

Sustainable Sandhills (SS) FY2009-2010)

Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting Minutes, September 8, 2009

Partnership for Children, Charles Morris Conference Room, Fayetteville

Board Members Present:

Deborah Branson
Harold Haywood
Ray Ogden
James Rose
Assad Tavakoli

Ethel T. Clark
David Heins*
John Portman
Chris Russo*
Walter White

Sara Harrington
Harry Huberth
Joey Raczkowski
Frank Stump

Board Members Absent:

Greg Bean*
Bob Doberstein
Maureen Sutton

Roberto Canales*
David Dycus*
Rodney Tart

Monty Crump
Colonel Sicinski*
Theresa Thompson

Others Present:

Jon Parsons, SS Executive Director (ED)

Jackie Bradley, SS Office Manager

Jodi Hajosy, SS Green Business Coordinator

Dayna Reggero, SS Public Relations & Community Outreach Manager

Paul Wirt, Fort Bragg

Steven Moore, Moore Exposure (for 15 minutes in the middle of the meeting)

**ex officio*

Chair James Rose called the Board of Directors' meeting to order at 12:10 p.m.

NOTE: Most attachments can be downloaded from the SS website. Names of each document and the attachment number will be included to make for easier reference.

<http://www.sustainablesandhills.org/Board.html>

Old Business:

A motion was made by Ethel Clark to approve the July 14, 2009 Board Meeting Minutes. The motion was seconded by Assad Tavakoli, and passed by a unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report:

- In the absence of Treasurer **Tart**, **Parsons** gave the report. He referred to **Attachment 1** which included the Financial Report Summary and the Official Financial Report submitted by McFadyen & Sumner CPAs. The summary explains each section of the report received from M&S. In response to a previous request, the General Ledger paragraph included an "Extraordinary Expenses" list of expenses not included in our annual budget. This included a \$400 payment for the purchase of rain barrels for the upcoming Lee County Rain Barrel Art Show and a payment of \$100 as a match for the City of Fayetteville's Recycling Brochure grant award from NCDENR. **Parsons** noted the August end-of-month report was not included because we had not received it yet.
- **Attachment 2** is the Cash Flow Forecast for the year which the ED provides for each Board meeting. In response to **Tavakoli's** previous request, **Parsons** included the forecast AND actual numbers. He noted that actual July revenues and expenses are less

than forecast. **A motion was made by Ray Ogden to accept the Treasurer's Report as given. The motion was seconded by Harry Huberth, and passed by a unanimous vote.**

SS Office Lease Comparison (Attachment 3): **Parsons** noted that we have worked with Moore Exposure (ME) over the last year on the project, lending our name to their "Green Partnership." We were included in a Fayetteville Observer feature article this summer about the building project and partnership. We received the proposed lease in late August so are just now able to compare those lease terms with our current lease at the Omni Family Resource Center (OFRC) owned by the Cumberland County Partnership for Children (PFC). Attachment 3 is a detailed comparison. The following questions and comments were captured in the discussion.

- **Portman** asked for the "intangibles" that are difficult to document in a table-formatted comparison. **Parsons** noted that a "store front" of our own would help with community awareness of SS; the work environment at ME would be nicer for employees; ME is in the marketing business and as part of their Green Partnerships with manufacturers, SS could benefit from those relationships.
- **Portman** asked if square footage limits at Omni are an issue. **Parsons** said no, but that if we were to stay at OFRC we would need to lease one additional office soon. We lease 4 offices currently. The ED and Office Managers have their own offices, and the other two are shared by two staffers each.
- **Parsons** clarified for **Heins** that both ME and OFRC spaces are unfurnished, but the enclosed offices at OFRC are easier to furnish than the open floor plan at ME.
- **Rose** asked for the time line for a proposed move to ME. **Parsons** estimated that the building will be complete in November, and ME would like to have the lease approved and signed ASAP. The lease would begin when ME receives the Certificate of Occupancy. **Parsons** suggests we negotiate more favorable lease terms.
- **Harry Huberth** asked if the Board could vote to give the staff the ability to finalize the lease. **Rose** said approval can be done electronically with the Board prior to our next scheduled meeting.
- **Ray Ogden** noted that the current approved SS budget includes a lease payment of \$775 per month and asked what there is in the budget to schedule the additional cost. **Parsons** acknowledged the increase but noted that our current cashflow projection shows a balance of \$30K at the end of this fiscal year.
- **Ethel Clark** asked how long the rent credits run. **Parsons** said the credits are spread evenly over five years; the annual lease cost escalation begins in year 4 (first of two option years) and is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- **Paul Wirt** noted that it is hard to get a sense of purpose in a place when you have a generic hallway and nothing else to define SS at OFRC. The three-year lease term concerns him. He asked that if SS has large meetings what would we do? At this point, **Parsons** introduced **Steven Moore of Moore Exposure**. **Parsons** noted that there was a small meeting space in the ME portion of the space that would be available after business hours. Currently we meet both on and offsite at OFRC.
- **Tavakoli** asked about the expense of using other meeting rooms. **Parsons** said that we utilize mostly free offsite space, so there is no budget impact, only convenience.

- **Joey Raczkowski** asked what the CPI is. **Parsons** estimated 3% annual, but noted it's variability in recent years. **Raczkowski** noted that Moore County government caps CPI in all of their leases and recommends that we do that in this case.
- In response to other questions, **Parsons** provided the following answers:
 - 1) There is no signage included at the ME site;
 - 2) There is adequate, assigned tenant parking separate from the ME business lot;
 - 3) The SS storefront would be visible from the street and that would be a plus;
 - 4) There is not a buzzer system for entrance into the building. That would likely be considered a tenant-financed upfit by the Moore's.
 - 5) We do meet often with Fay'l and Cumberland County governments, and the ME site would allow us to walk to those meetings. The ME site does add 5-10 minutes to almost every other trip to other locations in the region;
 - 6) There is a security guard at OFRC, but not at the ME building;
 - 7) There are three entrances to the ME building, including an employee entrance.
- Other comments from the Board included:
 - 1) SS is a regional organization; is rent what we want to put more money into?
 - 2) **Huberth** wants to evaluate further, and acknowledges that it is hard to build an identity in the OFRC. Can we build that identity at OFRC or somewhere else?
 - 3) **Rose** said the issue is funding, and we have to ask if we can afford this new space.
 - 4) **Wirt** suggested the Board allow Parsons to do further research and recommend the best course of action and ask for an electronic vote from the Board.
 - 5) **Stump** asked if Board members could tour the ME building. **Steven Moore** offered to give the Board tours anytime, as long as he had some notice.
 - 6) **Rose** reminded the Board that **Huberth** earlier suggested that the Board authorize staff to continue to negotiate and then let the Board know the outcome.

A motion was made by Harry Huberth that the entire board allow Parsons to negotiate and present a recommendation which could then be voted on electronically. The motion was seconded by Ethel Clark, and passed with a unanimous vote.

Board Member Interview Report (Attachment 4): **Parsons** summarized the interviews with Board members and thanked each for taking the time to meet. He also pointed out some "recurring themes" from the set of interviews, outlined in the attachment.

Strategic Plan Update (Attachment 5):

Parsons reminded Board members that our current Strategic Plan ends at the end of this calendar year. He asked several board members to give a summary of activities in their respective counties in regard to **Strategic Goal 1, Community Action Teams**.

- **Portman** – Moore CAT: He reviewed the attendance numbers, targeting "repeat attendees" as an area to improve. The film series is getting a lot of interest. Moore has some very active volunteers, and they are already talking about next year's Urban Farm Tour and community films. The walking trails project will be a huge project, and we have had about 500 respond to our local food survey.
- **Tavakoli** – Cumberland CAT: He referenced strong meetings and collaboration, lots of interest in the films, and there very good attendance at the FOOD, Inc. movie. SS is

assisting FSU and the School of Business and Economics with a program to train science and math students to work in non-academic jobs. Students would be eligible for generous stipends during their graduate studies. FSU will make application to NSF. Parsons noted that we would be able to use interns from this program at SS.

- Harnett CAT – **Parsons** noted that attendance is still a challenge in Harnett County. A current project unique to Harnett County, which we are working with Theresa Thompson, is a commingled drop-off center in Lillington. It is still in the preliminary stage and we will update the Board as it develops.
- Lee CAT – **Parsons** said that the major project is the Rain Barrel Art Show and auction which is a fundraiser in partnership with the Lee County Arts Council.

Goal 2, Diverse Funding Stream: **Rose** said that we have completed both the strategic plan and fundraising plan targets. We are not finished with the membership drive or the renewal drive. He said we are well on the way to meeting our goals. He noted that we are lacking major donors, but will be working to resolve that. The income for fundraising in 2009 is currently at \$13,900 with a \$38,500 target.

Goal 3, Awareness & Education: **Parsons** noted that we have sent 10 eBlasts, but will likely fall short of the goal of 22 for this year. We hope to send 18-20 by the end of the year. The film screenings continue to be a good engagement vehicle for SS.

Goal 4, Engagement of Board of Directors: **Rose** said that our numbers are very good. He said that the Tool Kit is available on line, but the brochure has not been completed.

Goal 5, Green Business Program: **Parsons** said that the numbers are strong, and we are seeing progress in those counties where we have an active CAT. There is still work to do on a special recognition award for the program. **Parsons** and **Amanda Blue** have been cross trained in the program so they can assist Green Business Coordinators **Jodi Hajosy** and **Heidi Johnson**. **Paul Wirt** asked if we are counting departments/directorates on Fort Bragg in our numbers. **Parsons** said that we would as soon as we had certified directorates.

Nominations Committee: **Rose** nominated **James Wilson** to serve on the Board for a 22 month term. A biography was given to members for their review prior to a vote. **A motion was made by Ethel Clark to approve the nomination of James Wilson to serve on the Board of Directors. The motion was seconded by Frank Stump, and passed with a unanimous vote.**

Fundraising Plan Tracking Tool (Attachment 6): **Parsons** noted progress towards the 2009 Fundraising goal of \$38,500. Major donors are an area that needs attention. There will be a fundraiser October 15 at the home of **Jon and Caroline Parsons**. The event will run from 530-9pm with a \$35 ticket, and will include music, food and beverages. **Heather Brown** included a list of tasks that the Board can assist with. Cutoff for ticket reservations is October 13.

Grantseeking and Earned Income (Attachment 7):

- SS is one of 3 organizations written into a Wildlife Conservation Society Grant, submitted by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. It will support a half-time position at SS for two years, but will require a 1:1 match. The source of the match has not been identified. Notification was just received and **Parsons** will have more info on this project and award and the plan to staff it at the next Board meeting.

- **Tad Davis** has given tentative approval on operational support funds for SS. **Parsons** said this award would support **Heather Brown's** position for the next year and cover the revenue line of \$60K in the SS 2009-10 budget. Special thanks to Fort Bragg's **Paul Wirt** were made for his efforts to secure this support.
- SS is also a partner on a grant project application by FirstHealth to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Healthy Kids-Healthy Communities Grant in 5 communities in Montgomery and Moore counties. Notification of this award will be in late September.
- SS's proposal for \$50k to PWC came back with comments, and that proposal is being modified for resubmission later this year.
- The CC Partnership for Children made application to DHHS's Strengthening Communities Fund. SS is designated as one of a handful of organizations that would receive \$30K-50K to build organizational capacity if the grant is awarded.
- BRAC RTF studies: Booze-Allen-Hamilton and SS submitted two joint proposals to BRAC RTF to perform two studies: a regional solid waste and regional renewable energy study. BAH is the lead on the proposal. The period of performance on these projects is 3-4 months. The work is well-aligned with our recycling and air quality programs. The proposals we submitted with BAH were "unsolicited" – meaning not in response to a request for proposals. BRACRTF decided that they would not award work without a formal Request For Proposal (RFP). The RFP has yet to "hit the street." The BAH/SS proposal is ready when the RFP is released.
- Kresge Foundation, Healthy Environments: A professional grant writer from the Fayetteville area has offered to help us prepare a proposal for this large grant program.

Cumberland County Schools "Go Green" Initiative (Attachment 8): SS's **Jodi Hajosy** has worked with key staff at the Cumberland County Schools (CCS) to develop a checklist for CCS to "go green." This project will be captured within the Greater Fayetteville Futures II (GFF II). It will also be our Green School Program Pilot for replication in the other 7 school districts in our region. The CCS Board has endorsed the program, and 22 of the 86 CCS campuses were chosen by CCS Operations Director **Kathy Miller** for involvement in this first year of the program. The checklist was developed over the summer and with it complete and the campuses chosen, our role is to facilitate implementation of each school's chosen measures. **Branson** said she wants Methodist to be included. **Harrington** asked how the program can be introduced to other communities. **Parsons** said that a combination of SS board and staff effort to reach out to School Boards and Superintendents, but some peer to peer testimony would be helpful. He used Transportation Director or Facilities/Energy Manager level staff as an example. He emphasized that this program scope was huge if introduced into multiple districts and had the potential to swamp our small staff, and that we knew there was a couple more months of work to do before it was ready to roll out to other districts. **Wirt and Russo** emphasized the importance of SS "branding" the program.

City of Fayetteville, Sustainability Master Plan: SS has supported the City as they have prepared a Sustainability Master Plan beginning in June. The draft plan is very ambitious, and if the timeline is maintained, the plan will be adopted by the City Council on October 12. SS staffers **Amanda Blue** and **Heidi Johnson** were both absent from today's meeting because they are supporting the City at a stakeholder review workshop on the Master Plan.

Green Building & Design Tour: Parsons reminded the Board that the fall tour will be held on November 7 in four counties and encouraged members to be involved.

Project Plug-in (Attachment 9): White presented this new program to the Board due to his interest in involving Lumbee River EMC in the program in their service area. He mentioned Senate Bill 3 (SB3) which mandates that 10% of energy be from renewable energy sources in 10 years, and that efficiency/conservation can contribute to that target. He'd like to "co-brand" the program with SS in the LREMC service area. A preliminary target for LREMC would be to donate materials for 50 homes in their service area. There are still issue of volunteer training and liability to work out. Parsons said we already have a targeted donation of \$4500 from a couple in CC for the program, in addition to potential support from LREMC and PWC. He noted that SS CAT Coordinator **Amanda Blue** designed the program. White said the education and engagement components of the program are very strong.

Regional Planning: Parsons noted that there will be a Workshop for Release 2 of the SS Land Suitability Project at The Fair Barn in Pinehurst in October. The workshop will generate revenue on a subcontract. The workshop will be promoted via website and eBlast.

Air Quality – USEPA Sustainable Skylines Initiative: Parsons noted that we continue to negotiate with USEPA for the region and Fort Bragg to become an official SSI partner.

Urban Farm Garden Fundraising Project: Parsons noted that if the builder/donor will pledge \$2500 (or more), SS will proceed with the project as proposed. If the pledge is not made, SS will arrange for the work to be done by contractors and volunteers, and will have a reduced role.

Local Food Survey (Attachment 10): Parsons noted that the results of this survey of consumer interest in Community Supported Agriculture we will be displayed on a web-based map viewer (similar to google earth), which will make it easy for local farmers to engage with interested consumers. Approximately 500 people have responded to the survey to date.

New Business: There was no new business. Parsons thanked Lee County Board member **Sara Harrington** for paying for an SS membership in the Sanford Area Chamber of Commerce. He referred Board members to the list of upcoming meetings on the reverse side of the agenda.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ethel Clark. It was seconded by Walter White and passed with a unanimous vote. The meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2009; location TBD.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackie Bradley