

City of Lawrence
Peak Oil Task Force
July 23, 2009 (4:00 PM) Meeting notes

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Mayor Rob Chestnut, Scott Allegrucci, Michael Almon, Rex Buchanan, Joe King, Dean Palos, Charles Marsh, Nancy Thellman
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Paul Dietz, Tom Kern, Paula Phillips, Dan Wildcat, Scott Zaremba,
STAFF PRESENT:	Cynthia Boecker
PUBLIC PRESENT:	Chris Cobb (SAB)

Set Agenda

The draft agenda was approved as written

Prior meeting minutes

The minutes of 26 March 2009 and 23 April 2009 were approved with revisions.

General Discussion

The meeting began with general discussion of the premise from which the group is working and the context of the final report, specifically: is there a peak oil problem? The group consensus was that most would agree that there is a problem, but we don't want to try to define a timeline by which oil depletion would be predicted as this is an area of greater confusion and disagreement. The consensus of the group was to focus on the fact that the energy picture will change and we should be working to address how we will deal with that eventuality.

The group discussed communication/public education relating to the issue and agreed that identification of the issues which will most directly affect Lawrence would be helpful in crafting a message to communicate the urgency or need for public understanding and action surrounding the issue. However, the group discussed that whatever is communicated it is best to provide positive information on what can be done rather than a "doom and gloom" scenario.

A two pronged approach was discussed whereby we would 1) identify the issue and educate the citizens to understand the seriousness of peak oil inflation, and 2) develop recommended City policies and practices for a response plan, including a methodical projection of what the community can do. We need the equivalent of "the elevator speech" that conveys the essence of peak oil in brief. A suggestion for that is the San Francisco "eight talking points" that are concise and to the point.

The name we use for the issue was also briefly discussed as some find "peak oil" as bothersome. This is a complicated issue and there is question whether we have fully framed the issue at this point. Does the situation go beyond oil to all energy and high energy crisis situations? However, it was pointed out that it is oil price volatility and unpredictability that is the problem. Also, the issue of oil decline and inflation is easier to explain to unaware citizens in terms of their pocketbook, than in terms of atmospheric CO2.

It was discussed that we have contingency plans for tornado, flood and other natural disasters, so this should be the equivalent for an energy situation. The problem with this approach, however, is that unlike a natural disaster, this issue doesn't recede. The group again discussed the nature of peak oil and looking at a crisis situation versus a long term situation. A key distinction is that response to peak oil inflation is best approached as adaptation rather than prevention.

Transportation Related Issues

Dean Palos presented information he had researched on transportation-related issues. He used recommendations from the Lawrence Climate Protection Task Force, San Francisco Peak Oil Response Task Force and the Portland Peak Oil Plan as a beginning point for information he put together. He provided information (attached) for review and refinement with recommendations from other members of the task force.

Food & Agriculture Issues

Charles Marsh drew his food and agriculture recommendations from the San Francisco Peak Oil Response Task Force and the Portland Peak Oil Plan. It includes practical policy recommendations as well as clear pathways to achieve the objectives. It emphasized that information alone does not motivate people to shift behavior, but they need to be inspired to make changes. The government can take the lead in shifting towards a low-energy lifestyle. He noted that both city's plans emphasized protecting high quality local farmland. He provided information (attached) for review and refinement with recommendations from other members of the task force.

Scarce Energy Land Use Issues

Michael Almon provided multiple chapters from the Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute "Sustainable Community Development Code Framework" document. This research institute is part of Denver's Sturm College of Law. The material is a cross-referenced matrix of actual codes and policies from communities, ranked from "remove obstacles" to "create incentives" and finally, "enact standards". Data in the electronic document is provided as web sites to take the reader directly to any given community's code. This opens up our potential resource bank of the Lawrence Peak Oil Plan materials from which we can draw.

Process, Next Steps and Future Meetings

The group determined that that the August meeting, process for continued discussion and development of recommendations as well as formatting of recommendations should be discussed, possibly along with specifics relating to food/agriculture (feedback on Charles' information), transportation (feedback on Dean's information), and land use (including sustainable land use from Michael's information).

Rex suggested that it would be a lot easier to access and work with these materials electronically, and also be able to respond. Cynthia suggested instead that sub-committees meet more frequently, but no one could afford time for that. So we agreed that we could communicate electronically with each other, and not violate KOMA if we would send messages to Cynthia, and she would forward them to others in the Task Force.

The group should also think about timeline as the initial meeting of the group was in January 2009. The resolution creating the group outlines a recommendation or status update be presented to the City Commission one year from initial meeting of the group.

October meeting discussions could include communications, economy and energy.

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for Thursday, August 27, 2009 at 4:00 p.m.