

TCLocal Meeting Minutes

November 4, 2006

Roll Call: Jon Bosak, Marty Hiller, Jen Maffet, Ed Mikula, Dave Panofsky, Katie Quinn-Jacobs, Angelika Rumberger, Bethany Schroeder, Simon St. Laurent

Regrets: Joshua Dolan, Denise Mooney, Terry Moore, Merry Muraskin

Election of chair for next six months: No other members volunteered, and all voted to have Jon remain chair of TCLocal.

Postmortems

17 October: Postcarbon Ithaca Outpost meeting (Peak Oil discussion group) — *Bethany et al.* Attendance remains as reported and meetings will continue as long as the group finds them to be useful.

19 October: Presentation at Kendal Continuing Care — *Jon & Bethany*

The audience consisted of just under 30 Kendal residents. Questions and comments were supportive and reasoned.

26 October: Meeting with the Franklin Citizens' Commission on Peak Oil — *Jon & Bethany*

Jon and Bethany met with the Franklin/Treadwell peak oil group. A full accounting of the meeting from the group's organizer can be found at the end of these minutes.

Upcoming TCLocal events

9 November: Invited to discussion following showing of "How Cuba Survived Peak Oil" at Sustainable Tompkins meeting — ***POSTPONED—To be held in January***

28 November: Postcarbon Ithaca Outpost meeting (Peak Oil discussion group) — *Bethany et al.*

Outcome of correspondence with David Mountin (TCAction): David didn't get back to us with status information. The last we heard, he hoped to get funding from NYSERDA for a local energy conference, with which TCLocal was prepared to help.

Outcome of attempts to engage candidates for 24th Congressional District

[Update] Press release from the CNY Peak Oil group with statements from the candidates; circulation to Sustainable Tompkins and now to TCLocal:

CITIZENS' GROUP URGES CANDIDATES IN 24TH CD TO ACKNOWLEDGE PEAK OIL

PRESENTATIONS ON THE GROWING CRISIS MADE TO ALL THREE CAMPAIGNS
With the support of the Peak Oil Awareness / Central New York (POA_CNY) discussion group, member Jason Brenno of Harpursville contacted the campaigns of each of the three candidates for Congress in the 24th Congressional District. Mr. Brenno was able to make presentations to the key staff of both Mike Arcuri, the Democrat, and Ray Meier, the Republican, explaining the importance of beginning now to take steps to deal with the imminent peaking of global

production of oil and natural gas and the permanent decline of supplies that will follow the peak. Jon Bosak of TCLocal (formerly the Tompkins County Relocalization Project) made a similar presentation to Mike Sylvia, the Libertarian candidate.

Each candidate was sent several statements from U.S. Government and oil industry sources, including the following from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and from a study made for the Department of Energy:

The doubling of oil prices from 2003-2005 is not an anomaly, but a picture of the future. Oil production is approaching its peak; low growth in availability can be expected for the next 5 to 10 years. As worldwide petroleum production peaks, geopolitics and market economics will cause even more significant price increases and security risks. One can only speculate at the outcome from this scenario as world petroleum production declines. The disruption of world oil markets may also affect world natural gas markets since most of the natural gas reserves are collocated with the oil reserves.... The days of inexpensive, convenient, abundant energy sources are quickly drawing to a close.... World oil production is at or near its peak and current world demand exceeds the supply.

Energy Trends and Their Implications for U.S. Army Installations. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, September 2005

The peaking of world oil production presents the U.S. and the world with an unprecedented risk management problem. As peaking is approached, liquid fuel prices and price volatility will increase dramatically, and, without timely mitigation, the economic, social, and political costs will be unprecedented. Viable mitigation options exist on both the supply and demand sides, but to have substantial impact, they must be initiated more than a decade in advance of peaking.

Peaking of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation, and Risk Management. SAIC report to the U.S. Department of Energy, February 2005

Mr. Brenno asked the candidates to provide to the group a written statement that acknowledges the urgency of the Peak Oil question and commits to do the following:

1. Publicly recognize the seriousness of the problem and work to begin preparations.
2. Seek membership on one of the House energy committees and join the House Peak Oil Caucus.
3. Dedicate competent staff resources to studying mitigation options.
4. Work with a non-partisan peak oil group comprised of concerned citizens in the 24th District that is open to any US citizen residing in the 24th District, to assist congressional staff in educating themselves and constituents on energy resource issues.

The campaign of Mike Arcuri, the Democratic candidate, sent the following response:

As a member of Congress, Mike Arcuri will seek bipartisan solutions to America's energy

problems. He will study the issues, and will dedicate staff resources to this end. He believes that America needs an energy plan that helps protect our environment, and takes into account that oil and gas are finite resources.

State Senator Ray Meier, the Republican candidate, replied:

Studies have shown that we have reached and probably have passed the peak of world oil production. Assuming that this is true, this means less than half of the world's oil reserve is left in the Earth. The United States consumes 25% of all oil used in the world, while we only have about 2% of the world's remaining oil supply. Therefore, we import much more than we produce for ourselves. We must immediately use conservation and energy efficiency to reduce our demand for oil. Alternative and renewable energy sources must begin to replace oil -- oil that we are not going to have as we move further away from 50% of remaining oil in the Earth toward zero percent. The high cost of oil and gas is particularly burdensome for Upstate New Yorkers, farmers, and businesses. Therefore, to keep jobs in Upstate and wean ourselves off of oil and gas dependency, we should work together to develop low-cost, alternative sources of energy. As Congressman, I would like to serve on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which will result in my staff for this committee dedicating a substantial amount of time to addressing energy issues. In addition, I will look to join fellow House members, either via a Caucus or other means, to promote energy research and development and to encourage the increased production and consumption of alternative sources of energy. Lastly, I would like to form an Upstate New York energy focus group that consists of a range of interested persons, including Upstate New York elected officials, conservationists, scientists, inventors, agricultural interests, and members of the local business community, and others to work toward helping Upstate New York to be the frontrunner in alternative energy production.

Mike Sylvia, the candidate of the Libertarian Party for the 24th CD seat, responded as follows:

I understand that preparing for problems relating to Peak Oil will take decades. In order to avoid a worst case outcome, we need to focus on starting work very soon. I am very interested in studying mitigation options and will seek membership on House energy committees. I will also join the House Peak Oil Caucus. I will commit staff to research this issue in alliance with a non-partisan group which includes citizens of the 24th District.

For more information on Peak Oil and the relocalization of economies, please visit POA_CNY@yahoogroups.com and join the discussion group. Or contact Jason Brenno at sjbrenno@yahoo.com or 607.693.2013.

[New] Jason Brenno (above) has proposed developing an advisory group to the winner in the 24th: Simon is willing to consider joining the group in the future.

Major development: October adoption of Peak Oil amendment to Economic Development plan by Tompkins County Legislature. The amendment's resolution language included the following paragraph:

RESOLVED, further, That as part of fulfilling the Economic Development mission of cultivating "a prosperous and sustainable regional economy", the Tompkins County Legislature calls on TCAD and its collaborators to recognize the need to grapple with how

best to respond to peak oil locally, and, in addition to the three goals enumerated in the Economic Development Strategy, to also focus on ways to help our local economy incorporate renewable energy, remain healthy in the face of the “peak oil” economic challenge, and move in the direction of being able to provide us locally with needed goods and services.

TCLocal members agreed that we should attempt to follow-up with TCAD. For example, TCAD conducts a survey among local businesses. Could we get some peak oil questions included in the survey that focus on the way we assess localization in TCLocal research. Kate suggested that a TCLocal representative meet with Martha Armstrong. We should also learn more about the ED Collaborative. **AI: Jon** to follow-up with Martha; **Simon** and **Katie** to stay alert to ED activity. **Simon** to check his contacts as well.

Research progress reports (all):

Simon: Now researching recycling asphalt and rebuilding of roads.

Angelika: will attend conference on fruit trees next week and hopes to begin writing soon.

Jen and Ed: working on wind, including metering; Jen has lots of literature, which she'll post; has also found information from the Farm Service Administration for grants related to new farmers. Jen recommended that members check out what Steve Case at AOL is doing (Google “revolution.”)

Marty: Still buried.

Kate: Read Who Moved My Cheese; attended recent transformative change presentation; continues with preparedness: doing root cellar experiments and keeping records of results.

Bethany: continues to read what she can find and to learn more about the system from within TC Public Health.

Jon: Has had further thoughts on possible relocation awareness event. Jon wondered whether we could attract more participation by offering course credit for student attendees. IC is willing, through the graciousness of Marian Brown, to provide an auditorium on a Saturday. Jen asked how we would prevent preaching to the choir. No votes taken, but most members of the group have doubts about this project. Jon will continue to think about how to keep it simple.

Action Item review

Marty: Provide mail list contacts for Small Farms and CU Extension—speaking opportunities—will try to locate information—**pending**

Jon: Post six Dmitry Orlov articles to the psych/soc area of the repository—**done**

Jon: Ask Dave to add Merry to the contributors list (research area: Soil)—will get to Merry re: where?

Jon: Assign Denise to Water research area--**pending**

Other business: Marty: Treea and IC had campus sustainability day with panel discussion about possibility of putting wind farm in Enfield (Buck Hill). A local developer hopes to get big wind farm equipment in the fields. Views this as a community-invested project. Bought land in Enfield because the area has no zoning. NY State plans to provide a subsidy in the near future (State has a commitment to get wind going).

John Miller's offer to help with TCLocal development: review next meeting.

Next meeting: January 13, 4-6; with potluck to follow at Denise's house,

THE FRANKLIN CITIZENS' COMMISSION ON PEAK OIL

The October meeting was held in Treadwell on October 26 in the United Methodist Church. We were joined by Jon Bosak and Bethany Schroeder of TCLocal (formerly the Tompkins County Relocalization Project).

Others present included (if I leave someone out, my apologies; I misplaced my list): Colleen & Daniel Blacklock, Brian Brock, David Cyr, Mark Davies, Brandon Dennis, Carole and Gene Marner, George Schwinn, Ellen Sokolow.

Our guests explained that the group changed their name to TCLocal because the idea of relocalization was confused by some with relocation which is, of course, precisely the opposite idea.

The meeting was largely occupied with explaining to each other what we were up to and trying to make sense of the difficulties both groups encounter. The central issue appears to be how to persuade those who have not yet understood the implications of Peak Oil to recognize the inevitability of relocalization. In other words, no matter what other economic, geopolitical, or environmental crises may develop over the coming years, Peak Oil and the consequent decline in personal, societal, and economic mobility will inevitably make us more dependent on local resources and local economies. We'll be using less energy and getting more local. The question remains how best to communicate this to local town and county governments.

Most of us are familiar with the Tompkins County Relocalization Plan Outline. Jon explained that their group had decided not to proceed with the huge hierarchical plan that the outline envisioned since the County Commissioners would probably not welcome a fat volume of prescriptions for post-Peak actions. Instead, they decided to bite off smaller chunks of the outline, research them, and write very accessible papers that would be made widely available in the community.

They have a well-developed website at <http://www.tclocal.org/> that includes a growing library of information relating to Tompkins County, most of which is equally applicable to our own area of Central New York.

George Schwinn observed that Delaware County is a large area with a relatively weak county government and so the Towns assume much responsibility, and asked if the same was true in Tompkins. Jon noted that, in New York State, Towns are a control point as they have charge of zoning.

Brandon Dennis described his own Peak Oil presentation to the Treadwell Community Improvement group, using a set of video clips he had put together from various sources. He went on to explain that when our group started out, we had an idea of developing a plan for the Town of Franklin but soon realized that no one knows about Peak Oil. His own personal mission is to get to know his immediate neighbors, offer them copies of his DVD about Peak Oil and work at increasing their awareness of PO. He also described our efforts to develop several databases: Food Security Network, Skills Exchange, Goods Exchange, Ride-sharing.

Bethany noted that they were trying to develop a presentation about PO that emphasizes opportunities. They would end up with a presentation, Jon added, that says: now that you understand that relocalization is inevitable, let's look at the advantages. Wal-Mart goes away, small markets return, local retail and local manufacturing return, agriculture - which has been devastated in this part of the country - becomes an economic opportunity and high status occupation.

Bethany said that one of their members has her own website: Prepared Tompkins at <http://preparedtompkins.org/> where she discusses preparations for Peak Oil and other emergencies at the household level.

Through Prepared Tompkins they have a canning group where they try to renew the skills our grandparents all had and learn from one another about managing gardens, water supplies, and the like.

Brandon emphasized that our educational efforts are predicated on planting a seed of information so that when the peak arrives and decline sets in, people will understand what is happening to them and not be so ready to seek out scapegoats. I mentioned our plan to publish on our home printer a local newspaper - called The New Franklin Register - to be distributed free in the Town. It's goal will be educating people about the facts of Peak Oil and making them aware of the databases that Brandon mentioned earlier for cataloging local resources. Much discussion ensued on how difficult it is to get people to take on this information.

George Schwinn noted that an aspect of relocalization is that the family becomes responsible for its own survival and well-being, growing and canning food, for example, and notes that, when they needed to do such things, people were more realistic about what it takes to survive.

David Cyr observed that people used to have lots of children to provide labor for those efforts, a solution that is no longer feasible in a vastly overpopulated world. Carole said that cooperative and community responses are the necessary alternative.

The meeting concluded with some discussion of "BUY LOCAL" campaigns, permaculture and local currencies.
