

Evanston's Future!

Monthly Electronic Newsletter of

*Evanston's Energy Future
Evanston's Transportation Future
Evanston Interreligious Sustainability Circle
Evanston's Affordable Housing Future
Citizens Lighthouse Community Land Trust
Evanston Food Policy Council*

March 2006

Network for Evanston's Future groups welcome new members, at any time and at any level of interest or participation.

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Calendar

March 2, 7 – 9 p.m.

Evanston Food Policy Council

Location: Unitarian Church, 1330 Ridge

Contact: Debbie Hillman, 847-328-7175

DLHillman@sbcglobal.net

March 12, 3 - 5 p.m.

Network for Evanston's Future

Location: Friends Meeting House, 1010 Greenleaf, Evanston

Contact: Steve Perkins, steve@cnt.org

March 14, 7:45 – 9:15 p.m.

Evanston's Energy Future

Location: Home of Len Sciarra, 3003 Park Place, Evanston

Contact: Joel Freeman at 847-869-0955 or JSF@grummanbutkus.com

March 23, 7:30 p.m.

Evanston's Transportation Future

Location: Evanston Civic Center, 2100 Ridge Ave., Rm 3650

Contact: Richard Martin, rmartin101@comcast.net

Calendar (continued)

- Mach 26, 3 – 5 p.m.** **Food, Fun, and Facts: Creating Connections in our Schools Between Diet, Health, and the Environment**
Location: Evanston Ecology Center
RSVP: Keep Evanston Beautiful at 847-448-8256 x105
*See **Special Events** for additional details.
- April 2, 1:45 – 5 p.m.** **Creating a Sustainable Evanston Forum**
Location: Unitarian Church of Evanston, 1330 Ridge Ave.
Contact: Steve Perkins, steve@cnt.org
*See **Special Events** for additional details.
- April 6, 7 – 9 p.m.** **Evanston Food Policy Council**
Location: Unitarian Church, 1330 Ridge Ave.
Contact: Debbie Hillman, 847-328-7175
DLHillman@sbcglobal.net
- April 12, 7:30 - 9 p.m.** **Evanston's Energy Future**
Location: TBD
Contact: Joel Freeman
847-869-0955 or JSF@grummanbutkus.com
- April 23, 1:45 - 5 p.m.** **What Would It Take 2006: Earth Day Workshop for Congregations**
Location: Beth Emeth Free Synagogue, 112 Dempster Ave.
Contact: Steve Perkins, steve@cnt.org
*See **Special Events** for additional details.
- May 7, 12:30 p.m.** **Global Warming Forum**
Location: First Presbyterian Church of Evanston
Contact: Verna Todd, gracetravelr@earthlink.net or 847-491-6233
Sponsored by First Presbyterian Church of Evanston
*See **Special Events** for additional details.

Visit www.evanstonfuture.org and click on [Calendar of Events](#) for upcoming meetings and activities.

Special Announcement

Submit Your "Green Tips"

The Evanston RoundTable is inviting citizens to write 200 word "Green Tips" for publication. The RoundTable will run a series of "green tips" to build the sustainability momentum going in Evanston. No more than 200 words. Questions and submissions to: Claire Bryant at info@evanstonroundtable.com.

Special Events

Food, Fun, and Facts: Creating Connections in our Schools Between Diet, Health, and the Environment, March 26th, 3 – 5 p.m.

Keep Evanston Beautiful and Slow Food Chicago will present a program on local and national initiatives regarding nutrition and obesity issues, including rethinking school lunches, farm-to-school programs, and edible school gardens in Evanston.

To ensure seating, please register by calling Keep Evanston Beautiful at 847-448-8256 x105.

The program will take place at the Ecology Center, 2024 McCormick Blvd., Evanston, on Sunday, March 26, 2006, 3:00-5:00 PM.

Creating a Sustainable Evanston, April 2nd, 1:45 p.m.

A public forum using Portland, Oregon as a model for imaginative and effective municipal initiatives in Evanston.

Keynote speaker: Steve Cohen, Portland Office of Sustainable Development

Breakout discussions on the relevance of Portland's experience to possible Evanston initiatives, including energy, housing, transportation, food, green buildings, and global warming.

Julia Carroll, Evanston's City Manager, will respond to Mr. Cohen's remarks and to ideas generated in the breakout groups.

Free and open to all.

What Would It Take 2006: Earth Day Workshop for Congregations, April 23rd, 1:45 p.m.

Presented by Faith in Place and co-sponsored by Evanston Interreligious Sustainability Circle and Beth Emet Synagogue.

Tools for religious people and their congregations to become better stewards of creation.

Topics: geothermal systems, hot water systems, coal vs. nuclear energy production, 2006 policy at the state level, congregational support for local and sustainable agriculture, low maintenance natural landscaping, best practices by Evanston congregations, and more.

Free and open to all.

Global Warming Forum, May 7th, 12:30 p.m.

Join the First Presbyterian Church of Evanston and speakers Dr. Paul Friesema, Professor of Political Science from Northwestern University and Dr. David Rhoads, Professor of Theology from Lutheran School of Theology for an afternoon of topics related to worldwide interviews with people impacted by climate change and eco-resources for churches and people of faith.

Network Member Updates

Evanston's Energy Future

(Submitted by Len Sciarra)

Energy Conservation Code

The International Energy Conservation Code 2003 to include residential construction was slated to come before the Evanston Planning and Development Committee on February 27th. If adopted in March the code would become effective for implementation within 60 days. Enforcement would start out with self-certification on the permit plans and some spot checking on larger projects. Updates will be posted future newsletters.

Don't Forget About Natural Gas

While the world may currently be focused on **oil**, we also need to be aware of where our **natural gas** comes from. In the United States, approximately 14 percent of electricity generation, 45 percent of home heating and 31 percent of the energy consumed by agriculture and industry comes from natural gas. The United States only has 2.9 % of the worlds known reserves.

Russia, Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates hold a combined 67% of known reserves. Think about that.

--from "The Geopolitics of Natural Gas," Michael T. Klare, *The Nation*, January 23, 2006.

Evanston's Energy Future (continued)

(Submitted by Joel Freeman)

U.S. Treasury Department/Internal Revenue Service Give Guidance for Energy Credits for Homeowners

The Treasury Department and the IRS have issued guidance (Notice 2006-26) on the certification that homeowners may rely on when they claim credits for purchases that make their homes more efficient. During 2006, individuals can make energy-conscious purchases that will provide tax benefits when filling out their tax returns next year. The credit will also be available for purchases in 2007. Manufacturers offering energy efficient items such as insulation or storm windows can assure their customers that their energy efficient items will qualify for the tax credit if certain energy efficiency requirements are met.

A recent tax law change provides a tax credit to improve the energy efficiency of existing homes. The law provides a 10 percent credit for buying qualified energy efficiency improvements. To qualify, a component must meet or exceed the criteria established by the 2000 International Energy Conservation Code (including supplements) and must be installed in the taxpayer's main home in the United States. The following items are eligible:

- Insulation systems that reduce heat loss/gain
- Exterior windows (including skylights)
- Exterior doors
- Metal roofs (meeting applicable Energy Star requirements).

In addition, the law provides a credit for costs relating to residential energy property expenses. To qualify as residential energy property, the property must meet certification requirements prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury and must be installed in the taxpayer's main home in the United States. The following items are eligible:

- \$50 for each advanced main air circulating fan
- \$150 for each qualified natural gas, propane, or oil furnace or hot water heater
- \$300 for each item of qualified energy efficient property.

Network Member Updates

The maximum credit for all taxable years is \$500 – no more than \$200 of the credit can be attributable to expenses for windows.

Additionally, the new law makes a credit available to those who add qualified solar panels, solar water heating equipment, or a fuel cell power plant to their homes in the United States. In general, a qualified fuel cell power plant converts a fuel into electricity using electrochemical means, has an electricity-only generation efficiency of more than 30 percent and generates at least 0.5 kilowatts of electricity. Taxpayers are allowed one credit equal to 30 percent of the qualified investment in a solar panel up to a maximum credit of \$2,000, and another equivalent credit for investing in a solar water heating system. No part of either system can be used to heat a pool or hot tub.

Additionally, taxpayers are also allowed a 30 percent tax credit for the purchase of qualified fuel cell power plants. The credit may not exceed \$500 for each 0.5 kilowatt of capacity.

These items must be placed in service after Dec. 31, 2005 and before Jan. 1, 2008.

Evanston's Transportation Future

(Submitted by: Richard Martin, Debbie Hillman, and Ursula Rose)

Vehicle / Bicycle Collisions

Norbert Budde reported that on Friday, February 24, a press conference has been scheduled to deal with a hit and run accident when a person driving a yellow Hummer hit a Northwestern student who was riding a bicycle northbound on Sherman in Evanston. Also, there was discussion and further sadness expressed regarding an 88 year old cyclist who was killed on February 15, when he was hit by a dump truck on Isabella.

There was discussion about crosswalks that need to be painted.

Bus Information Signs

Alex Sproul reported on email communications that he has had with John Burke, the Director of Transportation in the City of Evanston, regarding improved bus stop signs, similar to what Northwestern University provides for its bus service. Alex was suggesting that CMAQ funding should be considered for this. While John Burke informed Alex, due to the lateness of the request, that it would be unrealistic to use CMAQ funds for such for this year, John indicated that there might be some other city funds available for a smaller pilot project within the city. To discuss this further, a meeting with John Burke is planned for Tuesday, February 28. Some of the desired features, found in the Northwestern University signs include current schedules and maps that can easily and inexpensively be changed when routes and schedules change. It was suggested that the CTA should also be approached for participation and funding for such a project.

Yellow Line Study

Alex reported that he had no further information about the Yellow Line (CTA Skokie Swift) study, which involves evaluating the need for an additional stop in Evanston, and a possible extension of service to near Old Orchard Shopping Center. Because the decision has already been made to provide a stop at Oakton Street in Skokie, an evaluation of that stop has not been included in the scope of this study.

Network Member Updates

Coordination of Services

In the context of controversy surrounding the routing of the CTA # 201 bus at Sheridan and Central, where there has been neighborhood opposition to CTA buses at that intersection, there were a number of meetings, in which Representative Julie Hamos become involved. Out of this emerged a proposal to study the various services that are provided by different carriers, including CTA, Pace, Northwestern University, Evanston Hospital, and the various paratransit providers. Some successful similar coordination of services in DuPage County has been observed, and there was one meeting with DuPage County officials to discuss this. Alex agreed to inquire from John Burke whether or not there has been any progress regarding proposed funding for a planning study to look at this further.

Evanston's Transportation Strategic Planning Process Update

There was discussion regarding the ongoing strategic planning process with the City of Evanston. It was noted that at a recent meeting there were an estimated 200 in attendance, with a significant majority expressing dissatisfaction that the draft plan was merely a list of ideas (many of which were good), with no over-arching principles that are articulated in the draft. Debbie Hillman reported that she had convened a group from four organizations in Evanston (Network for Evanston's Future, Southeast Evanston Association, Design Evanston, and League of Women Voters) who met and prepared a list of four questions that they are encouraging all who are interested to answer. These are listed as follows:

- What do you or your organization view as Evanston's core community values?
- What is your definition of a "livable" city? Can you give a brief description of your ideal Evanston?
- Which key concerns of your organization are reflected in the Strategic Plan Draft? Which are not?
- What role is your organization willing or able to play in making Evanston a more livable community?

We discussed this and reflected on what this means for ETF. We are encouraging ETF participants to answer these questions and get back to Debbie Hillman with your answers. Following are some suggested responses from our discussion.

Regarding the core community values, in the context of sustainability, we agreed that the plan should include a wide range of transportation options including the availability of public transportation for everyone, including those with disabilities.

Regarding the definition of a livable city, we agreed that we want the City to establish "complete streets," as a standard for transportation projects, planning, and funding. "Complete streets" are safe and comfortable for all modes of travel, including walking, bicycling, public transit and wheelchairs.

Regarding key concerns, we observed that the draft of the Strategic Plan is missing a method of turning the plan into policy.

We discussed networking and internal communication, including the need to have regular input into the Network newsletter.

Network Member Updates

Evanston Food Policy Council

(Submitted by Debbie Hillman)

Food, Fun, and Facts: Creating Connections in our Schools between Diet, Health, and the Environment

Keep Evanston Beautiful and Slow Food Chicago will present a program on local and national initiatives regarding nutrition and obesity issues, including rethinking school lunches, farm-to-school programs, and edible school gardens in Evanston.

Lynn Hyndman, Keep Evanston Beautiful Board member, will talk and show pictures of the Dawes School edible gardens, as well as her recent tour of Alice Waters' Edible Schoolyard in Berkeley. Joel Smith, from Slow Food Chicago, will speak about the Slow Food Movement in America and locally. Jean Saunders, a member of the District 65 Wellness Policy Committee, will talk about wellness initiatives across the country.

Healthy, light fare will be sampled prior to and after the program. To ensure seating, please register by calling Keep Evanston Beautiful at 847-448-8256 x105.

The program will take place at the Ecology Center, 2024 McCormick Blvd., Evanston, on Sunday, March 26, 2006, 3:00-5:00 PM.

Food as a Policy Issue

Below is a brief statement by the Evanston Food Policy Council explaining why food needs to be on the city's radar -- why the reliability of our food supply is tenuous and why it needs to be a Mayor, and the City Council.

Today's urban populations are removed from the growing of food or farming by several generations and vast distances and times. There is a disconnect between the knowledge of the food on our plates and where and how it is grown, and a further disconnect of the relationship between what we eat and its effect on our health. This is a safety, security, and sovereignty concern.

"Considerations of the nutrition and health needs of the U.S. population have been disconnected from the considerations of agricultural practices and policy. Public and professional awareness is at an all time high that foods (and physical activity) are key components of serious health threats -- including heart disease, diabetes and cancer -- with health care costs approaching 15% of the GNP. There are compelling reasons to link the sustainable agriculture and health sectors. In light of the obesity crisis, both sectors are concerned with increasing production of and access to, fresh, affordable, high-quality farm products, and altering elements of the food system which favor production and distribution of highly processed, high-fat and high sugar foods." *

Many North American municipalities including Chicago, Portland, Toronto, and San Diego are rethinking the implications of the distance most food travels to reach the urban plate (estimates range from 1,300 to 2,500 miles). This transport and usage of energy is taking a serious toll on the environment. Illinois, with some of the deepest and richest topsoil in the world, has become an export state with approximately 80% of the crops in corn and soy, all exported for animal feed. Should there be a crisis that would prevent the routine transport of food, experts calculate that most cities in America would have approximately a two-day supply of food.

The production of our food supply today is dominated by large agribusinesses using environmentally degrading farming practices that deplete the soil and pollute the water and air. Excessive nonrenewable resources such as petroleum are used in transport and for chemical inputs in fertilizer.

Network Member Updates

Pesticide/herbicide use poses serious health risks to farm workers while also contaminating public water. Irradiation of food extends shelf life, but the human health risks from changed irradiated molecules and loss of vital enzymes plus the use, storage, and transport of radioactive materials are largely unknown. Widespread use of antibiotics in animal farming is a major public health worry because of the development of resistant bacteria, negating the efficacy of antibiotics in human health care. Genetic engineering raises the health issue of the modified DNA remaining undigested in the intestines, much less the specter of drifting pollen contaminating wild and native species. Mercury levels in fish and food-borne bacterial scares are all part of a new awareness of the need to address healthy food production and distribution. Obesity and hunger are pressing issues of social concern.

City governments, public interest groups, and community organizations are beginning to address access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Tools include comprehensive local food assessments, municipal policies of land use and purchase agreements that support regional organic food sources, and economic development around urban agriculture. Alliances are growing between urban people and farmers in their region.

Good food and good health have long been an important personal concern for many Evanston residents. Evanston has a long history of access to healthy foods, including one of the oldest farmers markets in the Chicago area, some of the earliest independent retail outlets in the “natural foods” movement, and now the home of the two biggest whole foods chains, barely a mile apart. Food and health are now taking on global policy-wise importance. It is time for the City of Evanston to regard food as a policy issue and to address the city’s food supply in the Strategic Plan and all further comprehensive planning. Our safety, security, and independence are at stake.

* Cultivating Common Ground: Linking Health & Sustainable Agriculture
(Prevention Institute, 2004)