

EnviroAlums

Steering Committee Meeting

Lewis Center, 2nd floor conference room

24 April 2010; 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon

Present: Carl McDaniel, Maggie Zimmer [in Lewis Center] and Michael Bobker, Andrew deCoriolis, Meredith Dowling, Anders Ferguson, Walt Galloway, John Petersen, Pat Cobb Tarnow [via teleconference].

Absent: Andrew Barnett, Susan Bernat, Kristin Braziunas, Lewis Gilbert, John Schaefer, Rob Stenger, and Karen Florini (Board Liaison).

Guest: Bill Barlow (Vice President for Development and Alumni Affairs)

October Environmental Reunion Weekend

Meredith Dowling '06, Walter Galloway '69, Carl McDaniel '64, and Margaret Zimmer '11 drafted an article that appeared in the Alumni Magazine, Winter 2009-10, pg 29, with the title of *Waste Nothing—Not Even a Crisis*. The reunion brought together 150 people from the college and town to consider turning “the current economic and climate destabilization crises into opportunities to foster environmental sustainability.”

Many positive comments were given during and after the weekend. Several Steering Committee members were impressed with the session on Saturday morning that showed city, college, and local citizens were united in addressing together sustainability, both economic and environmental. Anders Ferguson and Walt Galloway noted positive networking outcomes—initiating together an Oberlin-Cleveland project titled “Sustainable Northeast Ohio 2019” and Anders Ferguson joined E’s Steering Committee—and with David Orr events bookending the weekend, the weekend foreshadowed the Oberlin Project and Oberlin being designated the 18th city in the Clinton Foundation/United States Green Building Council Climate Positive Development Program (see below).

Michael Bobker noted that too many events were scheduled for Saturday afternoon and suggested future events consider fewer concurrent events. Walt Galloway suggested we consider what worked and didn’t work. This would be useful to the Alumni Office that coordinates affiliate group reunions and strives to incorporate into future events lessons from earlier reunions.

Tenth Anniversary Celebration of the Lewis Center

Carl McDaniel announced that a major event to celebrate the history, influence, and spin-offs from the Lewis Center and to launch The Oberlin Project (see below) is scheduled for 11-12 October 2010 in Oberlin. Many alumni as well as accomplished people in the ecological design and sustainability movements will be involved in the event. Put dates on your calendar and plan to attend.

Environmental Careers Speaker Series

Maggie Zimmer reported that her committee of three students (Tim Ballard, Savannah Sullivan, Maggie Zimmer) had four speakers during the spring semester: 27 Oct 09, Steve Bollens '82, Washington State University, *The Role of Plankton in Estuaries and Coastal Ecosystems: Integrated Basic and Applied Science*; 22 Feb 10, Corienne Alexander '93, Purdue University, *The Food vs. Fuel Debate: Insights for an Extension Economist*; 4 Mar 10, Karen Florini '79,

Environmental Defense, *Climate Change Policy, Politics, and Personnel: A View from Washington*; 15 April 10; Charles Newcomb '87, Seminar: NextGen Energy Partners, *Wind: Our Future, Its Future*. Talks had attendance ranging from 25 to 45. Each speaker also met with from 5 to 8 students for a meal and discussion of life after Oberlin and paths into environmental careers.

Carl McDaniel noted that Charles Newcomb also met with local officials (Oberlin Municipal Light and Power System people, city manager, city council representative and past president, and Lorain County Sustainability Coordinator) to discuss the wind and PV projects NextGen Energy Partners is currently doing in OH.

Student Projects Funded by EnviroAlums

E had about half a dozen requests and funded two to date. We supported first publication of Headwaters Magazine (<http://www.youwillneverfind.us/creative2010/erika/Headwaters.html>) and funded the Commencement/Reunion Bike Co-op program of bike rentals and educational events.

Oberlin—College and City—Designated as 18th Climate Positive Development Program City in a Joint Program of the Clinton Foundation Climate Initiative and the US Green Building Council

Carl McDaniel commented on the designation. The Clinton Foundation Climate Initiative started in 2006 and has about 40 projects. The Climate Positive Development Program started in 2009 and has 18 projects. No money is provided but help in achieving the climate positive goal is provided. Oberlin was selected because of the unique city and college relationship that has been reflected in numerous ways including the recent effort of members of Oberlin College community and local citizens to get off coal as the energy source for electricity.

City and College are digesting exactly what is involved. For starters, the college has to replace coal for steam generation and both town and city have to use electricity not produced with fossil fuels. Landfill gas is a possibility that is being pursued along with wind and PV, intermittent sources that do not directly cover base load.

A down to brass tacks conversation followed. Carl McDaniel wondered what climate positive really means: Do all activities by all members of the college and city have to result in no release of heat trapping gases? In the extreme this would mean that each person's part of US energy use would have to be considered. The US uses annually 100 quads of energy (a quad = 10^{15} BTU) or 350 million BTU/person. One million BTU can be produced in a year by a person pedaling a bicycle fast enough to light a 100 Watt bulb for 10 hours/day, 6 days/week, and 50 weeks/year (most of us couldn't do this). That is, each person has 350 energy persons working for him/her every day to maintain his/her energy dependent lifestyle.

John Petersen stated that the visionary people in Oberlin are going further and further out on the limb of sustainability hoping for support. The Oberlin Project is a large vision that goes beyond the numerous individual projects that are for the most part not connected. The college has adopted LEED Silver and pushes for Gold in all new construction. But we are resource constrained. In the Asia House renovation, the roof but not the walls were insulated—the next renovation will be in perhaps 50 years. We are discussing retrofitting the Science Center lighting, but the ventilation system is far more challenging because of the original design and may or may not be improved. The Oberlin Project requires cultural transformation and there is

always resistance to change, even modest change. This cultural transformation is a new challenge for all of us at the college and in the city.

An Initiative between Oberlin and Cleveland for a Sustainable NE Ohio

Walt Galloway briefly described the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) process that is “a collaborative search to identify and understand an organization’s or a region’s strengths, the greatest opportunities, and people’s aspirations and hopes for the future.” Last August an AI summit titled “Sustainable Cleveland 2019” was held in Cleveland. This will be an annual summit with the next summit scheduled for 22-24 September 2010.

On 7 April 2010, Walt Galloway and Anders Ferguson brought together in Oberlin eight people including Alan Hecht (Director of Sustainable Development, EPA, Office of Research and Development, David Orr, and Roger Saillant (Executive Directory, Fowler Center for Sustainable Value, Case Western Reserve University) to discuss for three hours the possible collaborations among the various sustainability initiatives in the Cleveland and Oberlin region. A number of new relationships were established to facilitate interactions between Cleveland and Oberlin initiatives. The Fowler Center’s AI approach has promise to build community support for the Oberlin Project and Oberlin’s smallness provides a testing ground for ideas that can inform Cleveland’s programs.

A Proposal to Create Broad Based Support for the Oberlin Project

Anders Ferguson assessed the Oberlin Project as a vision dynamic and powerful enough to attract major interest and substantial support in college and town sufficient to consider forming a group, Friends of the Oberlin Project. What is the best way to do it?

Bill Barlow indicated we are going where no small college and its local community have gone. It will be difficult and require substantial upfront costs. The next college fund raising campaign is moving from the planning phase to the silent phase of identifying major donors. Elements of the Oberlin Plan are consistent with campaign objectives.

The consensus was that the Friends of the Oberlin Project had to be inclusive and not merely a college group. A group of respected citizens in the city would be a desirable starting point because everybody’s future is intertwined with the Oberlin region successfully transiting to a vibrant, mostly locally sourced, post fossil fuel economy. Anders Ferguson and Walt Galloway volunteered to lead a group to consider the best approach for forming Friends of the Oberlin Project. Carl McDaniel and John Petersen will to participate and Bill Barlow offered his assistance.

Oberlin’s Home Page: These Are Our Stories

Carl McDaniel noted that of the several hundred stories now on the home page only five are environmental with two just being posted by current students. He commented that he is tired of seeing Marvin and Kristin, SEED House, and Trail Magic in the upper right hand corner when Oberlin has so many environmentally accomplished alumni. For a start, he asked that all Steering Committee members take the time to write a story that focuses on the uniqueness of their Oberlin experience, and if appropriate, highlight the environmental roots and consequences (<http://stories.oberlin.edu/contribute.shtml>). The goal is to collect 1,000 stories. Currently the site has 159. Let’s get 100 environmental stories. Thanks!

Affiliate Group Representative on Alumni Council Executive Board

Lewis Gilbert and Andy Barnett again volunteered to be considered for a 3 year term, if E is chosen to fill the empty affiliate group seat. Decision will be made at the June 2010 Executive Board meeting.

Next SC Meeting

Saturday, 25 Sept 2010, time TBA, Lewis Center Conference Room

Respectfully submitted

Carl N. McDaniel '64

Chair, EnviroAlums