

WELL Coordinating Committee Minutes of June 18, 2012

Present: CC members Peter, Holly, Madge, Jane & Tim;
Guests: Harry Maurer, Pat Norris, Beth Riedel, Susie Dean, Christopher Martin, Mike Adams, Fred, Chris, and Yolanda
Facilitator: Tim; Minutes: Madge

- 1. Minutes** of May 21 are approved.
- 2. Report on Bio-Char:** Peter requests adding this to the agenda, in view of an in-depth seminar on bio-char being offered at Sonoma State July 29-Aug. 1, as well as heightened local interest after the Grange youtube showings by Lee Davis. Mike Adams and his friend Fred have begun making bio-char in a 55-gallon barrel. By closing off oxygen as the “slash” or other raw material is cooked, it reduces CO2 emissions. Mike, plus the Drells, Michael Foley, and Peter, are all doing small-scale controlled studies on plantings with and without bio-char. According to proponents, the bio-char provides a structure that helps retain moisture and nutrients and should – especially after several years – increase yields. Bio-char may also produce some bio-fuel as a bi-product.
It is moved and approved that WELL do further research into whether we could get some scholarship or non-profit discount for the Sonoma State seminar, which normally costs \$395 plus lodging & food. Depending on results, there could be a request for some funding assistance to enable a representative to attend. This subject could also be reported in a newsletter article. Peter is point person on this.
- 3. Adaptation Conference:** Peter summarized the current plans for this July 19-21 Arcata event, including the possibility of the Grange live-streaming the main speakers here on Friday. Al & Peter are progressing on the video about Willits; Peter will present and be part of Q&A on that. Also Jane will be part of a panel on initiatives for local investing. The CoCom previously approved \$300 to defray costs for up to three CC members to attend. In addition to Peter and Jane, Tim is encouraged to replace Kimbal. It is moved and approved that, if a third CoCom member does not attend, we would allocate that \$100 to assist one or two local young persons to go.
- 4. Email Communications:** This past month, only the 7 elected CC members were on the list-serve, which was used intermittently and considered helpful to some. There was much discussion about pros and cons of transparency and inclusivity vs. info overload and misunderstandings regarding how broad to make the list, or possibly having two lists. It was moved and approved to have the list (wellcc@well95490.org) be the 7 elected members plus the “2nd circle” of people who are attending CC meetings regularly. For now that is: Pat, Beth, Harry, Susie and Christopher. Madge will draft a policy for what qualifies as “2nd circle” for possible future additions. The idea is that people who attend regularly know the people and context and are interested enough to follow the email thread. We may also want a larger “announce” list to keep all members better informed of events and new developments. One critical reminder: *use accurate subject headings!*
- 5. Emergency Kit-Making Day:** Holly says plans for this event July 28, 10am-1pm are progressing, with a letter going soon to businesses and groups that might participate, e.g. Coast Hardware, Rexall, Grange Grains, maybe JD Redhouse, CERT, Fire Dept., Mormon Church, etc. Madge will check with Rich Padula about use of the lot at W. Commercial St. Peter & perhaps Kimbal will have a WELL table at the event.

(Madge will send Holly the event planning matrix.)

6. Member Renewal Follow-up: Beth, Madge, April, Jane, Pat & Peter have lists to call (folks whose membership expired prior to 2011). Many of those reached are getting reminder letters and will, hopefully, renew. There is consensus that we can offer a one-year honorary membership to a few who have given service and have a financial hardship. (Beth & Madge to OK those.) Beth will coordinate a second round using emails to contact those for whom we have no valid phone number. (Holly willing to help.)

7a. Computer Upgrade: Madge says we seem to need an improvement, based on difficulties and slowness of our old system. Further research is needed to come up with a proposal. The advisory committee will be Tim, Peter and Harry. Peter will interview users to see what it is we do (& would like to do); Tim will see what software and capacity we currently have. This group will bring a proposal to next CC meeting.

7b. Office Needs: Several CC members have never met Monique and feel uncertain about how office tasks are handled. We need periodic financial reviews, a procedures manual and “where to find things” info, timely process for picking up mail, sending out checks, etc. Madge will invite Mo to next CC meeting for a review.

8. Investment Group: Jane, Holly, Peter & Madge have met and are drafting a proposed structure for a first “vehicle” for enabling local investment. After the draft is reviewed internally (by CC list), it will go to advisors such as Richard Cooper, John Kuhry, Keith Rutledge (re: REDI’s PACE program), and then possibly a legal expert on this subject such as Jenny Kassen (Cutting Edge Capital). Once we have developed a potential vehicle/structure, we will want another meeting with potential investors to hone the criteria that meet the objectives of most people and adjust accordingly. Tim and Susie would like to be added to the subcommittee for developing the draft, our questions, and outlining the process for going forward.

9. Re-Opening Seed Grants: Michael Foley is not using most of his \$3,500 allocated grant, and Bill Bruneau is not using his \$500. (BTW, the Mendo Free Skool seems to be doing essentially what Bill proposed; Holly will invite them to our next CC and also suggest we have an article in next Newsletter.) Madge suggests that, with these unused funds (up to about \$5,000), we could invite new seed grant projects. Others note that (a) we need to maintain a reserve for our organizational stability and for things that come up, such as seminars, etc.; and (b) we currently have our plate full with developing the investment group strategy. This idea is postponed for now.

10. Miscellany: (a) We aren’t tabling at June 28 Hometown Celebration, but Peter (& perhaps Holly) will hand out WELL flyers;
(b) Next newsletter is July/August – get items in to Jennifer!
(c) People felt the meeting went well; try for being more concise next time.
(d) Holly mentions again it would be nice to have a WELL office on Main St.

11. Next CC meeting is July 16. [NOTE: Changed to July 23.] Peter will facilitate.

TO DO LIST

Left-over from Previous Lists:

- Peter – Explore possible film programs
- Madge – Contact seed grant recipients for an update/report
- Madge – Revise & send out Event Planning Matrix
- Kimbal – Ask for WEC billboard notices
- Holly – Start draft of “State of WELL” flyer
- Mo – “Honoraria” were sent
- Holly -- Contact Patty Bruder to update us on Food Policy Council
- Peter – Continue plans for Willits video (with AI)
- Harry – Add contact info for Peter, Madge & Kimbal to website [done?]
- Madge – Add referral numbers to office answering machine message [not yet done]

New Items From June 18:

- Peter – Check on discounts for Sonoma State Bio-char seminar. Newsletter article?
- Mo – Reimburse Peter, Jane, possibly Tim (or other) for Adaptation Conference
- Mo – Provide financial status report; review office procedures; come to next CC meeting
- Tim – Add “2nd circle” to cc email list-serve [done]
- Madge – Draft guideline for adding to “2nd circle”
- All -- *Use accurate subject headings!*
- Tim – Propose “announce” list-serve for next meeting
- Peter, Tim & Harry – Research computer needs; make proposal next CC meeting
- Beth & Madge – Continue member renewal follow-up
- Peter, Madge – Finalize update of WELL flyers
- April – Get photo of WELL’s planters on W. Commercial St. w/ volunteers [done]
- Madge and Investment Committee – Send June 3 notes to potential investors [done]; draft investment strategy; plan for Aug. 6 next group meeting; article for newsletter
- Madge – Check with Rich Padula re: use of lot for July 28 [done – answer is “no”]
- Holly – Find alternative venue for emergency kit day / other prep for July 28
- Madge, Jennifer – Add an ad for Abby’s Closet (complimentary for Printing Express)
- Jennifer & Holly – Assemble newsletter over June 30-July 1st weekend
- Peter - Facilitate July 23 CC meeting

SUMMARY OF CC MEETING 6-18-12

We started by adding a report on **Bio-char** to our agenda, hearing about Lee Davis' recent inspiring film showings at the Grange and an upcoming seminar at Sonoma State July 29-Aug 1. Guest Mike Adams and several other local folks are now making bio-char and doing tests of its use. (See article.) Peter will follow up to see if WELL could get some discounts for the Sonoma State seminar.

We reviewed plans for our participation in the **Adaptation Conference**, and possible live-streaming at the Grange. Plans for the **Emergency Kit-Making Day** are also underway. (See article elsewhere in this newsletter.)

House-keeping: The CC approved having the new **email list serve** (wellcc@well95490.org) include the 7 elected members plus people who attend CC meetings regularly. We may also want a larger "announce" list to keep all members better informed. Several of us have been phoning for **membership renewals**, and we expect good returns. Beth will coordinate a second round using emails for those we've been unable to contact by phone. We might need a **computer upgrade**; our current system is old, slow and sometimes problematic. A subcommittee will research our needs and bring a proposal to next CC meeting. We also need periodic financial reviews, a procedures manual and better understanding of the process for handling office tasks.

Investment Group: The subcommittee is drafting a proposed structure for enabling local investment, which will then go to financial advisors and possibly a legal expert. We will then have another meeting with potential investors to hone the criteria and objectives of most participants. (See article.)

We considered the idea of another round of **Seed Grants**, with some of the unused funds from last year. However, in light of keeping a reserve for other needs and opportunities and given our full agendas, we decided to postpone this.