

Roanoke Valley-Regional
Sustainability Summit

Morning notes, afternoon session comments
and roundtable discussions

5/9/2011

Roanoke Valley-Regional Sustainability Summit

Morning Session Notes:

- Cabell Brand
 - Goal of today is to find local, sustainable solutions since it doesn't look like there will be any legislation forthcoming
- Wayne Strickland
 - First of hopefully many summits that will focus on sustainability of our region
 - Visions of local leaders on sustainability – opportunities & challenges
- Maryellen Goodlatte
 - Land use ordinances – using ordinances for development
 - Localities must update their comprehensive plans every 5 years
 - Recent approaches to development focus on “multi-use” approach, such as:
 - Greenfield
 - Downtown Roanoke
 - Residential areas in downtown Roanoke is a recent positive development
 - Roanoke County looking at making amendments to zoning to deal with energy development (wind energy ordinances)
 - Educational & best practices are key to successful regional approach to sustainability
 - By working together, today's summit participants are the key to making sustainability possible in the region
 - Local governments don't enact ordinances changes in a vacuum – working with local businesses to determine their needs
- Richard Caywood
 - Cars are still the transportation of choice
 - Interstate highways have shaped how we live
 - Goal is mobility; mobility that fits
 - VDOT recycles asphalt; also incorporate roofing shingles into asphalt
 - Wetland Impact; sometimes construct new wetlands
 - Societal Sustainability; challenges; desired outcomes: bike lanes, wide/clear sidewalks
 - Park & Ride expansion
 - Current transportation development patterns often rely on isolated streets
 - Challenge: Limited resources
 - Opportunities: Change in approach; change in how we look at things
 - VDOT doing two things at once: meeting the needs of today while also creating possibilities of the future
- Renee Godard
 - Educator's perspective on sustainability
 - Ecology/environment: recognition that we as people we rely on environment
 - Economics/employability

- Equity/equality
 - Education: must have a solid educational foundation
 - Educational institutions are hamstrung with buildings that were built in a time when sustainability wasn't a focus
 - Hollins University students organized and demanded Hollins to be more responsible on environment so the university and Roanoke County partnered on a recycling center
 - Environmental advisory board comprised of key stakeholders
 - To respond to the needs of the community
 - To help Hollins purchase part of Tinker Mtn and put in conservation easement
 - On the national level higher ed institutions have not been committed until recently - "American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment"
 - Hollins identified its carbon footprint – goal to reduce footprint by 3%
 - Dominion Power is a partner - collaborative partnerships key
 - Food – think about how many local farmers markets have emerged recently
 - Students – self-imposed "green fee"
 - Bringing paper under control
 - Challenges
 - Long term/short term perspectives – money
 - Identify sources & partnerships
 - Understanding the implications for business as usual
 - Providing hope
 - Good stories; vision; commitment
- Sarah Baumgardner
 - Goals of Water Authority
 - Operate regionally
 - Infrastructure stability/Rate structure that supports infrastructure
 - Newest technology
 - Partner with local businesses
 - Water needed to be managed regionally not locality by locality
 - Technologies available:
 - By products of waste – methane gas: process of installing generators that captures the gas – 90% of heating and cooling will be addressed by the gas
 - Greenway coming through the plant will help with educating the public
 - Water distribution – large energy audit – what can we change to produce savings to pay for improvements
 - Skilled workforce but 1/3 will be retiring in 5 years
 - Va Western Community College created a water and waste water certificate program to train future workforce
 - Tours and classroom presentations

- Paul Phillips
 - FFCR - Focus on community development
 - Sustainability is the credit union model
 - People come together, pool resources and achieve goals
 - Legal mission to serve people of modest means & encourage thrift
 - Cooperative
 - “Not for profit-not for charity-for service”
 - Limited to serve specific communities
 - Each member has one vote
 - Low-income designation
 - Largest CDFI in Virginia
 - FFCR fits in between the 3 sectors: nonprofit, business, government
 - Can help:
 - Transportation – Responsible Rides Program
 - Affordable housing – 100% locally owned – very engaged in the community
 - Personal banking
 - Provide community development/nonprofit financing
 - Impediments
 - Funding priorities – need to be coordinated and holistic
 - Local, state and federal budgets constrained
 - Long-term stakeholder commitments not guaranteed
- Joyce Waugh
 - All chambers are different because the make-up is driven by its members and most members are small businesses
 - Annual economic summit – “Will going green save you green?” theme of past summit
 - Raising awareness among companies
 - Work with Cool Cities Coalition – follow guidelines & then a business can get a static sticker promoting they have met the green guidelines
 - Designed to recognize Chamber member business that have made commitment to green practices
- Bob Fetzer/Dave Hill
 - Sustainability means a lot different things to a lot of different people and it means a lot of different things to a lot of different cultures
 - “Making your worst place, your best place”
 - Net Zero - www.ruralZed
 - Bringing the power company and bank together to combine mortgage with electric bills
 - Energy Star program – underutilized – opportunity for banks and communities to work together
 - Challenges to mortgages: entire mortgage industry reshaping themselves
 - Embrace what is right already

- Southern Gap Innovative Partnership – Buchanan County, VA
 - Partner with Alpha Natural Resources Coal Company – take a mountain top that had been leveled and build a community – town & government center
 - Wind energy and solar energy available at the top of the mountain
- “Light Imprint Handbook” – Tom Lowe
- Commonwealth Green Initiative
 - Combine research & community
 - Living-Learning Laboratory for Green Design
 - Farmland Conservation
- Rupert Cutler
 - Communities’ sustainability
 - Acting locally – must break down in bite-size pieces
 - Making our hometowns great places to live and work – micro level
 - Importance of arts & culture in sustainability
 - Transmitting values of culture from one generation to another
 - Avenues that people of any age, race, age can travel
 - Education and economic development strategies
 - Attracting businesses
 - Examples
 - Center in the Square
 - Jefferson Center
 - Taubman Museum
 - Arts & Cultural community is a necessary ingredient in any sustainability plan
 - Nonprofit museums and performing arts are struggling
 - City of Roanoke currently working on an arts & culture plan – city council will vote soon
 - 94% of survey responded that arts & cultural venues are important to the community
 - The arts connects us to our corner of the world and to each other
 - Creativity fuels innovation
 - Arts education prepares students for entering the workforce
 - Last fall study by Gallop and Knight foundations found that the arts was the most important factor in residents’ connection to their communities

Afternoon session moderator comments

- Look to the comprehensive plans for each jurisdiction
 - public engagement
- Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations
- **Challenges**
 - Money
 - Collaboration
 - Vision (consensus)
 - Commitment
- **Impediments**
 - Differing funding priorities
 - Budget constraints
 - Absence of master plan
 - Long –term stakeholder commitment
- Water authority as model of collaboration
- Recognition of green business
 - Creating incentive
- Embrace what is right already
- Sustainability requires partners
- Make workplace the best place
- Arts & culture are key ingredient for keeping people in locality

Afternoon roundtable focus question: What are the essential elements of a sustainable (regional) community?

Table 1:

- Not “growth” (stable population)
- Net zero
- Clear definition of government role with regards to energy, water, community
- Sustainable = renewable (7 generations) = peace
- Lead by example locally (global context)
- Educate community regarding all of the above

Table 2:

- Political cooperation across jurisdictions
- Consensus on regional priorities
- Education/awareness
- Engagement of all aspects of community
- Development of clean, alternative energy
- Arts/culture as priority
- Availability of outdoor recreation, greenways, etc.

Table 3:

- Connectiveness/connectivity
- Communication/education/web
- Jobs-demonstrating sustainability
- Better communication by the for-profit and non-profit
- Efficiency-doing more with less
- “Turn worst to best”
- Innovation and creativity
- Regional center for career and tech education
- Values and respect

Table 4:

- Think regional and locally (sourcing)
- Reclaim existing or degrading infrastructure
- Citizen education
- Protecting natural resources
- Enhancing natural resources
- Policy and legislative support
- Transportation options with interconnectivity
- Incentuizing development in existing density
- Best practices
- Vibrant economy

Table 5:

- Education (early childhood through higher ed/tech schools)
- “Efficient” transportation network (energy, land use, etc.)
- Renewable energy sources and utilities
- Variety of opportunities for “playing”- inside/outside/arts & cultural
- Awareness-each company and individual understands the impact on local, regional & global levels
- Broad and diverse job opportunities/businesses
- Compact network of services that are easily accessible to all users
- Affordable opportunities for living
- Intergovernmental cooperation/collaboration (Water Authority)
- A plan to balance all of the communities/our region has similarities and differences
- An active/engaged community
- Respecting history and diversity bring innovation

Table 6:

- Know your resources
- Flexibility (people, planning, government)
- Multiple methods of communication and ability to listen
- Recognition that you/we are a community
- Shared vision and goals
- Develop in ways that are compatible with resources

Table 7:

- Status quo is not sustainable
- Sustainability is a worthy goal
- Sustainability is multi-faceted; requires inter-disciplinary approach
- Focus on a vision/strategy OR choose a project or theme and jump in

Table 8:

- Using people's creativity (partnerships, joint funding)
- Keep moving forward even if not everyone agrees
- Play the devil's advocate-public to know what could happen if we don't.....
- Maximize energy efficiency
- Public transportation more efficient