

## ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING

January 26, 2015

Room 325, Burruss Hall

### MEMBERS:

**Members Present:** Kayla Smith (for Sherwood Wilson), Savita Sharma (for Dwight Shelton), Jason Soileau, Frances Keene, Denny Cochrane, Ruben Avagyan, Steve Mouras, Rob Lowe, Sean McGinnis, John Chermak, Tim Baird, Bruce Obenhaus, Katie Reaves, David Mellichamp, Devita Mccullough.

**Members Absent:** Chris Kiwus, Richard Benson, Sarah Mazza, Josh Barniak, Kaylyn Duda.

**Recorder:** Emily Schosid

**Guests:** Emily Schosid, Rial Carver, Pete Ziegler.

### **1. Welcome & Introductions E&S Committee Members; Review Charge**

Mr. Mouras called the meeting to order at 2:03PM; all members introduced themselves.

### **2. Approval of Proposed Agenda**

Mr. Mouras asked for changes to the agenda, and receiving none, the agenda was approved.

### **3. Approval of November 17, 2014 Minutes**

Mr. Mouras asked for changes to the minutes, and receiving none, the minutes were approved.

### **4. Old Business**

#### **a. 2014-2015 Green RFP Review: Denny Cochrane**

Before Mr. Cochrane started speaking, Mr. Mouras reported that the Commission on University Support approved the second reading of the revised Sustainability Plan. The document is therefore approved. Mr. Cochrane reported that the results of the electronic voting process approved the rank divisions of the 11 projects approved the divisions as presented, though there was some great interest in the Reusable To-Go container project. Similarly, committee voted to keep the rank order proposed for the Category 1 projects. Mr. Cochrane worked with the facilities staff for both Academic and Residence halls to assess the cost estimates for the two water bottle refill station projects. Tim Gift with Housing and Residence Life conducted a water fountain inventory for all Residence Life buildings on campus and in Oak Lane. There are 23 buildings that do not yet have a water bottle refill station, and so that proposal was expanded to place one unit in each building without existing units. The price for the Academic buildings was increased because of the proposed units in McBryde hall needing special casings to deal with the interior Hokie Stone. Mr. Cochrane reported that the total of all category 1 projects is over \$187,000, which is almost as much as the program has been funded in the previous 4 years combined. Mr. McGinnis asked about the cost of the 4 units in McBryde Hall. Mr. Cochrane reported that the cabinets and water bottle stations would cost about \$7000 each. Mr. McGinnis asked if we could not better use that money to install 3 or 4 simpler units somewhere else. Mr. Baird added that it would be a matter of which units would get used the most. Mr. Cochrane said

## ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING

that McBryde is a high-traffic building, which is why he feels it is important to outfit that building. Additionally, the current water fountains are not well-attached to the wall. Mr. Baird asked for more details about the solar table project. Mr. Cochrane said that the project was to fund 2 tables, but that it is an upper-bound cost. A local contractor may be able to provide similar units for less money than proposed. George Mason University has a solar table of the same brand in the proposal, and they report that the table is heavily used and well-liked. Mr. Cochrane ended by thanking the sub-committee for their hard work and to all who provided input.

### **b. Waste Management Program Overview: Denny Cochrane**

Mr. Cochrane gave a detailed overview of the recycling process at Virginia Tech and in Montgomery County. All of the waste created at Virginia Tech is processed at the Montgomery County Solid Waste Authority (MRSWA). This facility has a very low rejection rate (meaning that the waste they receive is not contaminated). Mr. Cochrane then detailed what materials are generated and collected on campus, where the majority of that waste comes from, and who on campus is responsible for the collection of the waste. Virginia Tech contracts with two outside firms to collect waste—Bob’s Refuse Services (BRS) and Allied Waste. Additionally, Virginia Tech has its own team to collect waste in Facility Services. There are some special materials that are dealt with outside of MRSWA (compostable materials, e-waste, waste oil, etc). These materials are known as “primary recycled materials.” Finally, there are some materials that are not recycled, but are reused (in road renovations, Ytoss program, demolition projects, etc). Every year, Mr. Cochrane collects the collections numbers from the primary recycled materials and the reused materials to generate our annual Calendar Year Recycling Rate Report. In 2013, the recycling rate (percentage of total waste that was captured as principal recycled materials) was 43%. The waste diversion rate (which includes materials that were reused as well) was 83%. In total, Virginia Tech kept 17,337 tons of material out of the landfill in 2013. Over time, recycling rates have been trending upwards and trash generation has been steadily declining. Mr. Cochrane then reported on a couple of new initiatives to increase the recycling rates even more. Additionally, as of July 1, 2015, MRSWA will be a single-stream facility, rather than a dual-stream facility. This means that all recyclable materials will be able to go into one bin, rather than separating bottles cans from paper. This will mean some big changes over time in the recycling bins on campus.

## **5. New Business**

### **a. OES Graduate Assistant Application Process: Steve Mouras**

The Office of Energy and Sustainability is looking to replace our graduating graduate student assistant. Mr. Mouras described the details of the position as well as the application process, in case any faculty know of any graduate students who might be a good fit for the position. Applications open on Feb. 2, and will be open for 3 weeks.

### **b. RecycleMania 2015: Emily Schosid**

Ms. Schosid gave a brief overview of the RecycleMania campaign for this year. Mr. Mouras added that the events planned do a good job of complimenting the goals of OES to educate and engage students in the recycling (and other sustainability) program on campus.

## ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING

### **6. Open Discussion**

Ms. Sharma asked about an energy strategic plan. However, Mr. Avagyan decided that it was a little premature to present on that topic this month. It will be presented in February most likely. Mr. Cochrane mentioned that RecycleMania is a great time to do a “spring cleaning” of staff and faculty offices. RecycleMania is not just a student program—staff and faculty can also participate.

**Next Meeting;** February 23, 2015 - Room 325, Burruss Hall

**Adjourned** at 2:49PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Emily Schosid