

Minutes for TCLocal Meeting

September 8, 2007

Roll Call: Jon Bosak, Chris Peters, Bethany Schroeder, Simon St. Laurent

Reports

TCAT Advisory Group (*Jon*): No meeting in August.

Local Action Plan Energy Policy Committee meeting 17 July (*Jon*): The committee finished its report and will make its work available to the pertinent regional groups.

Upcoming TCLocal events

Resolution requesting the formation of an Energy and Resource Planning Task Force of the Environmental Management Council to assess Tompkins County's exposure to diminishing supplies of oil and natural gas and make recommendations to address vulnerabilities will be made to the PDEQ Committee meeting, 3:45 p.m. Monday, September 10, Tompkins County Courthouse Conference Room. TCLocal members are welcome to join Jon at the presentation.

Presentation to Back to Democracy, 7 p.m., Friday 26 October, Trumansburg (location to be announced).

Tabling at events

Members discussed whether tabling is a productive use of the organization's time. We agreed that events like Earth Day are probably worth stretching our resources for. Education is a big part of our purpose, but given the small number of people involved in our work we should be careful not to over-extend ourselves. We agreed that tabling could be helpful to the organization at specific, targeted events, which should be carefully chosen.

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Homegrown, drupal, Serendipity, DocMgr, or what?

We're currently using Dave's software, which he's had a hard time maintaining. Dave wondered whether we could switch to an open-source product. Jon has had lots of complaints about the ease-of-use with the current software. Jon and Simon agree that any software program will be beset with its own problems. Simon wondered whether we could use blogging software.

We agreed that we exist to express a point of view that isn't being expressed elsewhere.

E asked what we are beyond an organization that may or may not be operating in parallel with another task force. Our purposes follow:

1. standing for a particular point of view
2. educate
3. developing plans for the future in which we experience energy descent

With a view to working within our goals, can we do something besides paper-oriented plans/white papers?

Simon noted there are other ways to write about descent issues meaningfully on line—not as a replacement for the repository, but as something more in the moment.

Jon suggested that the right software product would allow for the push of our writing and the pull of community members' responses.

Simon said that we should maintain the repository but have something that allows the community to ask questions and to make observations.

Jon pointed out that we could make announcements on the Sustainable Tompkins listserv, among others, about documents available for comment. He also expressed concern that the discussion could get stale without daily maintenance.

We all discussed whether we could present issue-oriented opinions on a monthly basis, in the form of a hot topic that needs the public forum for its full expression? Simon opined that we have a wealth of information in the group, that anyone in TCLocal could write on anything within his or her scope. Somehow we need to merge the formal with the interactive.

AI: Simon will organize a document with various examples for TCLocal members to assess. The goal is to get ideas from the members in time for more of a discussion at the October meeting. [After the meeting, Simon and Jon developed a new plan based on new information. Come to the next meeting to learn more!]

Chris wondered about the main purpose of getting feedback. He liked the idea of deadlines, etc.

What would be accomplished? Getting useful input; publicity for TCLocal and energy descent; a place for people to share ideas and engage in correspondence.

Tie-in with closely related efforts

Members agreed we should develop pointers for the sustainability groups we support, like Prepared Tompkins and the Buy Local Campaign. Jon will confer with Dave.

We wondered whether inviting groups to our meetings to share information about their projects would be a benefit to our members.

All further items for discussion or report were tabled until the following meeting.

Next meeting

October 6, 5-7