

**Greenest City Action Team
Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2009
2:00 pm to 5:00 pm
12th Floor Boardroom, Vancity Credit Union, 183 Terminal Avenue**

Attendees:

Mayor Robertson	Co-Chair, City of Vancouver
David Boyd	Co-Chair, Environmental Lawyer
Suzanne Anton	Councillor, City of Vancouver (observer)
Dr. Penny Ballem	City Manager, City of Vancouver
Donna Clark	Senior Advisor to the Chair, BC Hydro
Lindsay Cole	Director, Sustainability Solutions Group
Karen Cooling	National Staff Representative, Western Region of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers' Union
Michael Harcourt	former Premier of BC, former Mayor of Vancouver,
Cheeying Ho	Executive Director, Whistler Centre for Sustainability
Mark Holland	Principal, HB Lanarc Consultants
Alex Lau	Vice President, Golden Properties
Michael Magee	Chief of Staff, City of Vancouver
Linda Nowlan	Environmental Lawyer and former Executive Director of Westcoast Environmental Law
Sean Pander	Sustainability Group, City of Vancouver
Moura Quayle	Commissioner, Pacific Coast Collaborative Commission
Andrea Reimer	Councillor, City of Vancouver
Robert Safrata	CEO, Novex Delivery Solutions (participated by conference phone)
Dr. David Suzuki	Scientist, Environmentalist, Broadcaster
Mossadiq Umedaly	Chair, BC Hydro Board
Tamara Vrooman	CEO, Vancity Credit Union
David Thomson	Facilitator, Coast Consulting Group

Regrets:

Linda Coady	Vice President, Sustainability, VANOC
David Cadman	Councillor, City of Vancouver and Chair Transportation & Traffic Committee
Gordon Price	Director, The City Program, SFU and former Vancouver City Councillor

Minuted by: Caterina Di Nozzi, City Manager's Office, City of Vancouver

Desired Outcomes:

1. Quick Start action plan finalized.
2. An initial set of long-term action possibilities for climate change and energy is identified.
3. Options for financing are explored.
4. Working groups are identified.

Welcome and Introductions, Update on Recent Developments

Highlights:

- David spoke on the draft Quick Start Report Recommendations, identifying the top 10 high priority areas with input and feedback from various Action Team members. Some ideas were going to be moved to the longer term (10 year) action plan.
- A revised draft of the Quick Start Report will be circulated to GCAT members next week; the Mayor is targeting reporting to Council on April 7. This report is not a formalized plan, but a set of recommendations.

General comments regarding Quick Start actions:

- Quick Starts are actions that we can commence OR complete this year, where we will have accountability, and will make an impact.
- Who is going to be responsible for making actions happen? (Who will be accountable?) Someone needs to be empowered.
- There is a need to focus GCAT's efforts; in terms of the list of action items, there is a fair amount of work already underway at the City. Need to be cognisant that some proposed actions (such as water metering) are complex, and expensive. This should be moved over to the 10 year plan. It should be compared against the district energy action.
- There is a need to be cautious about mixing quickstart ideas and the longer term agenda, i.e. Toxic Hotspot Mapping vs Workshops for Farmers and Restaurants
- Ecodensity issues - how do we jumpstart zoning changes, and maximize density targets? It all affects energy, transportation, etc. How do we address how this gets done? Institutional capacity is a key thing people are wondering about.
- Showcase Integrated Energy - "Quality Urban Energy Systems of Tomorrow",
- It is wise to defer the Water Metering and Volume Based pricing action, and wise also to move forward on Ecodensity and Laneway Housing. Most recommendations around climate change, energy and transportation are areas of greatest need of attention. It's up to the City on how to profile these things.
- Vancouver is the first city in North America to have a Laneway Housing program.

Set Up of Working Groups

David Boyd described the ten action areas he'd like to establish Working Groups for:

Climate Change and Energy
 Transportation
 Green Economy
 Water and Wastewater
 Solid Waste
 Local Food
 Human Health and Environmental Hazards
 Green Neighbourhoods
 Nature and Green Space
 Financing the Greenest City

A sheet was circulated amongst the members, for each member to indicate on which two working groups they would be interested in participating.

Discussion:

- Question: can other experts join a working group (ie. Could someone from BC Hydro who is more involved with climate change replace Mossadiq on the working group?) Yes
- the scheduling of meetings (meet every two weeks, split into groups after a GCAT meeting, etc.) The working groups will be self-organizing, and a point person (lead) should be elected from within each group.

Long Term Actions for Climate Change / Energy Actions

The team broke into two groups to brainstorm, looking at longer term actions, and what could have the biggest impact for the City - what would be signature actions (buildings, energy, land use patterns)? Thoughts to keep in mind:

- 2020 target is key
- 2030 target for carbon neutral buildings
- Are they still appropriate targets for Vancouver?
- Are our existing targets ambitious?
- Does Vancouver need to strengthen its targets?

Potential long-term strategies for climate change/energy:

- Focus on buildings: energy efficiencies, energy supplies, using the right type of energy, reducing demands, offsets, land use patterns; ultimately targeting carbon neutral. By 2020 we need to cut 50% of our average citizen's emissions. Include looking at energy systems for schools when looking at seismic upgrading (47 schools are up for renovations for seismic stability). In Copenhagen, all new schools will be carbon neutral, and all old schools will be retrofitted. Get partners to pay some incremental costs. Could a district energy plan be built?
- The Pacific Coast Collaborative is working on energy equipment. How do we create the equipment that will use less energy for our buildings? Need to look at clean-tech industrial capital, where do we create as part of our economic base green manufacturing. Funding has to be through "green economy". Tax credits to help us get where we want to go?
- UBC plans to be carbon neutral by 2020. Brought in developers doing green developments.
- VanCity is a major investor in Dockside Green in Victoria; we should take people who are pioneering in this areas and bring them to Vancouver, to give us their ideas
- Need a key integration group to ensure that all connections are made, and to identify the key platforms. The Province is the connector for all of these. Need to link with Universities, philanthropic foundations, schools, Province, Urban Development Association, Building Owners and Managers Assoc, Federal Public Works, Health Authority, TransLink, Port Authority, Airport Authority.

Need to bring in the private sector. Partner with banks, one or two key landowners, and pay only for differentials. Payback cycles are 40 years for energy costs.

- Carbon Free Prosperity: 2025 (Seattle) - look at that Ten Point Plan and how it could be transferred to Vancouver, how does it fit?
<http://www.cleanege.com/reports/pdf/CarbonFreeProsperity2025.pdf>
(71 page report)
- To go green, or "net zero" in development could add up to 10-20% in cost. Could be 40-50% of building cost for some areas like Shaughnessy. Have developers build LEED buildings.
- How can we get our building codes changed: by 2030 have solar-powered panels on buildings, to retrofit district systems, look at dynamic of incentives. Where is the neighbourhood heating supply going to come from? Boilers and heat exchangers...
- What is our goal or target on climate change? Some cities are setting audacious targets. Targets are a motivator; you then use tools to set in place the actions. Better not to set targets until the game plan is in place.
- Integrated energy systems across the City: how to deal with heat? Central heat. How do we catch up to cities like Copenhagen? Would like to have had Qwest here re integrated quality energy systems.
- Do a "pilot block" - choose a neighbourhood that would look at a "net zero" energy retrofit, district heat, etc. (need a neighbourhood that is enthusiastic, aggressive - tie into existing neighbourhood groups (Neighbourhood Block Watch, Communities in Bloom))
- Have neighbourhoods compete for "greenest" neighbourhood, again targeting existing neighbourhood groups (convene a conference in the fall to launch); need to create a neighbourhood pull on this. Already have interest from some neighbourhoods.
- Need to design a plan to help businesses in a green, organic fashion. A pilot project is great - do 10 at once! Give them lots of ideas, and stir up competition amongst them.
- Education - teach school children - work with School Board. Get school kids into this civic engagement.
- Look at energy efficient vehicles - Terasen Energy, BC Hydro. Terasen has the pipes (infrastructure) - what do we want to do with them?
- Arrange for symposiums/forums - bring in leaders (UBC, Cascadia Green) to present, to build the credibility around this. (Need clear steps for people on how to become Carbon Neutral). Real win is changing our living patterns.
- Need for further discussions around cost/financing and technology issues. How do we bankroll? City has the money, but how do we shift over to this? Need existing capital to shift over to this area. Change management is an emotional issue. Need to come up with a plan and spend the money on it. How do we get at the cultural shift? Investment will come with attitudinal change; some say the mindset is already there. (Anti-smoking campaign was cited as an example of attitudinal change...)

- Could develop a green economic agenda on a national basis. Very credible case. Development community could be interested in buildings that would have no parking.
- Decide what is “low hanging” fruit, and move more quickly on what we can do quickly. Why aren’t kids walking to school?
- Concern about turn around time to get things moving fast enough - what is that leap? Is there a “wormhole”? How do we get from here to where we need to be in a short time span? Question of cost is the sticking point. Stimulus packages could be developed.
- Get Mayor Robertson and Mayor Diane Watts of Surrey to team up on the issue that funding should go to cities with green city strategies .. perhaps at the next Big City Mayors’ Caucus, FCM.
- What about community buy-in - would this plan carry through? The challenge is to work on our basic value system.

Financing Opportunities (‘Sustainable Prosperity’)

Focus was on ideas to help finance the green actions that the City would like to undertake. What pots of money can the City tap into? What process changes can be implemented to help with funding piece?

- i.e.
- (1) British Government has funding for other countries to tap into
 - (2) 8-10 US municipalities - private capital pays for energy efficiency upgrades
 - (3) Tax shifting
 - (4) User fees/charges
 - (5) shadow carbon tax or charge a vehicle levy?

Members were reminded to think of players that could be involved: City, broader municipal government (Metro Van), FCM / Provincial / Federal / Private Sector / Academic

Innovative bold ideas:

- Recognizing massive climate leap will require latest technology systems available - good deal of what will be required will take a 40 year paydown
- Dynamic to force a building change in the building sector, to force change but at same time avoiding financial hardship for developers, contractors, etc.
- How to deploy every single possible \$ into green initiatives: how do you spend the \$, where do you save money on a day to day basis - set up green bonds.
- Tamara explained VanCity’s experience with building, energy, water consumption initiatives -- initiatives pay for themselves. Can’t underestimate what the market will create and finance as well.
- People want to be associated with recycling of gray water - need a variety of tools to get bulk financing, or once you get your big 5/7 - favour a strategy -- not centralize, focus on a strategy, get the strategy right, and then attract financing - see change in consumer

preferences. People are seeing the opportunity.

- Need major motivation or regulatory force to move asset base.
- Externalities - market was created by us, it's not a living entity
- Can't leave it all to consumer choice, but the City can't do it all
- Regulatory thing that sets the benchmark - those that do it faster and better than benchmark get recognition
- Performance based standards get rewarded - there is choice, but uses market forces to reward behaviour
- Why can't Dockside Green be the new building standard right now? Japanese appliances have a 'top runner' law.
- New evidence in Ontario looking at pollution in cities and health care expenses. Cities with less pollution have lower health care costs.
- Goal is to get everyone on board, and then the market players can move on it. Set this as the rule of the game, and have people fight to get beyond that. Keep pushing our standard up in terms of having a green economy, to achieve an economy of scale.
- Inertia of existing: only 3% of bldgs are new per year, rapid transit lines to be built, sewer treatment systems. To get to Mark's point to get change quick - got to regulate, educate. How to retrofit existing bldgs quick. Convert energy in bldgs quickly to renewable sources?
- What role does the City have to facilitate these retrofits, how to reach goal of being the greenest city by 20/20? Will need every ounce of knowledge to make this happen.

Overall Communications Strategy

Mayor Robertson advised that the first action has been announced - the community garden at City Hall. He felt there is a need to be well "grounded" around the next announcements and initiatives, and a need to find creative in ways to engage and energize the majority of the public. Work on the communications piece needs to happen urgently over the next few days.

GCAAT discussed:

- how to address the challenge the Mayor mentioned
- why is "environment" failing? Needs to be framed in context of quality of life, health, security
- community newspapers being at the front end of end of mainstream media. We should use mediums being used today - look at new technologies and exploit them.
- Having different leaders speak about green issues - using different "faces" (not those people who already associated with "green").

- “environment” vs. “livability”. Need to be gutsy and say stand up for what you believe in (the citizens of Vancouver rejecting the proposal to create a freeway through the city was cited as an example)

Public Outreach and Engagement

Councillor Reimer spoke on:

- the City of Vancouver’s website, describing the City’s environment and sustainability projects.
- GCAT’s new email address; Councillor Reimer is the administrator for this.
- Gordon Price’s “Audacious Ideas” forum at SFU.
- Councillor Cadman engaging the regional Mayors to form a “green Mayors” group

Suggestions for outreach included the Mayor reaching out to other City “family (School Board, VPD) asking for ideas, and that a green ideas forum be developed for late May, similar to a science fair display. A panel could be asked to review ideas.

A. Councillor Reimer will e-mail GCAT members with the e-mail address and password, links to various sites on the web, and the passcode for Twitter.

B. GCAT members are encouraged to volunteer to be on a panel.

Next Steps, Next Meeting

Proposed dates for the next meeting: April 16, 24, 27, from 2 - 5 p.m. (April 27 was ultimately confirmed after the meeting)

Agenda for the next meeting:

Focus on Transportation, water and wastewater

Develop more ideas re financing - get more focused, something we can sink our teeth into

Look at a National Roundtable - Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments reports

Review the measures from March 28th's “Earth Hour”

Other suggestions/feedback for next meeting

- Is there some way we can tap into the working groups at the meeting?

The meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.