletin article being written for the January issue that should have this information in it, and also that the College website can feature EcoSphere content. Camille promised to invite all members of SusCom to the listserv.

Joy asked the students if there were any pressing initiatives. Kathryn noted that Earthlust was partnering with 350.org, a national carbon-reduction group, on a project this Saturday (24 September 2011): highlight transportation emissions by having bicyclists make an aggregate of 350 laps around Parrish Hall (about 72 miles). Clara will staff a kickoff table, make a short speech, and distribute a one-page description of CAPcom (Climate Action Planning committee, chaired by Rachel Merz). The event will end at 3:50 pm.

Carr asked about “No Impact Week,” a no-carbon student initiative to take place sometime in March, which might include an address by the author of “No Impact Man,” Colin Beavan, if \$2500 can be raised for his honorarium. There is an organization that sponsors this “University No Impact Experiment;” more information at <http://www.box.net/shared/qk7qhjyqgbc10qt538po> .

Linda reported that the TedX talks will also be coming to Swarthmore on Saturday, March 31, 2012. These popular web-distributed panel discussions will bring people to campus and feature some Swarthmore professors. SusCom might want to anticipate the opportunity to make the event as sustainable as possible via advanced planning.

Carr announced that he would be presenting to the Social Responsibility Committee at the Board of Managers meeting on Friday, September 23, 2011, in Science Center 183 from 1:00 pm – 1:45 pm. SusCom members and CAPcom members are invited. Carr will present an overview of sustainability efforts, highlighting the creation of CAPcom and the hiring of Clara Fang to help formulate Swarthmore’s Climate Action Plan. Nadine offered a draft of a document describing Green initiatives that is being prepared to help fundraisers. Parts of this document could feature in Carr’s presentation, especially the idea that Sustainability, Crum Woods stewardship, and Curriculum (ENVS) are the big synergistic components of a sustainability plan.

Nicole and Camille had gone through the draft Strategic Planning document that will be discussed at the Board of Managers meeting. Carr promised to link the Climate Action Planning effort with this Strategic Plan in his presentation. Camille offered ideas for this link [Carr later met with Camille and took notes on her ideas, including pointing out that the College should align its practices with its stated ideals. It was also agreed that the letters written to President Chopp regarding the importance of a Sustainability Director should be available to the Social Responsibility Committee

Board members to underscore that sustainability is a student issue.]

The meeting ended in a discussion of how to get students to apply for positions on CAPcom and the Social Responsibility Committee (these are appointed by Student Council).

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Carr Everbach, SusCom co-chair

*** Future planned meetings of the Sustainability Committee ***

Friday, September 23, 2011, 2-3 pm, Lang Center Seminar Room (106)

Thursday, September 29, 2011, 8:30-9:30 am, Sharples Room 4

Monday, October 3, 2011, 11:30-12:30, Lang Center Keith Room

*** Fall Break ***

Monday, October 17, 2011, 11:30-12:30, Lang Center Keith Room

Monday, November 7, 2011, 11:30-12:30, Lang Center Keith Room

Thursday, November 10, 2011, 8:30-9:30 am, Sharples Room 4

Friday, November 18, 2011, 2-3 pm, Lang Center Seminar Room (106)

Monday, November 21, 2011, 11:30-12:30, Lang Center Keith Room

Thursday, December 1, 2011, 8:30-9:30, Sharples Room 4

Monday, December 5, 2011, 11:30-12:30, Lang Center Keith Room