



Village Vancouver Energy Network



Meeting Minutes – April 19, 2010

Meeting place: Home of Ann Pacey

Present: Ann Pacey, Ross Moster, Ian Wood, Yee Tong, Nick Grabovac, Brookes B., Cloud, and Randy Chatterjee

Introduction and Sharing Interests

Ross set out 3 areas of team focus: Education, Action, and longer-term Planning. He also stipulated that successful VV community efforts should come through people acting out of their own interests, closing one's own place to contribute, work, or find enjoyment.

Cloud, with a background in energy management and training from BCIT, is concerned primarily with energy conservation and focussing on the biggest producers of carbon, in this order: buildings, transportation, industry, air travel, the dairy & beef industry, and long-distance goods sourcing. She feels this list is an important first start and leads to stronger consideration of local travel, weather-proofing and renewable energy generation in buildings, reforming or avoiding the dairy and beef industry, improving transit and sustainable transportation modes, and always seeking to source goods purchases locally. She is an experienced facilitator of programs, telephone surveys, launching pilot programs, and wants to learn more about change management and working with children. She decried the low cost of energy in the LM as the source of many problems with conservation and renewable energy programs. She mentioned the importance of education and outreach, through libraries or other community meeting places, to engage people in making changes to their homes or lifestyles.

Brooks is a student of international studies at SFU, cares about recycling of soft plastics, the use of biodegradable packaging, the value of hemp as a sustainable source of fibre, and general policy & research.

Nick, a father of three, has taken permaculture design courses and feels this experience has sent him and his family on a tumultuous journey on the path to ask: What does it mean to live sustainably in a city? How self-reliant are or can we be? He is interested in ethanol from cellulose as a source of fuel, citing the circa 50,000 tonnes of collected yard waste in Vancouver each year that could be made into tens of millions of litres of ethanol (20–40 million estimated). He is also interested in generating methane from sewage as another energy source. He has a 20'x20' garage, with 15' ceiling and no windows, which could be a working space for experimenting with local ethanol/econol/miconol/sustinol production from local cellulosic waste. He has some mouldering wood chips that may provide a first source of material

Yee's background is in statistics and biochemistry at SFU, has worked as a professional chef, and is learning organic farming at UBC. He has a strong interest in passive solar and solar thermal technology, and is looking for ideas and ways to implement changes in how we live with our environment. He recommends the



book Sol Viva by Anna Edey (http://www.solviva.com/solviva_book.htm, ISBN: 0-9662349-0-1, published by Trailblazer Press, 1998) on high productivity, sustainable farming techniques.

Yee's comments:

There is a place for everyone here. This group and all VV working groups are a place for you to sow your own seeds or join in on others' projects.

Some universal goals of the Energy Group would be:

- Increase Awareness (each others' and greater outreach)*
- Prioritize and align and co-ordinate individual efforts within and between Villages.*
- Develop and implement elements of a Village Energy Model.*

Here are some modes of participation and action:

- 1. Education/Outreach: administer it and/or receive it.*
- 2. Research & Project Development*
- 3. Planning including EDAP (Energy Decent Action Plan)*
- 4. Networking (alliances and new members).*

8 members met at our first meeting at Ann's wonderful heritage home, and afterwards, I felt energized by the focus and spirit of this group. I learned so much and have refined my understanding of embodied energy in concrete and solar panels thanks to Randy; air-travel to dairy from Cloud; spaghetti and wheelbarrows, Ross, and more... I now have a better idea of what projects this group is interested in and in the best position to move ahead in.

This discussion can serve as a starting point for us to re-envision how we might apply ourselves to achieve our individual, collective, and outreach goals as a part of Vancouver's transition towards resilient villages scale communities.

Where neighbors network, support, and assist one another in mutually beneficial relationships.

Let this be an open discussion of our goals, visions, information resource sharing, and also the start of a catalogue of various resources including: suppliers, websites, books, multimedia, people, and places.

Also, this is where we can inspire and refine each other's visions and share ideas about how to do what we are already doing and beyond.

Ian Wood, a mechanical engineering, is the father or three young women and worked in plastics manufacturing for medical rehabilitation products. He has attended the Vancouver Peak Oil Meet-Up group and has worked with renewable energy installers using solar thermal technologies for homes, apt buildings, and community centres. He shared frustrations with building codes that made it prohibitively expensive to install these systems, often as much as twice as high in cost as "advertised," and resulting in few actual projects getting finished. He discussed backflow prevention valves and the need for costly annual inspections



and efficiency losses using required double-wall heat exchangers. He also has a passion for bamboo as a building material and for bicycle trailers to haul materials.

Ann is a chemical engineer by training, and has recently worked as a mining industry engineer in Latin America. Her interest in the TT movement is to find ways for the community to engage in expanding conservation.

Potential VV Projects

Nick – **Producing local Econol/Miconol/Sustinol (ethanol)** as a fuel source from waste cellulose (yard waste/clippings) that are currently trucked to Delta and composted by the city at a huge carbon cost and with huge additional CO2 losses. The process would generate both a source of energy and multiple other downstream materials of value, such as garden compost. Rural India produces and uses small biogas generators for composting food waste, which creates fuel for cooking.

Cloud – discussed an **Australian program of deploying a neighbourhood conservation team** to descend on a few blocks of a community on a weekend to assess and then implement conservation measures in a proactive, comprehensive, and efficient manner.

Randy – discussed **TwinHarvest**, www.twinharvest.org, Diane Lafontaine's Broccoli Garden project that the City of Vancouver is thus far unwilling to give a fair shake. It combines horizontal geotransfer technology with urban organic farming to make better use of urban green space.

Regarding **urban agriculture**, we discussed that scale was not always critical, and plots of less than an acre (half hectare) had value for efficient food production. Ross noted that backyard agriculture could be more productive than retail agriculture.

We had a larger group discussion around **VV capacity-building**, especially around finances for local projects, even if just for printing and outreach. Setting up a formal society structure and then moving toward charitable status was identified as a high priority goal for the central group. We noted that TT groups were well positioned to use government grants to facilitate Energy Descent, implement Kyoto commitments, and improve community resilience. TT Totnes has received a 600 pound grant from the English government to work further on its programs.

Action Steps and Plans

We plan to meet again in three weeks to identify 3–4 projects that we could take on as a group, with selected leadership teams for each one, and also to add other potential projects to a longterm wishlist for our Energy Descent Action Plan.

We agreed to blog or add comments within discussion groups to the website to come up with these projects and find resources to begin implementing them.

Next Meeting: June 3, 5–7 PM, Ann's Home