

CPTF Policy, Education & Outreach Workgroup – Meeting Summary
July 15, 2008, 3:00 to 4:30 PM - Lawrence City Hall

CPTF Members Present: Simran Sethi (Chair), Jeff Severin

PEO Workgroup Members Present: Marty Birrell, Cynthia Boecker, Robert Glicksman, Derek Helms, Sarah Hill-Nelson, Nancy Jackson, Gwendolyn Klingenberg, Lisa Patterson, Dan Wildcat

Community Members Present: Gavon Laessig (representing PEO member Phil Cauthon), Kathy Richardson (representing CPTF Waste Management working group)

1. Overview & Introductions

Simran provided an overview of the focus for this workgroup. Members of the group represent various components of the community and serve as a conduit for information, distributing information back to those represented organizations and contributing to the discussion. She encouraged the group to become familiar with the goals of the larger Task Force, as well as the focus of this specific workgroup. We have about 5 months to work on this component of the plan, so we will need support from everyone to move the process along. Kathy Richardson is attending as a representative from the Waste Management workgroup, and it would be helpful for members of this group to attend other workgroup meetings, as well as the larger Task Force meetings.

2. What do we want to accomplish?

Dan: Through experience working on this issue in Native American communities has identified that it is all about what is done locally. Stresses the importance of : 1) Education that is practical, useful, and connects with daily life; 2) Involving young people – our greatest asset - in the process and using online media for communication; 3) Energy conservation and efficiency – as a society we are very good at consuming, but not at saving.

Gwendolyn: Face-to-face contact with people is important; members of this group could attend and present at meetings of other organizations that we want to reach.

Jeff: Educational campaigns will be important, but not just in the traditional sense of putting out general brochures and websites. A successful campaign will target specific groups with information that is important to them. This includes churches, non-profits, community organizations, etc. Involving the business community in educating the public will also be important (e.g. encouraging businesses to share their successes with customers and highlighting what customers can do to help).

Rob: Need to get to the root of how people think about these issues and the connection between understanding a concept and acting on it (not just understanding it, but not truly wanting to do anything about it), as well as .

Marty: Education on many different levels, including the industrial and commercial sector on down to the individual level, targeting different groups with individualized approaches to encourage social acceptance of change regarding this issue. This is a challenge of changing attitudes and habits and moving people from awareness to action, building on a knowledge base and motivating people to act on an issue.

Gavon: Lawrence.com can be used to distribute information through the online calendar or a blog devoted to this issue. The issue needs to be addressed as a pop-culture campaign.

Derek: Focus information that is sent out on the economic benefits of actions. Avoid the “Save the Planet” fad and frame the issue as an economic decision for our community. Look for a different angle to promote ideas and reach out to people who don’t see this as a priority.

Sarah: There is power in a united front, such as using the same message, image, logo, theme, etc. throughout the community, creating something that all stakeholders can use in their materials. Education is one important component, but so is economic development – attracting like-minded businesses that support environmental responsibility. Sarah is currently working with the Chamber Grow Green Task Force, which is creating a checklist of environmentally responsible behaviors for businesses. The idea is to create a list of practices for businesses to implement, allowing them to use a “Grow Green” logo.

Lisa: It is important that we be able to connect with people with content that is digestible and useable, actions that can be implemented, terms that can be understood and used through the community, and they “why” behind tips. Identify the major challenges. Highlight successes along the way.

Cynthia: Need to look at the long term and what to focus on that will have the most impact in the short amount of time that we have.

Nancy: Ideas that have been proven to be effective:

1. People act for personal reasons
2. Find champions in the community to facilitate person-to-person change.
3. Connect with groups such as Interfaith Power & Light that are working with churches to sign a compact to get an energy audit and follow up with changes to reduce their impact. Trinity Episcopal is the first in our area.
4. CEP is supporting energy efficiency block parties to education people on peer-to-peer basis
5. Through Project Porch Light, volunteers visit their neighbors and give out CFLs if people promise to install them immediately, then follow up to make sure they are using the lamp and provide additional information
6. Door-to-door campaigns to encourage purchase of green power have been effective at raising participation rates. Sarah suggested that a check-box could be added to city water/utility bills for people to purchase green tags through the city since it isn’t currently an option through Westar.

Nancy also noted that a group at KU is looking at Kansas specific impacts of climate change, especially as it relates to water. That report may be helpful in identifying strategies and educating the public about impacts. Gwen noted that the League of Women Voters is also working on a water-related study.

Simran: You don’t miss what you don’t know; focus on cost-savings, energy conservation, shifting behaviors, and the issue of economy and quality of life.

Kathy: The Waste Management workgroup sees source reduction as their main priority, focusing on city/community-wide reduction through support of policies such as a bottle bill, a ban or tax on plastic shopping bags, and getting the most out of our waste stream by connecting businesses in the community that might be able to use one businesses bi-products or waste as a resource.

3. Framework

- Need to address the why and how.
- Start personally and work out from there, providing a better understanding of the reason behind tips.
- Take a positive approach and identify what we do want for our community (vs. what we don’t).
- Provide attainable goals from the simple operational aspects on up to larger issues
- Develop action items for each area and back them up with resources to help people along.

- Stay focused on the issue of climate protection and not implement things just because they are popular because they may not have the desired impact for our community (e.g. curbside recycling is something that community members want, but it may increase GHG emissions through increased truck routes).

4. Who do we want to target?

Schools (Public & private K-12 schools, KU, Haskell)

Businesses

Homeowners and renters

Churches/religious organizations

Civic & professional organizations

Non-profit organizations

City government

5. Areas of Focus

Energy & Water are major components that have been brought up. Our message should focus on conservation and green energy, with the goal of reducing greenhouse gases. Target the biggest contributors – 33% of GHG from power and much of that is from residential use.

6. Next Meeting

We will have a better understanding of the framework for this workgroup in the context of the larger climate plan after the full CPTF meeting next week (July 22). From there, we will be able to discuss further and break into smaller groups. The next meeting will also focus on how we will address policy recommendations, start identifying champions in the community, work on the concept of a unifying message, and develop a timeline for our group.