

January 25, 2003

Sustainability Subcommittee January 21, 2003 Meeting Notes (Draft)

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Meeting Location: Kent County Service Center, 1500 Scribner, Grand Rapids

Meeting Time: 1:15 PM- 2:45 PM

Those Present: Brian Donovan, City of East Grand Rapids; Jane Secord, Lori Larsen, CES; Erika Rosebrook, Kent County Administration; Karl Hausler, MDA; Jim Oosting, Bowne Township Planning Commission & Friends of Coldwater River Watershed; John Koches, Water Resource Institute; Jim Smallegan, FTCH; Janice Tompkins, DEQ.

*Kristine Huizen was not able to attend but provided via e-mail her comments which I have include in the meeting notes.

Discussion 1: Why did you choose to participate on the sustainability subcommittee?

- If we are going to be successful in implementing the Phase 2 regulations we need to do it through partnerships and creating a sense of ownership by all the stakeholders. Enforcement of the regulations alone will not be successful. We need to develop an educational outreach and incentives, not just new ordinances. The example given was a fertilizer ordinance and becoming the fertilizer police will not be effective or efficient at achieving better water quality.
- Looking at sustainability is key to ensure implementation.
- To be successful this has to be everyone's project.
- It allows us to look at the big picture and discover what roles people or agencies can play to accomplish sustainability. It allows us to leverage our resources.
- It provides an avenue to do creative problem solving of the complex issues.
- It provides an avenue to develop a system approach to the challenges and have a voice in the outcome.
- It will provide opportunities for linkage and maximize resources.
- To create a common vision that people will buy into not just from their heads but from their hearts in order to ensure a healthy ecosystem for people to utilize and enjoy for generations to come.

Discussion 2: What should be the outcomes for this subcommittee?

- Increase public awareness and involvement
- Institutionalization of watershed principals through partnerships including local government.
- Get an ideal or develop a common vision
- Develop a healthy tension between the ideal and today's reality and an appreciation for the value of that tension.
- Develop evaluation measures (report card)
- Link with the upper watershed
- Actions steps that stakeholders can take – (Cookbook)

- Provide for the next generation's replacements to continue to implement watershed management principals.
- Develop a common vision and a strategic plan for sustainability
- Develop a plan for stable funding. Whether that is a new source of funding (like the bottle bill being introduced) or redirected from else where. It is critical to identify as many opportunities as possible.
- Get the buy in of those stakeholders that have the most direct interest in the waterway. It will be those groups that will keep the interest of the watersheds at the forefront.

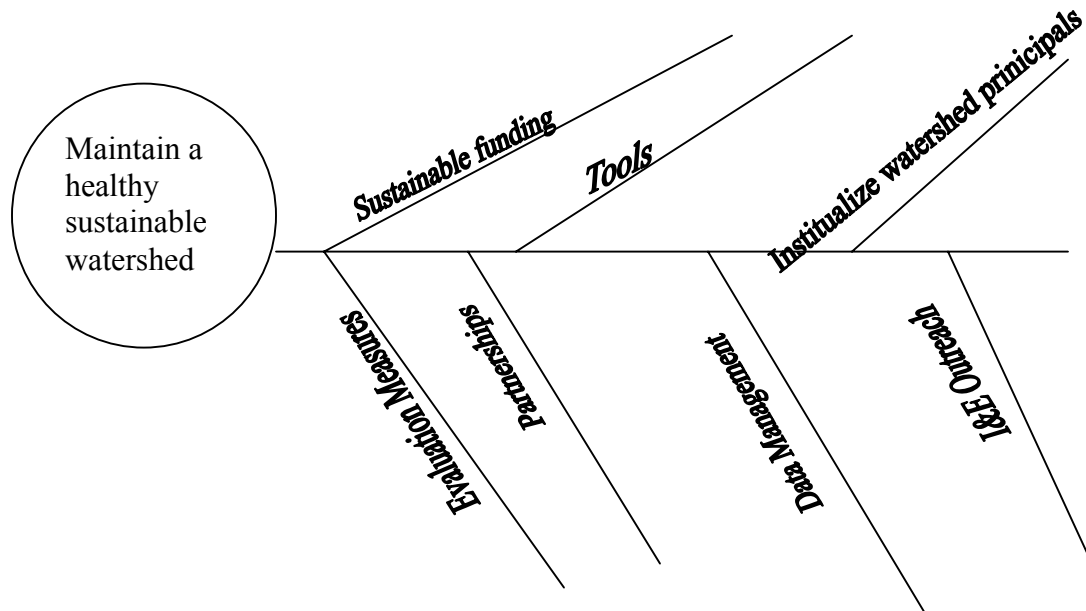
This discussion raised several questions. What was the role of this committee in achieving the above outcomes and the role of the other committees? What role does the steering committee play in the development of the vision and the common language? Is it their responsibility to develop the vision or is their role to respond to what we have put together? Is our role to just develop a funding plan for future projects? How detailed should we go in our strategies: goals? action steps? Should this committee develop the big picture and a second committee be formed afterwards to develop action steps and seek ways to implement those ideas?

Subcommittee Consensus in answering those questions: The role of the steering committee is to be the overseer and to respond to the work of the various subcommittees. The urban, rural, technical, and I&E subcommittees are focusing on providing input on the tasks laid out in the 319 grant work plan. This is the only subcommittee who has the opportunity to focus on the big picture. In looking at the big picture the committee can: 1) provide direction on what are the needs not currently being address by the 319 project and provide input on what else could be done to enhance the watershed plan and 2) develop a sustainable strategic plan from a systems approach. Without a clear vision and a common language that captures the heart of the stakeholders it will be difficult to achieve the outcomes that the subcommittee listed. The strategic plan needs to answer the following: what, why, who, when and how. The subcommittee will develop the draft strategic plan and then give it to the steering committee and the other subcommittees for their input. Make what ever changes needed based on the input received and then as a tangible product have a final strategic plan to maintain a healthy sustainable Lower Grand River Watershed.

Discussion 3: What should be the framework to develop the strategic plan?

It was decided to use a systems approach. We would utilize the fishbone tool for the initial brainstorming. What are all the components (causes) that will affect the outcome we are trying to achieve? We started to brainstorm ideas.

Fishbone Example



Discussion 4: When and how often should we meet?

The issue was raised that to try to do this type of braining storming in 1.5 hrs is difficult. The suggestion was that we meet at least for a half of day to accomplish more thereby reducing the need to meet more often. The tentative date suggested was February 19, 2003 from 1 PM – 4:30 PM. The issue was raised that there is a more immediate need to determine what other activities outside the scope of the 319 work plan we should be pursuing to enhance the current 319 watershed plan? The consensus of the subcommittee was that staff should develop ideas and funding ideas and bring them back to the subcommittee for input.

Discussion 5: Do we have appropriate representation on the committee?

We all agreed that representatives from Agriculture were needed. Karl offered to invite Scott Piggott, Farm Bureau. I offered to talk to some agricultural people to see if they would participate. (There are other voices not being heard: urban non governmental and people of color. Do we need more riparian representatives? What efforts should we make between now and the next meeting to try and invite more representative voices?)

Evaluation of the meeting

What was good: 1) Discussion from a philosophical perspective, 2) Everyone was engaged and participated, 3) The format for the agenda, 4) Meeting preparation (homework) included as part of the agenda notice, 5) Janice did a good job of facilitation (Janice listened well)

What could be improved: 1) The agenda and meeting preparation assignment should be sent out earlier, 2) 1.5 hr time frame was difficult to accomplish the agenda items. 3) Meeting room was very warm.

Tentative Outcomes for the next meeting: 1) Develop draft mission statement, 2) Develop draft vision, 3) Diagram the system, 5) Further Diagram the subcomponents, 6) Prioritize the components 7) Develop goals for the top priority components,

Assignment for Next Meeting

(Tentatively set for Feb 19, 1 PM – 4:30 PM, location yet to be determined):

1. Bring ideas for a draft mission and vision statement*
2. Be thinking through what are the major components that are needed to have a healthy sustainable watershed.
3. Bring in an object or picture that reflects your vision of a healthy sustainable watershed.
4. Contact Jerry or me before the next scheduled meeting if you have names of people you think should participate on the committee with us.

* I handed out at the first meeting a document call the Watershed Management Accomplishments in the Grand Rapids District 1990-2202. It contains my vision and goals that I have been working under. Please only use it to stimulate your thinking not as something that just needs to be tweaked. It only reflects one perspective. To achieve our outcomes the vision and goals needs to also include your perspectives.