

Heart of the City Meeting

May 12, 2008 – Café Carpe

Present: Jill Kessenich, Steve Tesmer, Kitty Welch, Beth Gehered, Tim Seith, Nora ?, Nancy Breitsprecher, Lue Ehinger, Bill Camplin, Joan Callan, Edith ?, Bruce Lowe, James Debilzen, Richard Miller, Elane Johnson, Janet ?, Beth Gehered, Doug Johnson, Bill Zolvie, Kathy Kaufman, Mary Linton, Josie Gobel, Joanne Moon, Margaret Martin, Leslie LaMuro, Barb Smith, Andy Jorgensen

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by President Kitty Welch

Approval of Minutes (Leslie/Tim)

Truth to Power: Joan Callan read from a book by Wallace Stegner "Conservation Equals Survival".

Guest Speaker: Jeff White, CEO Renew Energy

Introduction by Leslie LaMuro. Renew Energy is one of the largest Ethanol producers in the country. Expect plant north of Jefferson to produce ~120 Million Gallons of Ethanol per year. Plant has just completed construction. Corn kernels are "Fractionated": remove germ and bran from corn and sell as high protein animal feed (about 1/3 of the corn is made into feed). Feed is targeted at high-end: poultry and swine. Remaining portion (DDC – De-branned, De-germed Corn) starch is used for production of fuel. Goal is to optimize each part of the corn.

Auto makers have been slow to take full advantage of full potential of Ethanol, which has higher potential for efficiency and lower emissions.

Recent article in Science Magazine indicated that Ethanol is having a negative environmental impact. Corn is being grown in US instead of soybeans, as a result rain forests in Brazil were cut down for growing soybeans because soybean prices are up. Ethanol industry is being outspent 1000/1 by Oil companies. Oil companies are funding research aimed at discrediting Ethanol.

Current Ethanol technology is transitional – it is better than Oil but not as good as future technologies. Cellulosic Ethanol is still about 8 years away.

Impact on food: We have always been able to grow enough food. Since beginning to produce Ethanol we have simultaneously increased export of food.

Gasoline cost has gone up 10 times in the last 10 years. Food went up by 4% in the past year while Gas went up by 79%. Oil companies are pointing at use of corn for Ethanol as a reason for increase in food cost, but most of the increase is due to transportation.

Fundamental issue: We don't produce enough petroleum, we need alternative renewable sources of energy. Ethanol is an important first step toward a sustainable energy future.

Q&A:

Doug Johnson: Agricultural/Environmental Consultant, supported Mr White's points – agrees with assessment that Ethanol is a viable stepping stone.

Margaret: Can you point to a source that confirms that Ethanol will produce more energy than it requires to produce.

JW: 1.6 to 1 energy gain current standard. Argonne National Lab 2001 "Net energy balance of Ethanol"

(http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&ct=res&cd=1&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.nrbp.org%2Fpdfs%2Fethanol_balance.pdf&ei=TeYoSK7UAoGcgjGARfi_BQ&usg=AFQjCNEWijukAvOIRvn_tYJulpq7aamjvQ&sig2=8_QD2mZ8cEEIcqu2hgP6qA)

Bill: What are inherent risks in Ethanol Production?

JW: Low fire risk, not like petroleum

Janet: Lives North of the plant: Involved in getting rid of at-grade railroad crossing?

JW: Yes, has spoken with Railroad commissioner to get overpass built. The Ethanol plant is going to dramatically increase the amount of railroad company.

Janet: Why does the plan smell so bad?

JW: Hydrogen Sulfide due to an initial problem, is currently being treated in water treatment system. Organics are decaying producing smell. Will be solved in the future.

Joanne Moon: Where does corn come from?

JW: Wisconsin & Illinois

JM: Are these farmers changing their crops due to this?

JW: No significant shift in food corn, these are feed corn growers already. Last year there was a shift from soybeans to feed corn, this year it is shifting back

Beth: Has read that higher starch corn is highly genetically engineered and patented. Farmers will have to buy this corn from these suppliers.

JW: Farmers have option to lock in future prices.

JW: Believes that genetic engineering on seeds is much lower risk than genetic modification of animals.

Andy J: Do we want to get off foreign oil? Sees many advantages (security, local economy, environment) to using Ethanol as a transitional energy source.

Doug Johnson: Algae biofuel holds tremendous potential for much more efficient energy.

JW: Looking at methods for growing Algae efficiently. Algae also absorbs CO₂.

? Has there been any attention to where the corn is coming from and if land that has value for other uses is being converted to corn?

JW: Only at the local level.

Doug Johnson: If Saudi Arabia is overthrown gas could go up to \$20/gallon.

Bill: The cost of the war is not currently being reflected in the cost of petroleum.

Bill: The Environmental movement have an important roll to play in the decisions to be made in the future.

Margaret: Don't loose sight of conservation as an energy policy. Less use of automobiles, more mass transit, higher efficiency vehicles.

JW: Agrees, we will have no choice but to be more efficient with energy.

JW: Believes that the Oil companies are playing to the Environmentalists to suppress alternative energy.

Committee Reports

Projects:

Cynthia Fischer, art teacher at the Middle School, has the garbage cans were are reusing for recycling cans. Cynthia took the designs made by the elementary school art students of Karen Crosby and Karen Gomez and made composite designs into stencils. Cynthia's middle school students are stenciling the designs onto the cans. Once completed, the

HOC Projects committee will finish the can lids with holes and labeling for recycling. The cans will be distributed to the schools and the Fort Parks and Rec department for use in the city parks.

Planting is going on out at the Hearty Gardens. Gardener gatherings are planned for every 6th of the month at 6pm. Josie Gobel, who is coordinating the garden efforts for HOC, has also agreed to represent Heart on the Dorothy Carnes Park planning group..

Old Business

Big Heart Award Nominations:

None.

New Business

Membership Mailing

Leslie doesn't have email list, will send form to Ann to send out.

Comprehensive Plan input

Concerns that sustainability components are being watered down, and the voices that spoke during initial public input are not being heard. People are encouraged to attend steering committee meetings and speak during public input period. Next meeting is June 2 (conincides with HOC steering committee meeting)

Farmers Market volunteers

Family Farm Defenders from Madison: Sell organic Wisconsin cheeses and fair trade products. Were contacted by Beth, to see if they would participate in our market. They can only man the stand one Saturday per month – HOC would need to man the stand on the other Saturdays.

Carnes Park Master Plan Representative

Josie Gobel has agreed to be representative.

Rock the Earth Survey

Survey has been developed by Leslie – needs to be posted on Survey Monkey by someone.

Announcements

Myanmar Relief: Chip Duncan recommends making donations to Relief International (www.ri.org)

Fishing Ban Protest: Saturday June 7

Next Steering Committee Meeting: June 2

Next General Meeting: June 16 – Café Carpe

Adjournment: 9:12 pm

Respectfully Submitted, Steve Tesmer