

## Notes April 2005

Heart of the City Meeting Minutes - April 21, 2005

Next Meeting - May 19, Café Carpe @ 6:30; Kitty Welch to facilitate  
Please Note Action Items below; Rain Garden and Other

Heart Of The City Web link <http://home.earthlink.net/~aengelman/>

Hearts On Line Discussion Forum <http://anewamerica.net>

In Attendance: Beth Gehred, Lue Ehinger, Mary Gates, Jill Sereno, Kim Karow, Dale Karow, Leslie LaMuro, Anders Yocom, Mary Linton, Kathy Kauffman, Kitty Welch, Bill Camplin, Steve Tesmer

Facilitator: Leslie LaMuro Minutes: Steve Tesmer

### Sustainability Update

Beth Gehred initiated a discussion about the upcoming school funding referendum, which will include the question of upgrading the school HVAC system with geothermal technology. People are needed to spearhead the PR effort to help get the referendum passed. Group discussed to what extent Heart of the City as a group wants to support the effort. A major effort will be required to get the referendum passed and it is currently seen as an uphill battle. Decision was made to support the geothermal project in principal, but leave more in-depth participation up to individuals.

### Greenbelt Discussion/Update

Margaret Burlingham from LanDesign was invited to the meeting to discuss our ideas for the Fort Atkinson greenbelt. She presented a draft proposal, itemizing the steps required to develop a formal plan which could be presented to the city. Margaret has considerable experience with public projects, including Dorothy Karns Park, Korth Park, the Jefferson County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan 2005&#8211;2010, rain gardens and shoreline restoration projects. She is also on the board of the Rock River Coalition.

Margaret noted that grant money is available for projects like this, especially if they are related to river and shoreline restoration and protection. Non-profit organizations are given higher priority by the DNR in awarding g grants, possible opportunity to work through the Rock River Coalition.

Bill Camplin gave a brief history of the genesis of the greenbelt idea Fort. Lou Ehinger pointed out that during group visioning sessions 4 years ago, every participating group included some type of greenbelt concept in their plans.

Bill mentioned that a Master Plan review is coming in the near future, so this is the time to prepare. Land South of highway 12 and West of the bypass has already been purchased by speculators for future development.

Kitty asked if there were other cities in Wisconsin that have successfully implemented greenbelts. Margaret said there are not as many examples in the Midwest, more so on the East and West coasts.

Margaret talked about the Town of Koshkonong Comprehensive Parks and Outdoor Recreation Plan recently developed. She said that many times land owners are willing to offer land for sale to be preserved as greenspace.

During the development of Dorothy Karns park, land owners were brought into the process early, to get their buy-in before going to the public.

With respect to protection of waterways, it was pointed out that municipalities appear to be given

much more leeway than private property owners, and it seems that they are not always required to comply with regulations (such as filling in of wetlands).

Margaret pointed out that other states make Wal-Mart do much more to protect the environment than Wisconsin currently does. If the project does go forward, they should at least be pressured to make concessions to help preserve the environment.

Mary Linton pointed out that the DOT likes greenbelts and green corridors because they see them as potential future roadways. Bill pointed out that the DOT does not like all of the commercial development that takes place along bypasses, it has a negative impact on the smooth efficient movement of traffic.

Bill Camplin has had some discussions about the greenbelt idea with John Wilmet and Sheldon Mielke, and now that he is no longer on the city council feels that he can be more active in selling the idea to city officials.

There was a discussion of the Prairie Crossing development near Grays Lake, IL. Margaret said that it is a very well executed development designed around a large amount of greenspace, with small residential lots along the borders. It was suggested that it might be worth planning a Heart of the City field trip to tour the development. The development has also been a financial success in that nearly all of the lots have been sold.

Mary Linton said that the homeowners in the Prairie Crossing development maintain the prairie, and get an educational benefit from it.

Margaret also described a development in Los Angeles designed as clusters of high-density residential around greenspace.

What is the next step? Develop a concept plan and look for ways to raise money to pay for plan development. Margaret pointed out that hospitals in many communities have been very supportive of "Healthy Community" initiatives and might be approached for backing.

There was a discussion of the success of the bike path, it is already seeing a lot of use this spring. Bill suggested that Jefferson County could potentially become a statewide bike trail hub.

Margaret posed the question as to how we perceive the greenbelt: As a transition between city and rural land, or as a place to encourage higher density residential development on both sides? Bill indicated that he likes the idea of residential development on both sides of the greenbelt. Margaret indicated that if done right, it could help to concentrate the residential development that occurs in rural areas, rather than the typical widely spread development on large lots.

Dale Karow talked about a development near Black Earth along a trout stream. The development has had zero impact on the trout stream, and the water quality has improved due to techniques used to protect the creek, for example natural plantings instead of traditional lawns.

Bill Camplin suggested getting aerial photos of the city to help in developing the plan, Kitty said that satellite photos can be downloaded from the Internet. Also, the county keeps current aerial photos.

#### Rain Garden Update

Kitty brought up the Rain Garden project as an example of a "Low Hanging Fruit" type of project that we could get behind. It was suggested that the Café Carpe and the Water Department grounds would be ideal locations for demonstration rain gardens. Possibly put on a workshop on creating rain gardens. Barrels can be purchased from the Milwaukee Sewer Department for \$23 each, Heart of the City could resell them, possibly at Farmers Market. Anders Yocum volunteered to go to Milwaukee with his truck to get an initial shipment.

Some Wisconsin towns with community rain gardens are Marshfield, Watertown and Hustisford. Kathy Kaufman brought up the fact that in order to maintain Master Gardener status, gardeners must do public projects, she will check to see if she can find a potential rain garden workshop leader.

Action items to move rain garden project along:

- Get buy in from City officials (Jeff Woods & Rudy Bushcott)
- Look into selling barrels at farmers market
- Setup workshop(s)
- Someone write an article for the paper
- Get Garden Club & Beautification Council involved

Jefferson Wal-Mart Update

Jill Sereno updated the group on the Wal-Mart issue in Jefferson, and raised concerns about the proposed store's impact on the water quality in the Rock River. Efforts have been made to declare highway K a rustic road, but it is not looking too promising, all property owners along the road must OK.

Miscellaneous Action Items

Bill Camplin &#8211; Will talk to John & Rudy about Community Rain Garden Project Someone? &#8211; Look into possibility of Heart of the City having a table at the Farmers Market and selling Rain Barrels and reusable grocery bags.

Kitty &#8211; Will contact Barb Lorman to see if Beautification Council would like to participate in any of the above projects.