

## Go Green! ¡Viva Verde! Committee Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2009, 1:30 p.m.

AS 103C

Attendees: Kim Corbin, Fine and Performing Arts/Speech; Irene Dennis, Corporate and Community Education; Anna CohenMiller, ESOL; Denise Barkis Richter, Communications; Joe Greco and Bubba Lowery, SpawGlass.

Denise opened the meeting shortly after 1:30 p.m. and asked for the April minutes to be approved. The minutes were unanimously approved by those in attendance.

Denise welcomed and introduced Bubba Lowery and Joe Greco of SpawGlass to the meeting. Bubba is the construction superintendent for all of the renovation going on around campus, and he wandered over to the Go Green! ¡Viva Verde! booth during PACfest to introduce himself. Denise invited him to attend this meeting. Bubba and his wife are building a geothermal (pollution-free) home in Fredericksburg, and he is very knowledgeable about sustainable practices.

Irene Dennis (Environmental Citizenship Subcommittee) reported that the college's student ambassadors will include information about our recycling program during their tours of the campus. Denise asked for Irene to report on Corporate and Community Education's green classes and initiatives at upcoming green meetings so that we know what's available and can help promote their programs. Irene said that she would invite Yolanda Jimenez, the college's director of institutional advancement, to attend September's green meeting to fill the committee in on the multi-million dollar grant the college received to build a botanical center and natural trail. Larry Jackson, dean of CCE, asked Denise via e-mail to provide a list of the committee's green accomplishments (see attached) to submit to Dr. Federico Zaragoza at District for a CE/Workforce meeting on April 17. The District hopes to tap into the federal stimulus package for green energy/green jobs.

Kim (Recycling and Solid Waste Subcommittee) reported that we recycled at PACfest for the first time. Green recycling bins were stationed throughout the courtyard area next to every trash can. At the end of the day, eight totes with empty plastic, empty metal and empty glass containers were filled to the brim. Special thanks to the IALS eco-tourism students from Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia for their outstanding work throughout the day. PACfest recycling would not have happened without them. Kim said that we need to develop an information sheet to give to next year's PACfest vendors regarding green practices (disposing grease and wastewater, flattening cardboard boxes, rinsing glass bottles before placing in recycle bins, etc.). Finally, labels that read: "Please recycle here! EMPTY plastic, EMPTY glass, and EMPTY metal" that were placed on the green recycling bins for PACfest were a hit, and more labels for all green bins on campus will be printed and affixed. The recyclables total for April was 3,980 pounds, which brings our four-month (January, February, March and April) total up to 18,364 pounds (9 tons) of rescued recyclables. We rock!

Natural Habitat and Indigenous Wildlife Subcommittee members were not present. Denise reported that Greg Pasztor secured 200+ free trees and planting guides from the City of San Antonio again this year to distribute during PACfest. Weldon Riggs in Horticulture helped Greg retrieve the trees.

Anna CohenMiller (Air Quality and Energy Reduction) reported that the "San Antonio Current" printed an article titled "Crime Scene Cleanup" on April 29, 2009, that deals with the "Toxic Triangle" near Kelly Air Force Base that has a high incidence of liver, kidney and other cancers. She distributed copies to the committee attendees. Anna also reported that she's been in contact with Joe Martinez of Texas A&M-College Station's Energy Systems Laboratory, and he is working with District to inventory the number of occupancy sensors on each campus. (Occupancy sensors turn lights off in empty classrooms/offices, which saves energy/reduces pollution.) Anna is still working to get energy misers installed on all soft drink vending machines on campus. The person in charge of contracts at District said that the energy misers would have to be written into future contracts. Anna also said that she's been in contact with Cakky Brawley, who teaches sculpture in Palo Alto's Art Department, to see if she and her students could create artistic bicycle racks for the campus like the one at the downtown public library. Anna has also been in contact with Dr. Mike Flores about funding this project. He was receptive. The committee also talked about getting old bicycles donated so that we could spray paint them day-glow green and place them around campus at the bike racks. The bicycles would then be used by students, faculty and staff to get around campus. Anna also said that she would work with Dr. Daniel Rodriguez, director of Student Life, to make sure that VIA Metropolitan is invited to campus to sell bus passes to students, faculty and staff. (\$35 student semester pass allows unlimited rides on all VIA transportation.)

Water Conservation Subcommittee members were not present. Bubba Lowery recommended that the committee look into rain water capture for the campus. Committee members wondered if retrofitting the buildings with this catchment system was an area that the stimulus package would support. Bubba recommended a 5,000-gallon tank (8 feet in diameter, 10 feet tall) that could be powered by a solar pump. He also suggested the installation of rain sensors that would shut off the sprinkler system when it is raining.

Green Purchasing Subcommittee members were not present.

Green Building/Renovation Subcommittee members were not present, but Joe Greco of SpawGlass presented the committee a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) project timeline. He said that LEED (green building/renovation) has to be incorporated into building projects from the get go. The timeline suggests that the project should be registered with the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) as early as possible. The owner, architect, engineers, landscape architect, interior designer, lighting designer, etc. need to identify LEED project goals from the start to develop a set of green building guidelines, strategies and recommendations. "First cost" vs. "Life-cycle cost" must be explored. (Green buildings may cost more initially, but they save money over the long run.) San Antonio is hosting a Green School Symposium on May 20-21 that is sponsored by local chapters of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) with Solar San Antonio. Denise said that she forwarded the information on the symposium to the chancellor.

The Go Green! ¡Viva Verde! Booth during PACfest 2009 was once again a huge success. Thanks to Camille Fiorillo for the eye-catching “hanging clothesline” booth design, the official Fiesta (clothes)pins, and gathering the various environmental information handouts! Thanks also to all the volunteers who administered the home energy survey and answered attendees’ questions. Thanks to our presence at PACfest, several electric cars were displayed, 200+ free trees were given away, 500+ reusable grocery bags were handed out, the Recyclables Challenge Game (separating recyclables from trash) was played, and piles of environmental information was distributed. Palo Alto’s green initiatives were featured during KABB’s morning news. Weathercaster Shaun Stevens said, “Yesterday was Earth Day, but every day is Earth Day at Palo Alto College.” Stevens interviewed Denise, who reported that the college had rescued 14,000 pounds of recyclables in the first three months of the year. They also discussed recycling during PACfest and showcased the green bins that were distributed around campus. San Antonio City Councilman Philip Cortez, a Palo Alto College graduate, also gave the committee’s recycling effort a plug during his presentation. Cortez said that PACfest was the first festival he had been to that offered recycling.

Regarding follow up to the Environmental Site Assessment, Denise sent a memo to President Cha Guzman on April 9 with a list of 23 employees who have had cancer or tumors during the college’s 20-year history. Denise had not received a response from the president, so she said she would send a follow-up memo.

Another idea the committee discussed was to encourage Palo Alto faculty to incorporate “green” components into their curriculum. An example would be to have students enrolled in English classes, both developmental and academic, write about the college’s recycling program. Bubba mentioned that there’s a Renewable Energy Roundup and Green Energy Fair in Fredericksburg on Saturday, Sept. 26. We can tour his geothermal home, too. Denise is going to look into securing the District vans for this green field trip that will be open to students, faculty and staff.

Denise called the meeting to a close shortly after 3:30 p.m. and thanked the committee members for their on-going work. The committee’s next meeting will be on Thursday, September 3, location and time TBD.

Respectfully submitted by Denise Barkis Richter, Ph.D.