

**NOTES FROM THE
LET'S TALK CLIMATE CHANGE & SUSTAINABILITY FORUM
Monday, March 30, 2009 at 7:00 pm
Echo Centre**

Approximately 80 people were in attendance.

Introduction

Charles Mealey past Chair of the Climate Change Committee provided an overview of the Committees report and recommendations. One of the recommendations was for the city to conduct this forum.

Presentations

Bruce Sampson, shared a broad perspective of climate change through his experience with many organizations including the Board of Directors of the International Centre for Sustainable Cities and Metro Vancouver Regional District - Sustainable Region Initiative.

Mr. Sampson presented the three great sustainability challenges we face, namely: energy, climate change and ecosystems, based on the work he has done with the World Business Council on Sustainable Development.

Nola Kate Seymour, President and CAO - International Centre for Sustainable Cities, introduced the Plus Network - a group of municipal Partners for Long Term Urban Sustainability. Ms. Seymour highlighted the accomplishments of three member municipalities and what they are doing about Sustainability. She illustrated the accomplishments of Adelaide, Australia; Durban, South Africa and Iqaluit, Nunavut.

Ms. Seymour and Mr. Sampson responded to questions from the floor. This was followed by a fifteen minute session for the public to discuss ways to respond to climate change and sustainability. The summary of each tables comments are as follows:

TABLE A

- Electric Cars - not allowed in some jurisdictions
- Wind / Solar Farms - sell energy to the grid
- Education on issue - inspire/mentor youth
- Waste Produce - gleaners
- Sustainability of Forests - waste in forest practices

TABLE B

- Gardening
- Local Produce - meat, chicken, food, 10 Mile Diet
- From Carbon Footprint to Ecological Footprint
- Retrofit windows
- Promote sustainable design and projects
- Public Awareness/Dialogue Sessions
- District Energy

TABLE C

Personal Actions

- install geo-thermal in my home
- downsize living accommodation
- eat more consciously - more local, less meat
- better transport - planning for personal
- recycling

Collective Actions

- Check out Biomass at bottom of inlet
- Transition Town, let's move on this
- Analyze potential for green building and promoting retrofitting
- Recruit "Climate Smart" into business community

TABLE D

- Grow own food as much as possible
- Shop for locally produced
- Shop for more sustainable products
- Stop using vehicle for short runs in town - bus, walk, bike
- Stop pandering to big business
- Attend City meetings to watch what they are doing and keep up the pressure
- Get together for grass roots action
- Talk to neighbours - organize block parties.

TABLE E

- Understand the issues
- Influence others
- Cycle more
- Drink only public tap water
- Grow your own food
- Educate our children at home and at school.
- Buy local
- Live by example
- Reduce my footprint
- Cost of some green choices is difficult for many - \$
- Energy-efficient lighting and appliances
- Use water consciously and conserve
- Education for young people must emphasize environmental and energy sustainability - Political pressure > on politicians
- Problems - arrogance of those who are rich (us) versus poor
- Political will and action at international level
- Find ways to help one another make changes
- Improved public transportation
- Incentives needed for citizens to use (install/build)
- Energy-efficient greenhouses
- Re-educate ourselves about consumerism
- Getting an energy-audit done on my house and then retro-fitting

TABLE F

Personal Actions

- More bike rides (footbridge fund)
- Researching and applying the techniques of bio-dynamic agriculture for soil fertility while harvesting crops)
- Lower thermostat (at night)
- Tourist in my own town
- Car with good mileage
- No plastic grocery bags

Collective Actions

- Encourage recycling and be ready to pay for it
- Farmers' Market
- No new flood zone building permits
- Regional District ownership of watersheds
- Encourage smaller, LEEDS houses for new building
- Encourage green retrofits
- Ban raw log exports
- Avoid events like "Thunder in the Valley"

TABLE G

- Campaign for protection of water supply
- Agricultural land reserve determined by independent soil surveys, not political expediency
- Moratorium on residential waterfront development (rivers, lakes & sea) in favour of recreational use and buffer zones for rising water levels

TABLE H

- Aerator run by methane, generate sewage
- Installation tankless water heater
- Burn wood
- Walk/bike more often
- One vehicle

TABLE I

- Encourage people to diversify information sources (go guerilla) e.g. vbs tv - toxic
- Be more self-sufficient - learn critical thinking
- Improve diversity of my garden
- Network
- Join Freecycle
- Adapt sleep cycle to daylight cycle (up at sunrise, down at sunset)

TABLE J

- Learned a lot about sustainability
- Walking rather than taking car
- Changing all the light bulbs isn't going to do it
- It may be easier for us to change our consumerism than for our children who want everything we have
- Technology will be able to get us there, but it may be expensive/or it may pay off
- We need to ask what the City is doing to cut carbon costs
- Local government should provide low cost loans for alternative energy sources - repayable on taxes
- Local government should factor climate change into financial statements
- Conserve water rather than paying to develop new sources of water
- Get rid of my gas guzzler
- Turn off lights
- Our personal efforts are important, but we also need legislation to support and drive the change

Mayor McRae thanked members of the City's Climate Change Committee who were instrumental in ensuring that the forum took place. They are: Charles Mealey; Larry Ransom; John Mayba; Penny de Waal; Jen Fisher-Bradley; Chris Alemany; Robert Gunn and Jonah Zyrd.

Mayor McRae thanked the Alberni Valley Community Foundation for their financial contribution towards the forum.

The City's next step will be to appoint a Sustainability Committee to assist in moving forward to a sustainable future. Positions will be advertised and the Terms of Reference identified shortly

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