

**SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**September 2, 2014**  
**Meeting Summary**

MORPC  
111 Liberty Street, Suite 100  
Columbus, Ohio  
1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Meeting Attendees: Marilyn Brown, Steve Stolte, Dale Arnold, Mark Barbash, Kate Bartter, Michelle Crandall, Scott Griffin, Jack Knapp, Erin Miller, Tom Pendrey, Paul Wise.

MORPC Staff: William Murdock, Kerstin Carr, Christina O’Keeffe, Claire Jennings, Brandi Whetstone, Marion Dean, Amanda McEldowney, Brian Williams, Evelyn Ebert, David Abel, David Rutter.

1. **Welcome.** Chair Marilyn Brown called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m. and welcomed guests. Members of the group introduced themselves.
2. **Overview of the Sustainability Advisory Committee.** William Murdock reviewed the genesis of this new executive level advisory board and how it will help guide the sustainability work being done by the Planning & Environment and Energy & Air Quality departments and the MORPC working groups. Its mission and role are:
  - To be the voice of sustainability focused programming
  - Bring policy and program recommendations to MORPC’s local governments
  - Advise sustainability working groups and MORPC programming
  - Jury the Green Region Awards
  - Establish sub-committees for special efforts

He also introduced Kerstin Carr, Director of the Planning & Environment, and Christina O’Keeffe, Director of Energy & Air Quality.

The Department of Planning & Environment covers active transportation, greenways, waterways, safety, planning, and local food, and conducts regional education forums and events. This department is also heading the [insight2050 project](#), partnered with Columbus 2020 and ULI Columbus. This project will provide objective data and tools to evaluate growth in Central Ohio to help government, business and development leaders make informed choices for future growth and development. Many of the metrics included in the project are related to sustainability. The first phase of the project will be completed by the end of the year.

The Department of Energy & Air Quality covers energy conservation services, air quality forecasting and alerts, regional energy policy priorities, and innovative financing models and tools. A recent key project is the [Regional Energy Action Plan](#), released by MORPC in partnership with the Energy Foundation and the National Association of Regional Councils. It provides an assessment of the economic, social, and policy realities related to the development and use of energy throughout the 12-county Central Ohio region, and identifies recommendations that may lead to a more prosperous regional economy and enriched environment. The Sustainability Advisory Committee, along with the member governments and Energy & Air Quality Working Group, will play a role in advising the next steps.

3. **Overview of the Working Groups.** The chairperson of each of the working groups gave a brief description of the working group that they chair.

- Energy & Air Quality – Dale Arnold. The Energy and Air Quality Working Group assembles public and private partners to promote air quality improvements in the area and facilitate knowledge-sharing across sectors. The mission of the Energy & Air Quality Working Group is to improve and maintain clean, healthy air, and economic vitality in Central Ohio through education, policy development, and strategies that address our energy and air quality challenges.

The Working Group goals are to:

- I. Attain air quality standards for the region;
  - II. Submit comments to US EPA about new standards and designations when appropriate;
  - III. Assist Ohio EPA in developing State Implementation Plans; and
  - IV. Assist MORPC members in implementing and accessing clean energy and air-friendly technologies and infrastructure when possible.
- Greenways – David Rutter. The Greenways & Water Quality Working Group has identified 3 primary goals to work on for 2014 and 2015.
    - I. Update the Greenways plan to include water trails and identification of areas for preservation.
      - a. Survey, map, and work with local governments and citizens to get 100 miles of Central Ohio streams designated as water trails.
    - II. Gather and report on legislative issues/opportunities connected with water quality and water management
      - a. Invite elected officials from communities utilizing best practices to share what they are doing and invite officials from the region to hear.
      - b. Connect with other local groups.)
    - III. Gather and report on current water quality data and receive updates on Watershed Action Plan implementation progress.
      - a. Invite those who have data to present and share how to access i.e., City of Columbus, Soil and Water, OEPA, Watershed Groups.

The Central Ohio Greenways and Trails working group is focused on coordinating and facilitating trail development in Central Ohio. One main task of the group in 2014 is the Economic Impact of Trails Study. MORPC along with several local governments and organizations hired the University of Minnesota to conduct an [Economic Impact of Trails Study](#) for our Central Ohio Greenways Network. The 18 month study began in January and will end in June 2015.

- Materials Management – Jack Knapp. The Materials Management Working Group is made up of local residents and representatives from Central Ohio communities, non-profits, solid waste districts, businesses and public agencies. The Group strives to promote the management of materials in a socially responsible manner, so that they become an asset contributing to environmental stewardship and economic development. Sustainable materials management considers the use of materials throughout their entire life cycle, from the point of extraction through material disposal.

#### 2014 Priorities

In January 2014, working group members discussed the best role that MORPC and the group could play moving forward in the area of Materials Management. Below are the top three priorities based on the input from members.

- I. Convene partners and play an information sharing role.
    - a. Members agree that the information sharing has a big impact on their work and they also take that information and share it with a broader audience. MORPC provides a unique forum for the stakeholders to come together, which is not provided by other groups.
  - II. Evaluate the needs of solid waste management districts and local communities located in MORPC's region, and define MORPC's role in the process.
    - a. Address topics relevant to these audiences in the Working Group meetings in order to serve member interests and bring additional stakeholders to the table.
  - III. Gather available information and resources related to recycling in the region and connect the public and local governments with those resources.
    - a. MORPC could be the catalyst for more unified messaging in the region and help identify regional resources and information gaps.
- Regional Food Council – Mark Barbash. MORPC is a regional and statewide leader in regional food-system planning and has been committed to local food since it completed its 2010 *Central Ohio Local Food Assessment and Plan*. In accordance with that plan, MORPC's Regional Food Council is focused on developing a local-food processing and distribution "infrastructure" to provide markets to farmers and allow local food to become more "mainstream" and easily available to targeted populations.

The council is made up of business, government, and non-profit leaders, and representatives of all local food councils. It increasingly promotes local food as an economic development strategy and a way to strengthen urban and rural communities by:

- I. Serving as a convener and coordinator that connects the dots among new and existing food businesses;
  - II. Providing a forum that allows local/county food councils within the region to share ideas and work together on joint issues;
  - III. Addressing challenges that go beyond the scope of the region's local food councils, such as increasing meat processing capacity in the region or identifying and promoting innovative business and financing models; and
  - IV. Identifying initiatives that align with other MORPC expertise, such as food mapping, food-related development in areas with housing needs and energy-efficient food distribution.
4. Green Region Awards nominations & Vote by Committee. Amanda McEldowney gave an overview of the Green Awards and this year's nominees. These awards are presented at the [Summit on Sustainability & the Environment](#) event on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Members voted and turned in the ballots to Amanda. The winner will be announced at the Summit on October 10<sup>th</sup>.
  5. Next Steps. Steve Stolte recommended a Subcommittee to survey MORPC members and working groups to better understand their needs and priorities for sustainability related issues. The survey results will guide the focus of the Sustainability Advisory Committee and assist in putting together goals and objectives for the committee. Steve nominated himself to chair the subcommittee, and Kate Barter, Scott Griffin, Erin Miller, and Dale Arnold all

volunteered. Staff will be in contact with them for input about a survey and the strategic plan. Work done on these items will be discussed at the next meeting in January.

6. **Adjourn.** Marilyn Brown adjourned the meeting at 3:05pm. Next meeting will be January 20, 2015.