



Wake County Sustainability Task Force News

Final Sustainability Task Force Meeting

The STF held their final meeting in June. The agenda included finalizing the energy recommendations, discussing some additional energy/sustainability topics that came up, and hearing from task force members about the overall recommendations in general. The final recommendations for Waste, Water, and Energy are on the project website. The supporting chapters for the final report are being written up.

The final recommendations will be presented to the Wake County Board of Commissioners at a work session. The date will be announced on the listserv.

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Final Energy Recommendations

Using task force and presenter input dating back to January 2010, an energy logic model was developed and discussed. The task force comments and the logic model were used to create a first draft of Energy recommendations. These were given to the Energy workgroup which consisted of task force members and resource professionals who provided technical expertise. The work group met twice on 2/21/11 and 4/14/11. Their work became the second draft Energy Recommendations. These were presented to the task force for comment, discussion, and changes on May 19, 2011. The revised Energy Recommendations were sent by email to the task force and then presented for approval on June 16, 2010.

At the meeting the taskforce was asked to use the 5 finger scale to rate the strategies.

1. Endorsement - I really it
2. Endorsement with minor point of contention.
3. Agreement with some reservations
4. Stand aside with major reservations
5. Block- I won't support it and will try to prevent it from being implemented

If a member ranked a strategy as a 5, he/she was asked to submit an alternative opinion. These will be incorporated into the final report along with the recommendations. **END**

Discussion

A suggestion to hire a sustainability manager was brought up by email before the meeting and discussed at the meeting. This discussion encompasses the topics of a sustainability manager, energy manager, and an implementation plan for the recommendations.

Q: Does county have a sustainability manager? A: No.

A sustainability manager would be better than an Energy manager.

I support a sustainable manager

Progressive local governments have them.

A sustainability manager could be marketing aspect.

Other sustainability manager job descriptions have no definition of sustainable.

We have a definition of sustainable and the final report could help determine what a sustainability manager would do.

I'm not particularly in favor of this. Many definitions go back to an international standard so we have come full circle back to what I said I didn't want. It should be environmental stewardship only, not the 3 part definition that includes social equity.

You need to have someone who looks at all the Recommendations, understands them and can give oversight. This can be done through a job description. Someone who has ability to measure the needs and processes.

Given the budget, what position would be cut to make room for this position?

If the job description included a graduate degree in economics, I could support it.

It doesn't need a doctorate degree though.

Isn't this an implementation strategy which we were not doing? Shouldn't the county decide how to do what we want done?

I think this recommendation fits well with what we've done for 18 months.

Sustainability would fit under planning. If you don't have someone that gives this attention this deserves it turns into a report on a shelf

One person isn't going to be able to do this. He/she needs more.

It can start with one person. He/She needs to be a point of contact, a point person. Not a "policeman", but maybe starting as a clearinghouse.

To keep tabs on things, our recommendations must be implemented by staff. We need to charge the current managers to do these things.

What about the scope of this position is it just for Wake County, or is it for citizenry and other local governments.

Patrick asked Emily Barret to comment on the discussion, since she is a Sustainability Manager for the Town of Cary.

Emily – There are different way of doing things like this.

- Hire an energy manager
- Hire a 3rd party – e.g. performance contracting
- It can be good to have a manager in charge when there isn't a budget for projects.
- The position could be funded by savings from other areas.
- When there isn't a person tasked with driving an idea, it often doesn't get done or slacks off.
- This could be an easy rec. to follow through
- Can be money performance related.

Proposal put to 5 finger scale : *

Hire an Energy Manager

- 1 finger: 4
- 2 fingers: 6
- 3 fingers: 6
- 4 fingers: 0
- 5 fingers: 4

**(Facilitators note: In previous 5 finger scale rankings, proposals with 3 or more "5"s were revised or were dropped from consideration. Since this received four "5s" the proposal did not move forward.)*

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The responsible thing to do is identify what position to cut

Energy manager position too narrow.

Where did this come from? We don't seem to have discussed this much. I like the 3rd party tasking. There isn't enough evidence yet to support it.

What is the reasonable expectation that our recommendations will be implemented. There should be a mechanism in place to move this forward.

There are positions currently unfilled in the county.

We haven't gone that far yet – in identifying who, what, where needs to be cut, or what stream to fix.

We believe Wake County should put resources toward a position to get these done.

Wake County should task someone to get this done, whether it is new or current staff, or a 3rd party.

Rather than an energy manager, it should be a broader position, like the previously mentioned sustainability manager. Someone needs to do it.

Proposal put to 5 finger scale : *

Hire a Sustainability Manager

- 1 finger: 4
- 2 fingers: 6
- 3 fingers: 6
- 4 fingers: 0
- 5 fingers: 4

Isn't it implied that the county we want the county to implement our recommendations? Shouldn't it be staff's decision how to do it? It seems odd to say implement what we are telling you to implement.

This is a new position/field that requires technical knowledge that all staff members don't have.

We need some accountability of stewardship of our resources.

Sometimes, even with a warm receptions of recommendations, things fall by the wayside when no one is identified and takes steps to determine how this will be done.

Yes, we should identify ownership of the implementation plan

Identify resources including people for implementation. In the end it will take champions to move this from the commissioners to the programming level.

Identify resources and leadership for implementation of STF recommendations.

How will what is decided today impact the next generation so it doesn't have to be redone in the future.

It seems insulting to tell the commissioners what to do.

Proposal put to 5 finger scale : *

Identify a implementation plan.

- 1 finger: 9
- 2 fingers: 2
- 3 fingers: 1
- 4 fingers: 1
- 5 fingers: 4

The facilitator suggested moving on without including these strategies within the recommendations. She suggested that staff try to reflect the discussion about the need for identifying people to implement the recommendations within the report somewhere.

A suggestion was made to amend strategy #2 to read:

“Educate the residential, commercial, and industrial sectors about *the benefits of energy use, energy conservation and energy efficiency using science-based information. **(original did not include underlined words)*”

Without energy we would be in mud huts. Graph shown earlier in year supports that the country uses energy efficiently.

None of the recommendations are for reducing outputs, just efficiency.

Proposal put to 5 finger scale : *

Add “benefits of energy use” to strategy.

- 1 finger: 2
- 2 fingers: 0
- 3 fingers: 5
- 4 fingers: 3
- 5 fingers: 9

This proposal did not move forward.

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Task force members were asked *What one thing would you want to tell Wake County citizens about the final STF recommendations?*

The STF developed recommendations that are relevant to the current global conditions and concerns important to future quality of life.

The report is important from an environmental, integrity, economic development, and social justice perspective which collectively speak to the future viability of us as a county.

These issues are not of a nature that they can be considered once, their solutions implemented all at once, and then the issues can be thereafter ignored. Mistakes will happen, unintended consequences will occur, and circumstances will change. But I think these topics will deserve attention, consideration, and re-consideration in the years ahead.

As with all collaborative efforts, these recommendations are the result of considerable discussion, debate, and some disagreement. On the whole, these recommendations are a serious attempt to provide input and advice to our policy-makers that will guide decisions for a sustainable future.

The recommendations were made with future generations in mind. Hours of discussion, blood, sweat, and tears went into them with the hopes that their implementation will enhance wake county citizen lives at home, at work and at play. We hope you take them as seriously as we do.

Our intentions were good. It may seem as though we didn't go far enough, but we were a cautious group.

The majority of task force members does not understand the origin of sustainability, or intentionally promote it and the sustainable development movement. This task force chose to adopt a definition of sustainability that is virtually identical

with a philosophy that I oppose because it comes from the original United Nations philosophy of sustainable development that will centralize government and micromanage every facet of life through environmental, economy and social equity. They should reject this definition in favor of supporting the environment through local county values and experience, not through international policy insinuation.

When implemented, these recommendations are meant to enhance the environmental stewardship, quality of life and economic viability of our community for us and for our children

The vision of the STF is to ensure a high quality of life for all of us for decades to come. These recommendations are the steps we need to take as a community to get us there.

The STF did not use academically sound resource economics to develop the recommendations. Most of the recommendations are based on special interest fads.

By complying with the recommendations, you may not live to see the results, but your children and future generations will.

The benefits of compliance are directly proportional to the efforts put forth by individuals.

Overall the sustainability task force recommendations earn a "1" from me on the 5 finger scale [meaning I endorse it and I really like it]

They are not a balanced view and were created in a very backwards/inefficient process. It all started as a positioning/ political agenda and snowballed into nothingness. Sorry - being honest. I believe intentions were good though.

You would be totally surprised at the diverse opinions that were involved in the resulting recommendations.

END

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Some comments were submitted on notecards after the meeting. Because these were not discussed, no action was taken.

Energy Strategy 13 - Support economic development strategies to attract energy-related technology companies to Wake County.

Comment: This sounds good on the surface, but I'm curious what economic development strategies might consist of. Generally, I don't like the idea of any government, local or state, giving tax breaks to companies to move to a specific area. Using the 5-finger scale, I'd consider myself a 3 on this.

Suggested change to Energy Goal D:

Reduce dependence on *fossil fuels and foreign fuel sources.

This covers coal, which is the main fuel for electricity in NC. **(original did not include underlined words)*

Suggested change to Energy Strategy 6:

Support and encourage energy efficiency *and conservation in all buildings not owned or funded by Wake County through the use of audits, retrofits, performance contracting, and retro-commissioning. **(original did not include underlined words)*

END

**The Sustainability Task Force
Recommendations can be found on the
project website: www.ncsu.edu/weco/wake**



The final report is currently being written. All the newsletters and presentations are on the web.

The task force recommendations will be presented to the Wake County Board of Commissioners at a work session, date to be determined. The date for presentation, and updates will be sent out via the sustainability task force listserv.