

## ENERGY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE MEETING

November 17, 2014

Room 325, Burruss Hall

### MEMBERS:

**Members Present:** Kayla Smith (for Sherwood Wilson), Denny Cochrane, Ruben Avagyan, Steve Mouras, Rob Lowe, Sean McGinnis, Bruce Obenhaus, David Mellichamp, Devita Mccullough, Sarah Mazza, Josh Barniak, Savita Sharma (for Dwight Shelton), Kaylyn Duda.

**Members Absent:** Chris Kiwus, Jason Soileau, Frances Keene, John Chermak, Tim Baird, Ashley Folcik, Richard Benson

**Recorder:** Emily Schosid.

**Guests:** Emily Schosid, Stephanie Smith, Peter Ziegler, Bill Hess, Rial Carver, Kitty Zeringue, Anthony Purcell, Joseph Jojonie.

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

Mr. Mouras called the meeting to order at 2:02PM; 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 October 27, 2014 Minutes

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

### 4. New Business

#### **a. Waste Management: Rial Carver and Bill Hess**

Ms. Carver gave an overview of the composting program at VT. All dining halls on campus have compost abilities. Since 2009 4.7 million pounds of food waste has been diverted away from landfills, and Dining Services has invested \$300,000. Dining Services diverts about 600 tons of material every year, which accounts for 27% of the principle recycling materials (without cardboard) 47% with estimates for DS's contribution to cardboard. Without the waste diversion work that DS does, the recycling rate for VT would be closer to 25%, rather than 43% (VT's goal is 50% diversion by 2020). Mr. Hess explained that compost pickups are double the price of trash pickup (which is not the case in most places that see a high compost rate). This cost gets passed on to students who buy meal plans. Next semester, DS will transition from Styrofoam to-go containers to a compostable option. This means that the composting program is going to need to expand beyond the dining facilities. The biggest opportunity is in the residence halls, and conversations are starting with Housing and Res Life about how that program can happen. Hess explained that "in order to be a leader in campus sustainability, a university-wide composting program needs to be a priority." Mr. Cochrane explained that the waste diversion goal was pushed forward from 2025 to 2020 because of the success of the composting program. He explained that the university needs to look at waste more holistically, rather than as parts managed by different groups on campus. Hess explained that the compostable to-go containers are going to cost DS about \$100,000 extra every year, but the entire department has decided that it is the

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best way to stay competitive with other schools. Mr. Purcell explains that DS is simply looking for the best audience to present the issues around expanding the composting program at VT. He explained that the effective management of the composting program will require the work and leadership of lots of different groups on campus. Mr. Hess said that residence hall pilot composting programs may start this spring, with the hope of expanding to all residence halls by fall 2015. Mr. Purcell explained that DS has been working with PME (compost contractor) to increase efficiencies and therefore reduce costs. Mr. Hess asked if there was any conversation about having an on-campus composting facility. Mr. Lowe said that yes, a business plan was put together for a research-based facility that would process organic waste, but it was not funded. This project, however, came up about 10 years ago. Mr. Hess said that the technology has been getting better every year. Colorado State has an anaerobic digester that moves 2000 pounds of material per day. Mr. Lowe said that he still had his notes from the project that was proposed before, and would send the files to Ms. Carver. Ms. Mazza asked if the compostable to-go containers would also be used in all of the franchises as well. Mr. Hess explained that the national chains are still beholden to their corporate standards, but that these standards would be considered when the contracts are being reviewed and renewed. Ms. Mazza also asked whether composting in the residence halls would create pest and odor problems. Mr. Hess explained that the compost bins would be placed outside next to the recycling and trash bins next to each of the residence halls. Mr. Mouras moved the conversation to the next topic in the interest of time, but invited the committee to explore more questions during the open discussion section of the agenda.

### **5. Old Business**

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

Mr. Cochrane gave an overview of the Green RFP program and its purpose. He reminded the committee that the point of the program is to listen to student ideas, and not just advance the projects that are important to the committee. Mr. Cochrane went through the 12 proposals (6 category 1, 5 category 2, and 1 project to be pursued outside of the Green RFP program). He reminded the group that the Budget Office at VT has the lead in determining how to fund the programs, and there is no ceiling in the amount of money that can be applied to Green RFP projects. The goal of the committee is to rank-order the various proposals. Mr. Cochrane informed the committee that they would not be voting on the projects at this session, but that he would be reviewing each of the projects. Mr. Cochrane reviewed all of the Category 1 projects and went over the concerns with the Category 2 projects. Mr. Avagyan asked how the projects were ranked. Mr. Cochrane said they were all very good projects, and the Facilities administrators helped to rank the projects. Mr. Mouras explained that more information would be sent out to the committee and an electronic vote on the rankings would be held before the next committee meeting.

#### **b. Energy Initiatives, Future Plans: Ruben Avagyan**

Mr. Avagyan went through future energy plans for the university. He went through strategic plans, to include defining a clear mission and goal for energy management (is the goal to reduce CO2 emissions or reduce utility costs?), defining energy management targets (what are the various benchmarks for progress?), and defining the resources available for projects as well as what players are needed for the projects to succeed. Finally, a financial plan needs to be put together. Mr. Avagyan began to go through operational strategies going forward. Mr. Mouras stopped the presentation in the interest of time, and tabled the discussion until the next meeting in January. The committee said this would be ok.

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### **c. Residence Hall Energy Competition: Emily Schosid**

Ms. Schosid did a quick overview of the winners of the Turn Down for Watt energy competition. Harper Hall won the Residence Hall division (20% reduction) and Pi Beta Phi won the Oak Lane division (31% reduction). Mr. Avagyan asked who checked the meters, and Ms. Schosid explained that it was VTES. Mr. Jojonie asked how shared meters were dealt with in Oak Lane. Ms. Schosid explained that there is only one shared meter, and the chapters were considered together.

### **d. America Recycles Day Review: Stephanie Smith**

Ms. Smith gave an overview of the America Recycles Day event. Over 200 people stopped by to learn about recycling, including students, faculty, and staff.

## **6: New Business (continued)**

### **b. Goal(s) for this Year: Steve Mouras**

Mr. Mouras said that one potential discussion topic is the apparent need for a campus-wide composting program (as presented by Dining Services). Additionally, the Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority (MRSWA) will be converting to single-stream recycling in July 2015. This will have a big impact on campus. So, one option for the committee would be to explore a campus-wide waste management plan. Mr. Lowe said that a comprehensive waste management plan for the university will be very helpful, especially with some auxiliaries getting involved in better waste management. Mr. Mouras confirmed that the Athletics Department has expressed interest in going zero waste within Lane Stadium. Additionally, OES and Dining Services will be working on one-off zero-waste events like the 3.2 for 32 run, Grad Bash, and others.

### **c. Open Discussion**

None.

**Next Meeting;** January 26, 2015 - Room 325, Burruss Hall

**Adjourned** at 3: 08PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Emily Schosid