

NEWSLETTERS

November, 2000 Newsletter

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Collaboration is at the core of Environmental Policy Forum:

Part II of the Forum refines a new process for policy-making

With a goal of open and inclusive stakeholder involvement, WEI's Environmental Policy Forum sessions have produced a mechanism for addressing environmental policy issues built on collaboration and consensus-building. By using this mechanism, policy recommendations drafted and supported by a diverse coalition of environmental stakeholders can be developed.

At Part II of the Environmental Policy Forum held on September 14 in Madison, the collaborative process developed in previous sessions was validated and refined. Participants representing business, government, non-profit environmental organizations, and academia "tested" and evaluated the mechanism to determine its value for addressing specific environmental issues. They also discussed what elements and characteristics it would need to have in order to get support and involvement from key stakeholders.

The mechanism, drafted by Forum participants, is comprised of five parts: an **Environmental Policy Summit** (an event that brings a wide range of interest groups together to identify pressing issues stakeholders want to address); a **Multi-Group Winnowing Process** (narrowing the list of issues developed from the Environmental Policy Summit and deciding which ones would be most effectively addressed through collaboration and consensus-building); **Providing Incentives** (determining the incentives required, for each particular issue, to get people to enter into a collaborative process); **Additional Steps Towards Implementation** (steps that need to be taken to work towards implementation); and **Incorporating Science** (suggested ways to integrate science into the process if participants determine that science is needed for a particular issue; this includes developing a way to identify and convene top scientists for each issue

and building consensus on how to implement science). The mechanism includes enough flexibility so that, depending on the issue and the group of people involved, modifications can be made to approach a particular issue in the most effective way.

Participants at Part II generally agreed that the process itself is well designed and could potentially have a significant impact on policy surrounding certain environmental issues. Many people noted, however, that its success will depend on having adequate representation of different interest groups and the involvement of people who are in positions to influence legislative or other decision making processes. In turn, the incentives required to assemble the right group of individuals and organizations for a successful collaborative initiative will depend on the empowerment of the process.

Participants suggested a few important guidelines for successfully moving the process forward. Most importantly, all the "supports" must be in place: staff, a professional facilitator, people who can provide the diverse base of information needed to adequately address an issue, diverse sources of funding, a wide range of well-represented environmental interest groups committed to engaging in a collaborative process, and an assurance from policy makers that the work products generated through the process will be recognized and considered in policy decisions.

An Environmental Policy Summit in 2001 was suggested as the next step towards implementing the process. Environmental Policy Forum participants will now work to further define the summit, build support for it among those involved in environmental policy decisions, and make sure the foundation of solid information and resources is in place. There is a committed group of leaders who want to move this process forward and begin applying it to environmental issues facing Wisconsin.

If you'd like to participate in the Environmental Policy Forum call Jennifer Wilfrid at (608) 280-0360. For more information on the Forum visit www.wi-ei.org.

John Imes

Director's View

Greetings -- In 2000, with the development of the Environmental Policy Forum, WEI returned to its roots as the organization that brings together business, citizen groups and government in cooperative efforts to further positive environmental outcomes for our state. The Environmental Policy Forum originated when a broad and distinguished group of stakeholders agreed that there are opportunities to make Wisconsin's environmental policy making more inclusive and effective.

We are grateful for the leadership of the WEI Board of Directors, and in particular DNR Secretary George Meyer and Dan Barthold of Miller Brewing, who helped initiate and fund this effort and focus WEI on the missed opportunities in environmental policy making.

A review of the last legislative session illustrates examples of missed opportunities. Of the over 220 separate bills related to environmental policy, only a dozen or so became laws. The new laws include important provisions for wetland mitigation and fixes to Smart Growth -- but not much else unless you count:

ACT 178 which "...prohibits DNR from promulgating or enforcing any rule that prohibits persons who are fishing from possessing barbed hooks..." or my personal favorite, ACT 50 which "...provides that a dog is not considered to be running at large (and the dog's owner not subject to fines) if the dog is actively engaged in a hunting activity, supervised by a person..."

Missed opportunities indeed. Now I imagine these bills were well intended by their authors, but legislation that is passed should reflect a comprehensive, focused vision for our state's environmental future. It is clear, based upon the record, that polarization and gridlock in the legislature continues to hinder effective environmental policy making. In addition, with the exception of Smart Growth and wetland mitigation, stakeholders have had limited opportunities to communicate and work together on developing sound environmental policies.

WEI believes that a broader, more collaborative approach is needed to improve Wisconsin's system of environmental policy development; an approach not entirely dependent on legislative action, and one that emphasizes open and inclusive stakeholder involvement and meaningful incentives for participants.

The principles and characteristics of consensus-based approaches and creative problem solving can be the foundation on which a new way of environmental policy making is built. In his keynote address at the Environmental Policy Forum in June, John Ehrmann, Ph.D., *Meridian Institute*, speaking from his 20+ years of experience in collaborative processes, introduced these principles:

Conflict is good. It is a natural part of collaborative decision-making, and expressing differences gives everyone an opportunity to learn and grow.

We are all part of the problem. It is easy to place blame and focus on what others are doing, but everyone needs to examine their own actions to recognize ways they might also be contributing to the problem.

Good science alone will not save the day. Scientific experts will always support different data, so "good science" alone can't be expected to solve problems.

Balance is not the answer. Integrative solutions which respond to the needs and concerns of the parties are necessary, as opposed to an "equal," balanced solution.

Ehrmann stressed that it is not possible to *find* consensus; people must *build* it through hard work, trust and communication.

WEI's Environmental Policy Forum sessions have produced a mechanism which is unique and flexible enough to respond to a variety of specific issues and stakeholder groups. The mechanism is not intended to be the one-stop-shop for environmental policy making, but to offer a new process for individuals and organizations committed to a collaborative approach to environmental improvement. Our next step will be to hold an Environmental Policy Summit which brings together a wide range of interest groups to identify the pressing issues stakeholders want to address.

We recognize that there's a healthy skepticism towards using collaboration to improve environmental policy making in the state. On the other hand, we think the timing is right. We see it everyday with builders, businesses and citizens experimenting with new approaches, technologies and practices to further positive environmental outcomes.

The Environmental Policy Forum is a valuable tool for recognizing where interests overlap and progress can be made.

In the midst of the American depression Franklin D. Roosevelt observed, "The country needs, and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something..."

We believe the temper of the times is conducive to bold, persistent experimentation in environmental policy making, and we welcome your ideas and support in helping shape Wisconsin's environmental future.

Green Built Home in 2000 Parade of Homes Features Affordable Homes and New Urbanism

Twenty-two homes in this year's Madison Area Builders Association Parade of Homes and ten in the Metropolitan Builders Association 2000 Parade of Homes have been certified by Green Built Home . Thousands of visitors at both Parades got a glimpse of the latest products, practices and technologies used in green building.

"Homes built to Green Built Home standards gives builders a significant opportunity to reduce the environmental impacts of home building and provide a better value for home buyers," said Dirk Mason, Green Built Home Program Director.

Glacier Crossing in the Madison area presented three Green Built Home models priced under \$175,000 including the lot; these homes prove that building green does not have to cost more than traditional home building. Middleton Hills, a site that featured five Green Built Home models, is a leading example of New Urbanism with its efficient use of land, pedestrian-friendly design and community-enhancing features. All Green Built Homes in the Parades feature high quality construction, appealing design and innovative use of materials.

The Green Built Home Checklist, which went from one basic energy requirement in 1999 to sixteen requirements in 2000, includes erosion control, Energy Star appliances, recycled materials and ventilation/indoor air quality criteria. The Checklist has over 200 strategies to use infrastructure and materials more efficiently and conserve natural resources and energy. Waste utilization practices are also highlighted in the Checklist.

"The Green Built Home Checklist is very meaningful in terms of reductions in the environmental impacts of home building while being achievable for builders," said John Imes, Wisconsin Environmental Initiative Executive Director. "Green Built Home succeeds because it emphasizes the use of high quality, economically viable technologies, builder practices and materials."

This year's models feature a variety of green features that add up to homes constructed with high quality materials, improved durability, low on-going maintenance costs and a reduced impact on the environment. Green features incorporated into some of the models include:

- Recycled plastic/wood composite materials and ACQ treated lumber used for deck construction instead of highly toxic CCA treated lumber
- Installation of heat recovery ventilators to improve energy efficiency and indoor air quality
- Use of fiber-cement board siding made of recycled content, reducing the need for wood siding and providing increased durability and reduced maintenance
- Use of engineered wood products reducing the need for 2 x 10 or greater dimensional lumber
- Improvements in the home's thermal performance by minimizing heat loss through the use of Energy Star designated windows
- Water-based urethane finishes on wood floors to improve the indoor air quality of the home
- Front loading, horizontal axis clothes washers that use substantially less water than top loader machines provide additional energy savings

The average Home Performance Rating (HERS) score for the Green Built Home models was 87. These models will use at least 20 to 30 percent less energy than standard code-conforming homes. In addition, in coordination with WasteCap Wisconsin and the Metropolitan Builders Association, all Green Built Home™ builders participated in a wood recycling effort which recycled 52.4 tons of wood or the equivalent of 376 telephone pole sized trees.

Homes featured in this year's Glacier Crossing Parade site demonstrated that "going green" does not cost more. Many green products on the market cost the same as conventional choices. When certain "green" features do cost more initially, they are offset over time by future savings in reduced energy costs. In the long run owners of a certified Green Built Home and "green" products save money because less is spent in monthly utility bills and maintenance.

Green Built Home is sponsored by Dorgan Associates (www.dorganai.com), Home Depot (www.homedepot.com), James Hardie Building Products (www.jameshardie.com), KVV (Kolbe Vinyl Windows) (www.kkvw.com), Northern Crossarm (www.crossarm.com),. Additional partners include: Energy Center of Wisconsin, Madison Gas & Electric, Madison Area Builders Association, Metropolitan Builders Association of Greater Milwaukee, Valley Home Builders Association, WasteCap Wisconsin, Wisconsin Energy Bureau, Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation, Wisconsin Green Building Alliance and Wisconsin Gas-Wisconsin Electric.

The goals of Green Built Home are to protect the environment, educate the public about green building products and practices and recognize builders who are taking proactive measures to protect the environment. For more information on Green Built Home, visit www.wi-ei.org or contact Dirk Mason at dmason@wi-ei.org or (608)280-0360.

High School Students Building Green Built Home

In a project funded by Madison Gas & Electric (MG & E), twelve seniors at Madison's LaFollette High School are finishing their high school years with some hands-on experience in green building. From 7:30-11:00 a.m. each day, this select group of students from LaFollette's building trades program work on the construction of a three-bedroom, ranch-style house in the Reston Heights subdivision on Madison's east side. The house will meet Green Built Home and Wisconsin Energy Star standards for energy and resource efficiency.

MG & E initiated the project by asking teachers in the MG & E service area what they could do for energy education in schools. Steve Munson, a teacher in LaFollette's building trades program, had done home-building projects with students in Mt. Horeb for 10 years, and suggested to Dave Borski, a senior marketing representative at MG & E, that students build a home.

"It's a win-win process," Borski said. The program provides an opportunity to showcase different building programs and give students hands-on experience. Steve Munson also recognizes the importance of giving students a better understanding of the career they are planning to enter and gaining confidence in their abilities.

The project is also providing an opportunity for teachers to learn. This is the first experience with green building for Munson and Chuck Spitz, another teacher involved in the project. Munson said that he has addressed energy efficiency in past projects but Green Built Home has introduced him to different materials and aspects of indoor air quality. He plans to incorporate these into a home maintenance and remodeling class that he'll be teaching in the spring. Spitz also thinks that his experience with this project will affect what he teaches in the future. "We always try to upgrade, teach to the cutting edge, and incorporate innovative ideas."

Spitz has not found it difficult to incorporate green design into home construction. "It is absolutely simple," he said. Munson mentioned that "it wasn't any more work" to meet Green Built Home and Wisconsin Energy Star standards. Both, however, agreed that working with suppliers on getting "green" materials can be a challenge, but that hopefully this will increase knowledge of quality alternative products and make them more readily available.

Munson and Spitz are pleased with the progress the students are making and the quality of their work. "Just because high school students built it doesn't mean it's lesser quality," Munson said. "They know the quality must be first rate." He also added that due to the strong emphasis placed on accuracy in all aspects of the construction, "students will care about how to build a house properly."

According to Matt Gaudreau, one of the seniors participating in the project and preparing for college, "This couldn't have come at a better time." He has been working towards a project like this in construction classes since freshman year. He plans to pursue a career related to construction or engineering, and he values the chance to get hands-on experience in practicing what he has learned in the traditional classroom setting. He said that the most important thing he is getting out of the project is experience in teamwork and meeting deadlines. He also recognizes the value of working with innovative building programs that address issues such as controlling heating and other energy costs. "I think it's a good way to build a home," he said.

Any profit from the sale of the home will be used to create a building trades scholarship sponsored by MG & E.

Member Profile

Darin Harris, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Darin Harris has served on the WEI Board of Directors since 1996. He is a management consultant at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, where his work focuses on using group-based problem solving techniques to address complex environmental issues. He has been involved in various projects, including developing new standards for recycled newsprint, rock climbing policy, watershed planning, air toxics regulation, and local land use projects. He brings valuable skill and expertise to WEI, particularly in designing and facilitating our public policy-related events.

Darin Harris began cultivating his interest in environmental issues as an undergraduate student/ environmental activist at Long Beach State University in southern California. He was very active with grass roots environmental groups on campus. After working on several land use issues in southern California, however, he began to see that there were limits to what he and other students could accomplish with their approach. "You can only get the troops riled so much," Harris said, "and many times it's ineffective." He was referring to approaching environmental issues in an adversarial context, in which "one

side wins, the other side loses, and everyone goes home," and little can be done once a decision is made.

Thinking that there had to be a better way, he enrolled as a graduate student at the La Follette Institute of Public Affairs at UW- Madison, focusing his research on alternative dispute resolution in creating improved environmental policy. "I was interested in how you reach decision makers and get good policy into place- that really intrigued me." He wanted to find an alternative to the "win-lose, everyone goes home" model which could provide a way for people to get together early in the process to discuss their perspectives and potential solutions to the problem.

His experiences set the stage for his career at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, where he started working as a policy analyst six years ago. "At the time, DNR was working on how to bridge the three areas of Integrated Ecosystem Management: ecology, economics and society, and laws and institutions," Harris explained. He was interested in bringing together business, government, and citizen groups to give decision makers an opportunity to see all the different sides of environmental policy issues, thereby creating policies that would reflect diverse stakeholder interests. It was also his hope that by incorporating the views of diverse interests, more effective policies would result that would have a greater likelihood of being implemented.

Harris also explored what was being done outside of government to bring diverse stakeholders together to collaborate on policy issues. "DNR can't always play a neutral role because we're a regulating authority," he explained. He became involved in WEI in 1996 because of WEI's potential to be a neutral convener on tough public policy issues and give people a legitimate place to work things out. "WEI is the only group I know of in Wisconsin that's trying to peel away the politics and the negative power and control imbalances inherent in any issue, for the purpose of clarifying the needs of business, government, and citizen groups."

Harris' interests and expertise have made him an important asset for WEI, particularly in the Environmental Policy Forum. He has played a key role in planning and designing Forum events, and has facilitated several Forum-related discussions. To him, the Environmental Policy Forum represents an opportunity to reach out to more groups in Wisconsin that are involved in environmental issues and further define WEI's role as a neutral convener. He thinks that the most significant outcome of the Environmental Policy Forum was being successful in creating a space in which very diverse groups effectively participated, more relationships were formed, and communication between people was enhanced. He also appreciates the Forum's focus on longer term progress. "The conversation and relationships started at the Forum continued after the event- this is a hopeful sign."

Harris thinks that WEI's Business and Environment and Green Built Home programs also present opportunities for long-term progress in advancing environmental improvements through increased communication among various interests. "They're within WEI's mission, and focusing on certain sectors," Harris said. "Ultimately, WEI has a unique

opportunity to fulfill its promise as envisioned five years ago. That promise is to be a trusted and legitimate entity that can invite diverse interests to the table for the purpose of collaborative problem solving. The proof of this approach will be improved environmental quality."

In Brief...

Madison area builder **Jim Belanger of Tuscan Custom Homes** has committed to building all of homes to Green Built Home™ standards. " After researching our current building practices, we determined that we were already meeting the Green Built Home™ criteria. This made our decision to the program simple," said Belanger. In addition to Green Built Home™, Tuscan Custom Homes also builds Wisconsin Energy Star Homes (incorporated in Section 2 of the Green Built Home™ Checklist). "Both Green Built Home™ and Wisconsin Energy Star Home work well together to create a quality product," he said. To date Tuscan Custom Homes has submitted eight homes to the Green Built Home™ program, the most of any builder.

The **Madison Area Builders Association (MABA)** has established a Green Built Committee. The committee was developed out of a Recycling Task Force. As task force members learned more about the three "R's" (Recycle, Reduce and Reuse), the committee realized the connection to green building and recommended that a Green Built Committee be formed. The Green Built Committee was approved by the MABA Board of Directors with the understanding that it would continue its involvement with recycling efforts, but also further association involvement with Green Built Home™ and help promote green building ideas to the public and their membership.

WEI will soon be recruiting **2001 Green Built Home™ Partners** from businesses that provide products or services that meet the Green Built Home™ Checklist criteria. Partnership with Green Built Home is an excellent way to market a green product or service to Wisconsin builders, home buyers and the general public. Contact Connie McElrone at (608) 280-0360 or wei@itis.com for more information.

CALENDAR

November

3-5: Natural Capitalism and the Resource Efficiency Revolution

Conference with Amory Lovins, co-author of Natural Capitalism,

Big Sur CA: Esalen Institute: (831) 667-3000.

8-10: Adding Value: Strengthening Corporate Social Responsibility Strategies, New York, NY: Business for Social Responsibility: (415) 537-0890, www.bsr.org.

11: A Salute to America 2000 Gala Fundraiser, Milwaukee, WI: Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful: (414) 272-5462.

15: Talk & Tour, Outpost Natural Foods, Wauwatosa, WI: Co-sponsored by WasteCap Wisconsin and Wisconsin Green Building Alliance: (414) 961-1100.

28: Urban Redevelopment v. Urban Sprawl, Milwaukee, WI: Wisconsin Green Building Alliance: (414) 224-9422.

December

7: Political Perspectives on Green Building and Sustainability, Madison, WI:

Wisconsin Green Building Alliance: (608) 257-1011 or djsample@chorus.net

January

4-7: Home Builders Expo, Milwaukee, WI: Metropolitan Builders Association of Greater Milwaukee: (414) 258-9850.

February

10 & 11, 15-18: Winter Wonderland of Homes, Fox Valley, WI: Valley Home Builders Association: (920) 731-7931.

March

2-4: Home Products Show, Madison, WI: Madison Area Builders Association:(608) 288-1133.

9-11: Your American Dream Educational Home Show, locations to be announced:

Valley Home Builders Association: (920) 731-7931.

9-11: Wisconsin Lakes Convention, Stevens Point, WI: UWEX Lakes Partnership(715) 346-2116.

18-20: National Green Building Conference, Seattle, WA: (888) 602-HOME.