

Minutes for the TCLocal Meeting

February 3, 2007

Guest introductions & new members (if any)

Jon Bosak, Josh Dolan, Jen Maffet, Ed Mikula, Rob Morache, Dave Panofsky, Angelika Rumberger, Simon St. Laurent, Bethany Schroeder

Postmortems

19 January: Meeting with legislative aide to Senator Clinton in Washington (also: following up with Maurice Hinchey), with a letter to the aide and a summary of the meeting (appended to these minutes).

AI: Simon to arrange meeting with Hinchey; coordinate with Jon.

Ed interjected that he'd been looking into the farm-to-schools concept, as well as small-scale production over factory farming and diversity over monocropping, and bills related to farm subsidies granted every five years. **AI:** Ed will send URLs so that Jon can send to Clinton's office and to our members.

Note: we're omitting the monthly Peak Oil discussion group meetings from this list; they're continuing as usual and will be reported on if anyone has questions.)

Upcoming TCLocal events

Possible meeting with Quakers 6 March. **AI:** Simon will let us know ASAP.

Correspondence, Representation, and Local Requests and Resources

Correspondence with Don Barber regarding the TCCOG: Jon tried to arrange a presentation, which TCCOG declined.

Appointment to Mayor's Local Action Plan Steering Committee: Jon will serve as TCLocal's representative. The group was formed to focus on local policies for reducing green house gases.

Report on TCAT Advisory Group meeting 8 January: Jon is representing TCLocal with TCAT.

Request from Jennifer Dotson (vice chair of city board for public works) for input on City of Ithaca water plant decision. Jon and Bethany met with Jennifer and agreed to ask whether anyone in TCLocal is able to render an opinion about this decision. **AI:** Jon will provide the available documents to Jen, who agreed to render an opinion. Draft is due one week in advance of TCLocal meeting March 3.

Contacts for discussion of local natural gas: **AI:** Jon will arrange a meeting with Bill Hecht, a contact through Sustainable Tompkins, to get the available data, and will store the information until TCLocal has a researcher for this area. Ed and Jen noted that a fair amount of natural gas has been drilled for in Stueben county. The western part of the county has been extensively drilled, but more resource may be available in the east, enough of a resource, perhaps, to be significant. Ed noted that the gas is generally consumed within three years.

Earth Day planning: Kate attended the planning meeting; report deferred until Kate is available to make it. **AI:** Bethany to get report from Kate in email and to coordinate with Kate, as needed.

Sustainability column for Tompkins Weekly: Each community group select by Sustainable Tompkins will contribute an article about every 15 weeks. Advertising a TCLocal event in the Tompkins Weekly is a possibility; usual fees apply.

TCLocal project business and reports

Corrected Peak Oil Quotes flyer: Jon asked for further input on the flyer. **AI:** Jon will send the electronic version of the flyer to Angelika, who will work on improvements.

Revisions to “Urban Design” library structure: **AI:** Josh and Rob will talk about structure and email to group with a proposal.

Research progress reports

Dave: leaving Ithaca for Berkeley; wants to stay in touch. Will serve as our *pro bono* energy consultant; promises email access in perpetuity.

Jen: working on small wind and on developing some fast facts on ethanol.

Ed: good progress with greenhouse; growing microgreens; working on heat in compost; wants to begin documenting observations in 3-4 weeks.

Angelika: has found an orchard to begin working with.

Simon: to begin writing on roads and bridges; has begun to develop a vision of what road system could look like.

Josh: doing some interviews to help with his area, including Vicky Romanoff; John Rodgers, formerly from INHS. Developing more direction for urban design work

Rob: will be working with Josh; has been developing designs for last 5 years; opines that nodalization is necessary to sustainability.

Bethany: continues to gather data.

We asked where heating goes—under shelter or in its own category? **AI:** The group agreed to consider the question and talk about our thoughts at the next meeting.

Research paper formats: We’ll devote half of next meeting to a discussion. Our hope is to arrive at some consensus among members.

Research paper publishing sequence: We agreed that we need coherence via general principles, which will nonetheless be fluid enough to allow for subsequent differing styles of presentation. Jon will develop a sidebar of three short paragraphs about “what is energy descent?” to be included with each of the white papers. We need a graphic designer to make us a logo. **AI:** Rob may have access to someone.

Action Item review

Marty: Provide mail list contacts for Small Farms and CU Extension—we’ll quit carrying this item.

Jon: Acknowledge Denise as water historian on members list—**pending**

Jon: Add Rob Morache to contributors and members lists—**done**

All: Think about possible relocalization awareness event (how to contribute; whether worth doing). Josh recommended that we consider giving a presentation at the Northeast Permaculture conference in July. **AI:** Josh will get the information to the group.

Links on ethanol and wind thread (on ST?): **AI:** Jon to Jen.

Potluck at Jon and Bethany's house

Attachment: Follow-up message to Senator Clinton's energy advisor

Subject: RE: Peak Oil Presentation
From: bosak@ibiblio.org
Date: Fri, January 19, 2007 6:21 pm
To: "Utech, Dan (Clinton)" <Dan_Utech@clinton.senate.gov>

Hello Dan,

Thanks very much for meeting with me Friday afternoon.

To summarize, my purpose was threefold:

1. To establish contact between Senator Clinton's office and NYS peak oil and relocalization efforts
2. To offer our services as resources on energy issues
3. To determine the current state of the Senator's understanding of the situation that confronts us

In particular, I was concerned to ensure that Senator Clinton understands the following:

- That we will be using much less energy in the future (this is what we call "energy descent")
- That there is no way to avoid energy descent (not ethanol or biofuel or nuclear or hydrogen or....)
- That the implications of energy descent (whether achieved voluntarily through efforts to reduce greenhouse gases or forced on us by Peak Oil) include the following:
 - An inescapable reduction in our material standard of living
 - An almost certain economic collapse
 - A radical shortening of manufacturing and distribution supply chains

- Rising food prices
- A much more local way of life

I further stated as my opinion that the best near-term policy moves for Senator Clinton (given current political realities) are:

1. To start promoting the one effort that is both clearly to our advantage in terms of energy consumption and could also be sold as a jobs creation program, namely rebuilding the nation's rail infrastructure
2. To stop representing biofuels as a solution to the energy problem
3. To form or join a Senate Peak Oil caucus similar to the one in the House

I noted that there are a number of other actions we should be taking that are extremely difficult politically. These include a substantial mandatory annual reduction in energy use; a program to encourage people to start growing a significant portion of their own food; and a program to encourage the repopulation of our rural landscape. The groups I was representing today would welcome the opportunity to propose more specific policies, but perhaps the most important objective at the moment is to ensure that Senator Clinton understands the problem even if it is not politically possible now to urge policies that would directly address it.

With regard to your skepticism about Pimentel's estimate of the EROI of ethanol, I will forward in a separate message a set of concerns that summarizes the case against ethanol better than I was able to in our meeting.

I hope you found the quotations useful; I would be glad to send you an electronic version of the piece if you would like to reproduce it.

As to further reading, I recommended that you begin with Heinberg's two books /The Party's Over/ and /Powerdown/. And I urged you (and everyone else in an advisory role to Congress) to read the SAIC report to DOE entitled "Peaking of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation, and Risk Management," a copy of which can be downloaded from here:

http://www.netl.doe.gov/publications/others/pdf/Oil_Peaking_NETL.pdf

A followup to this study titled "Economic Impacts of Liquid Fuel Mitigation Options" can be found at

<http://www.netl.doe.gov/publications/others/pdf/Hirsch042506.pdf>

As I said during our discussion, however, I believe that many of the actions urged by the authors are ruled out by their

potentially catastrophic contribution to global warming.

Thank you again for the opportunity to engage on this topic, and please feel free to contact me if I or the groups working upstate can provide further input. I'm sure that we would all welcome the chance to meet with Senator Clinton if she ever finds herself in our part of the world.

Best regards,

Jon

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Jon Bosak
Chair, TCLocal
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