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from Todd

Subject: Meeting of September 27 Date: Sun, 26 Sep 1999 17:30:14 -0700

From: "collart" <collart@west.net>

Just a reminder folks of our meeting tomorrow at Jerry's home at 7:00. We have lots to discuss, probably more than we can really accomplish in one evening. The proposed agenda is outlined below. I have tried to add three additional documents to this e-mail as well. One is a press release about our August 24th event. A second is an outline of some organizational ideas that were prompted by our last meeting. Lastly is a draft letter to our "constituents"

since we do not have members per se. I hope we can discuss these three issues as well as others. Please bring a printout of the agenda and attachments if possible. Thanks. You convener, Todd

AGENDA 9-27-99

Introduction of any guests

Review of the agenda to make additions or alterations

Report on Grant and related endeavors - Bob Chianese

Report on League of Women Voters/Sustainability joint venture with Bd. of Supervisors - Jon

Report on Faulkner House Group and educational consortium - Todd

Discuss a response to Diane Underhill letter about the Council - Jon

✓ Event press release and existing policy

Report back on use of ARC for mailings - Jerry

Review of draft organizational ideas - Todd

Review of draft letter to constituents - Todd

Possible new projects

Citizen conference on the sustainable elements of the draft Ventura Vision

Moebi Awards

Business directory

Others

Reports on other events occurring

Time and place of next meeting

Dear Constituents;

Thank you for your continuing interest in a Sustainable future. I have much to report and hope you will individually find a way to become involved with the Council through one of our many projects or by launching a project your self.

Sustainability Conference on August 24, 1999 – It was a great success. We had 60 people for dinner and 30 to 40 others who joined us during the evening. We had numerous elected officials as well as business and environmental folks. The press coverage was so good that we rated an editorial in the LA Times in the Sunday, August 29th edition.

In case you were unable to attend, we had three speakers discussing a range of issues relating to sustainability followed by audience participation in a discussion of possible sustainability indicators. This part of the program was an energetic exchange between most of the audience and was recorded on paper (and attached), but not on the radio air waves as was the first portion of the program (KCLU). This lively discussion of indicators was a prelude to the

Council's grant with CSUN to identify quality of life indicators. Additional discussions will be held this Fall lead by a number of folks from Southern California who have direct experience developing and implementing indicators. If this is a project that you wish to participate in, please contact _____ at _____ . We very much want to communicate by e-mail the sustainable approach given the Council's board member's dislike of licking envelopes.

Past Projects – We do not want to bore you with what you may already know, but in case you are unaware of the activities and projects that we have sponsored they are listed below:

Co-hosted with the U. S. Navy two conferences on sustainability organized by the President's Council on Sustainability.

Sponsored a design churette for the interpretive center planned for Mugu Lagoon.

Sponsored a conference on Sustaining Dialog in Contentious Times at the County Government Center.

Sponsored a conference on energy deregulation and its implications for local government and businesses.

Sponsored a debate between opposing parties on the issue of sales tax collection and how it impacts land use decisions.

Incorporated on _____

The organization or its members have contributed several articles and letters to local papers on sustainability issues.

Made the first of an annual award to people who have made a significant contribution to the cause of sustainability.

Projects in Process - We have many projects under way that I would like to share with you and invite you to participate in.

Sustainability Indicators Grant – This was discussed above as part of the conference, but it bears repeating. The Council received a grant in association with Cal State Northridge (CSUN) which will fund among other things the development of sustainability indicators. We would like to have a broad cross section of people from across the county (ideally representation from each city) so that we can learn about the value of such indicators and then set about developing appropriate ones for the county as a whole, but also particular indicators for each city. Join us in this project. Contact _____ at _____ if you are interested in this project.

Greenbelt Forums – The Council is partnering with the League of Women Voters to hold public forums on behalf of the County Board of Supervisors which will allow the public to express their ideas on how the existing greenbelts that abut most cities can be strengthened. The meetings have not yet been scheduled, but if you are interested Contact _____ at _____ if you are interested in this project.

Faulkner House Group – The Council convened a meeting with representatives of several County-wide organizations to explore how Measure A could be advanced.

Public Education Follow-up to Measure A – Remember Measure A that was on the ballot last year with the SOAR initiative? It was overwhelmingly adopted by the voters and generally supported by parties on both sides of the SOAR initiatives. One of the recommendations in the Measure was public education on key land use issues that relate to development patterns and farming. The Council is working with a consortium of other interest groups to develop a coordinated approach to the education mandate. As our efforts take shape in September, we hope to invite the public to advise and comment on our efforts. Stay tuned.

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Research/educational Consortium -

Moebi Awards – The Council gave a hand-crafted award to an individual who it considered made an outstanding contribution to the cause of sustainability. This was John Krist, columnist for the Ventura Star who chronicled his

30,000 mile journey around the country examining local communities' efforts at promoting sustainable solutions to problems they faced. We hope the extensive series of articles will be republished soon. (Call the Star to urge

a reprinting of them.) Well, we are looking for candidates for our 1999 award(s). If you are interested in being involved in the awards program or have suggestions of people, programs, projects, businesses, etc. that should be considered for the award(s), please contact us at _____. By the way a "Moebi" is the name we gave our award (a moebius strip custom fabricated of recycled silver). The strip was chosen because of its continuous form that, unlike a circle, completes a revolution in 720 degrees while having one side and one edge.

Directory of Business with Sustainable Products and or Services – There are many businesses that are currently models of sustainable practices in the way they produce their products and or services. Unfortunately, we are probably not aware of them. They should be lauded for their efforts, but more importantly patronized so they can remain in business and expand their business. Many of them produce products that are part of a sustainable future, such as the firms in the solar power area. If you would like to work on this directory or have ideas to share, please contact us at _____.

Web Master – As mentioned earlier, the use of conventional paper and envelopes and stamps to communicate with you is not a sustainable practice (we do not want any more envelop stuffing parties as much as we enjoy each others company). It is also unnecessarily wasteful of resources when there is a better alternative. We hope you will all join us in a paperless organization by giving us your e-mail address (we won't say it again) and by helping us find a volunteer who would be interested in developing and expanding an exciting web for the organization. We have a site currently, but need someone to manage it and evolve it into "all that it can be." We would like it to be a place where we can post news of meetings, suggested readings, other web sites, pending legislation and general news of the organization that would allow you all to more easily be involved. We know that right person is out there, now you know we are looking for him or her. Give us some names.

Organizational Changes

Advisory Board – As the Council has evolved, the Board of Directors has created an Advisory Board of individuals and organizations who wish to play a particularly close role in advancing sustainable issues without serving on the Board of Directors. This new body would meet periodically with the Directors to discuss the direction of the organization and on an ad hoc basis to advise the Directors on specific projects and opportunities that arise. If this is of interest to you, please let us know through our e-mail address or web site.

Formal Memberships and Dues – Thus far the organization has been run on the sweat and finances of it Directors. As we become more engaged in various projects and try to expand our communication with our constituents, we have found that we will need more funds. As an individual who has expressed a past interest in sustainability issues, we invite you to become a member and pay modest annual dues that will be used to cover expenses relating to copying charges, maintenance of an e-mail address and a mailing address as well as an active web site.

Snail v. E-mail - While on the subject of e-mail addresses, you could be very helpful to the Council if we could communicate with you by e-mail. The Board members have funded the organization ourselves and we hate to spend our

treasury on stamps and envelopes. (As a dues paying member you will note the dual rate with an added cost for U. S. mail.)

Using e-mail (and an expanded web site in the future) we hope to communicate with you more regularly and much less expensively. We promise not to share your addresses (street or e-mail) with anyone (we have already turned down one request from a state-wide organization), so please pass along your e-mail address to us at

Hopefully this review of our past record and our present and proposed projects you will want to become a member of the Sustainability Council and help us promote sustainable solutions to the challenges confronting us.

PRESS RELEASE

9-28-99

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY

CONTACT: _____, MEMBER VENTURA COUNCIL

653-2520

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: WHAT PEOPLE WANT

The quality of life in Ventura County is an on-going concern of its residents, but in a surprising way. Nearly 100 citizens and elected officials from around the county attended the Ventura County Sustainability Council's August 24th conference on, "How Do We Measure Quality of Life." Billed as the initial step in a grant-funded study conducted jointly by the Council and California State University at Northridge, the conference stimulated brisk discussion amongst those present and prompted scores of suggestions on how to measure the quality of life in Ventura County. The Council recently completed its analysis of the suggestions and made a surprising finding.

Where quality of life has largely been measured in light of growth and development patterns, a significant number of suggested measures centered instead around the quality of civic life. Perhaps the recent adoption of new growth control measures throughout most of the county have freed people to consider the quality of other aspects of their daily lives.

Among the comments forwarded that reflect this emerging emphasis on the quality of civic life were the following: gauge people's sense of freedom to participate openly in their communities' affairs; assess the amount of interpersonal contact and dialog among citizens; quantify the number and per capita size of public commons; measure the amount of discretionary personal time; catalog the range of educational opportunities available; evaluate the health of public libraries; and identify levels of care and concern expressed for one another.

"The level of interest in civic engagement was unexpected," remarked Council Member _____. "Perhaps it reflects the public's growing confidence in the way that growth and development may be handled, thus freeing them to focus on other meaningful facets of daily life, not the latest subdivision or the density of redevelopment." The importance of civic engagement as a measure of quality of life in Ventura County will continue to be tested as the Sustainability Council sponsors further dialogues where the public will be invited to help define indicators of a quality life. Stay tuned.

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ORGANIZATIONAL LAYOUT OF
THE SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL

9-26-99

Non-profit Corporation

501c3 status

established for charitable and educational purposes

contributions to the organization are tax deductible

Board of Directors

Self – appointing

Number of members not fixed, but 12 + or –

Term of office – open ended

Criteria

Able to work

Pay dues of \$60/yr

Endorse principles of sustainability and the mission of the organization

Represent diversity of age, gender, educational/work background, live through out the county,
represent sectors of the sustainability movement

Roles

Promote the mission of the organization

Initiate projects that advance sustainability

Work to promote organizational harmony and development

Attendance should be a factor – miss ___ meetings and lose your position

Executive Board of Directors – defined by corporation bylaws

President

Secretary

Treasurer

Advisory Board

Invited to be on this body by the Board of Directors

Pay annual dues of \$_____

Qualifications

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Endorse the principles of the organization

From an organization that represents a sector of sustainability, e.g. organic farming

Purpose of Advisory Board

Called in periodically as a group to advise the Board

Used as ad hoc advisors based on their individual expertise

A place for past Directors to "retire" to

A place where potential Directors can be tested prior to elevation to the Board

Possible Members Based on Their Affiliation

Social Justice

Voluntary simplicity - Jon Myhre (Seeds of Simplicity, Ojai)

Social Services & Cecil Hoffman

Ecological Integrity

Fishermen &

Organic Farming & Jim Churchill (Lighthouse Group, Ojai)

Autobon Society &

Economic Prosperity

VCEDA & Penny Bohannon

Economic Development & Steve Kinney

Architects & Scott Ellinwood, Dave Sargent (AIA, Carpinteria, Ventura)

Planners & Carl Morehouse (APA, Ventura)

General Membership

Open to anyone

Pay annual dues to support the programs of the organization and service to members

No voting rights

Invited to participate in events

Solicited for projects and input

A way for people interested in sustainability can show their support and meet others

Products and Services

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Advocate for sustainability on behalf of people interested in this issue

Convene conferences

Facilitate coordination between interest groups

Seek grants for projects that advance our purpose

Contribute letters to newspapers and other media

Serve on advisory committees for public and private sector interests

Use Non-profit status for strategic purposes

Quarterly meetings with advisory Board with a guest speaker

E-mail communication with members no paper

Maintain a web site containing:

A history of the organization's development

Current Board of Directors (with or without phone #s, addresses, e-mail addresses)

Current Advisory Board Members

General members who wish to be listed

Purpose, mission statement, etc.

Past accomplishments

Present projects with a contact person

Prospective projects

List of sustainability web sites with links

Current news for members and general public

"Bulletin Board" for announcements of events, etc. by affiliated parties

Meeting announcements for open meetings by affiliated parties

Membership application

Annual Report of the organization

Poling of visitors to the site on topical issues

Participation via the web site in various projects, e.g. sustainability indicators

Organizational Issues and Tasks

Business card that can be handed out with our address, web site, purpose, etc.

Membership form

Working description of duties of officers, Convener, etc.

Policies/procedures

Meetings missed leading to removal from Board of Directors

Acceptance of gifts

Conflicts of interest between members and projects

Standard meeting agenda

Sponsorships

Press releases

Secretary minutes

Treasurer's report

Annual award

Fixed meeting place

Up-dating of by-laws to ensure they are appropriate

Annual Report format

Establish a web site with a viable server

Find a web master

Establish a P.O. Box

Establish a phone number for the organization

Dues structure

Develop a strategic plan

Communications with members

Rather than rely on paper and postage and the energy to assemble them to communicate, the organization should operate via a web site (which we have) and e-mail. Our membership should be so trained as well. The health of the organization should be a first priority. It should not be hobbled by past ways of communicating with its members. If people want to belong to the organization they should be willing to use a modern system to do so.

The board should communicate by e-mail as often as by phone. We should pass around copies of work to review by e-mail so we can move quickly on opportunities. For example, press releases need to be quickly sent to be topical.

Thus, the writer should post the release to the rest of the Board who should respond promptly or forego criticism of the effort later.

Our web site should be up-dated daily if necessary to keep interested people informed of the organization's efforts. It should also be a clearing house for sustainability issues and opportunities. Ideally we could trust the public to post messages on a message board, but perhaps we should exercise oversight of such a board at first.

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Sustainable Systems and Choices

A system is sustainable if it can persist for extended periods of time if not indefinitely. The system can be a society, an economy, a biological region, etc. Sustainability does not imply a static system, but rather one in dynamic balance that is constantly adjusting to changing conditions. Such change is always necessary because a given system is inexorably linked to other systems, each of which must adjust to changes (however small) that are emanating from other systems.

Because this mix of interactions is so complex, it cannot be fully understood or consequences totally predicted. As a result, there is seldom an absolute choice to be made between limited options that will clearly lead to a more certain sustainable outcome than other choices. For example, is a traditional wooden pencil a more sustainable choice than a mechanical pencil with replaceable lead? A complete analysis of the alternatives would be exhausting if one were to assess all the implications of the choice as they span the biological, economic, and social systems.

Consequently, practicing sustainability is a matter of selecting the best of the options available in an on-going quest to produce more sustainable outcomes. The Sustainability Council is about promoting decisions that lead to the most sustainable outcomes over and over and over again because there is no final choice that can be sustainable for all time.

An Working Definition of Sustainability

Distilling the concept into a working definition that is human oriented we can say,

Sustainability is the ability to meet our present needs without

Compromising the ability of future generations to meet their's.

Applying this maxim would suggest that we leave enough fish in the sea so that fisheries can survive to feed future generations; that we do not contaminate our water making it undrinkable for our children's children; that we do not squander a nation's wealth in the pursuit of the frivolous leaving future generation with crushing debt.

Guiding Principles of Sustainability

A working definition of sustainability will take us so far in assessing the choices that will lead to outcomes that are more or less sustainable than the current situation. Seemingly simple choices can be agonizingly difficult if pursued to the nth degree, so what can we rely on to more accurately guide our choices than the working definition cited above? Paradigms built around natural systems and physical laws provide the prime guidance augmented by some modern assessment tools.

From the natural or biological realm come:

Preserving and enhancing diversity

Conservation of energy

From the realm of physical laws come thermodynamic laws which are expressed in the Swedish program of "Natural Step":