

OPSEU Environment Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 5, 2008
Delta East – McCowan room
Minutes

In attendance: Gino Franche (chair), Sandra Snider (EBM), Patty Rout (1st VP), Paul Bilodeau, Randy Robinson, Gary Shaul

Regrets – Jennifer Giroux

Meeting called to order at 6:00 – Gino in the chair.

Gino thanked attendees for coming and welcomed Gary Shaul as the new campaign officer supporting “Greening OPSEU”.

1) OPSEU Convention 2008

a. Report to convention

It was agreed that a short piece would be included in the Board Report to convention. It was also decided that brief comments would be included in either or both the President and Vice-President’s oral report(s)

Action item: Paul & Gary to draft short report on activities in 2007.

Due Date: March 10

Action item: Paul to write and include material for oral report.

b. Greening OPSEU display table – materials - Give-aways

It was agreed to have an activity display but not a literature table due to logistics of staffing the table.

Action item: Gary to work with Jaelyn Proudfoot on a display. Meeting March 10.

Action item: Gary to work with Mary-Anne Di Adamo to investigate eco friendly toothbrushes, pens or other items to include in delegate bags.

c. Green stewards meeting

Gary reported that there was no meeting of green stewards at Convention 2007 but many had signed up at the info table. It was agreed to hold a 30 minute meeting this year and that the optimal time would be Thursday lunchtime as long as there was no conflict with EBM’s schedules.

[Updated to add – there was a 1/2 day program organized by Dave Fluri & Barb Thomas with the childcare kids to involve them in greening activities at Convention.]

Action item: Gary to book a room with Nympha for Thursday pending look at other meetings at the same time **Due Date:** March 10

Action item: Gary to try and include this information in Section “A”.

Action item: Gary to email notice to green stewards for whom we have email addresses. Gary will also have the notice posted on OPSEU webpage and Facebook.

Action item: Gary to draft short agenda for the meeting.

d. Green information tables – It was agreed that the following groups will be invited to have information tables

- i. World Wildlife Fund (Living the Good Life)
- ii. Wildlands League
- iii. Planet in Focus
- iv. Bullfrog Electric

Action item – Gino to provide Gary with WWF contact. Randy to provide contact for WL. Gary to get other contacts.

Action item – Gary to provide contact information to Mary-Anne Di Adamo so that the invitations can be made.

- e. Green convention videos - Gary reported that Audrey had arranged with Planet in Focus (PIF) to show two videos at Convention as people were arriving and leaving. \$110 contract has been signed. PIF are providing (free) 1,900 postcards for the convention kits.
 - i. Minus 40 degrees - climate change (approx 13 minutes)
 - ii. The Bicycle - follows an HIV/AIDS Health worker in Africa who goes from patient to patient on his bicycle (approx. 11 minutes).

Action item – Audrey to let Gary know when videos arrive for an advance screening by those interested.

Action item: Randy to provide Gary with information about the Al Gore Foundation video for possible use at Convention?

- f. Bio-degradable water cups

Audrey is checking with Sheraton about feasibility of not using disposable plastic cups. OPSEU prepared to pay if necessary.

Action item – Gary to follow-up with Audrey and report back to committee – **Due** – March 10

- g. Locally grown food policy at Sheraton – Jennifer to investigate and report back to the committee.

Action item – Gary to follow-up with Jennifer.

2) CLC Convention – May 2008

Randy reported that he is working with other unions to ensure that OPSEU issues make their way to the CLC convention.

3) Developing an environmental management system

- a. Updating the three year plan

It was agreed that the 2006 – 2008 proposed plan provided in the Toronto Environmental Alliance report should be updated and extended until 2010. This overview of priorities would be finalized and approved in time for Convention.

Action item – Gary to draft and distribute.

- b. Other steps

There was a brief discussion about environmental management to tie together and co-ordinate all of OPSEU's activities. Gary provided document with a suggested methodology. Further discussion at next meeting.

4) Environment Committee

- a. Review roles and responsibilities

Gino provided background. The Committee was set up as an ad hoc committee and remains so. Once the Committee is a permanent Committee of the board, a terms of reference will be established.

Action item: Gino & Patty to take steps to formalize the committee's status.

Action item: Gino, Sandra & Jennifer to draft terms of reference.

- b. Meeting frequency & schedule

All efforts will be made to schedule meetings when committee members are already in Toronto. Gary suggested that we can also teleconference in between live meetings and suggested touching base monthly. Other committee business will be conducted by email.

Action item: Gary to find out PYWC schedule and plan next meeting when Jennifer is in Toronto.

c. Board / staff retreat activity

Due to format of the retreat, there will not be a presentation or time slot for Greening OPSEU this year at the retreat. However, efforts will be made to ensure retreat itself is held at an eco-friendly location.

Action item: Gary to speak with Peggy & Katherine Francis about retreat location.

5) Green Operations

a. Go-Green Pre-assessments (Lesmill, Wellesley & Coopers)

Randy did a high level walk through of the three reports. He pointed out that it is costing OPSEU money every day not to take action on non-capital improvements that have a higher return of investment than the current strike fund investments. He also noted that despite efforts to date, OPSEU has not reduced its carbon emissions. The Go-Green reports provide the opportunity to take meaningful action that will make a difference and give the union needed credibility with members, the government, labour and employers.

Proposal: That OPSEU invest approximately \$400,000 in the 3 buildings to implement the suggested non-capital green measures at Lesmill, Wellesley & Coopers. These measures would be managed by Ed Brennan. Gary would assist by helping to co-ordinate needed policy development as indicated in the reports.

Action item: Randy to draft proposal for April 15th board meeting.

Action item: Patty to speak to President's office & get this on the agenda for April 15.

Action item: Gino to speak with other board members.

Action item: Once approved by the board on April 15, that this be announced at Convention.

Action item: Gary to meet with Ed Brennan.

Action item: Randy to schedule mid-March meeting with Consultants, Ed Brennan and others to walk through the report in detail.

Pending - Fonthill

b. Recycling at OPSEU facilities

Gary reported that recycling was a recurring theme in his discussions with people at OPSEU. He suggested that a survey of all OPSEU offices be conducted to determine what programs are available in various municipalities and recycling actions being taken by OPSEU.

Action item: Gary to speak to Ed Brennan for an update on progress to date on recycling.

6) Green stewards network

a. How to consolidate & expand network

Gary to connect again with Dave Fluri to get the list of 150 green stewards that he put together. Sign up list will be available at convention. OPSEU website can also be used to recruit green stewards. There will be a meeting called at Convention (see Convention above).

b. Activities – resource allocation, process for approvals & communications

It was reported that no money was spent last year on local activities and that a process was not put in place for locals to access resources.

Action item: Gary to draft proposal for 2008 budget resource allocation for locals and green stewards.

Action item: Gary will work with the committee to develop process and procedures for green stewards and locals to access resources within their locals, regions and communities. The Solidarity Fund and Live and Let Live fund procedures could form the basis for this.

7) **Head office green team**

Gary reported that this committee had met a couple of times and had organized an event for “Commute to Work” week last year. Gary questioned whether the structure used was effective and whether a voluntary model might be more effective. Gary also reported that he had set up a distribution list with head office staff who have expressed an interest in Greening issues. Gino clarified that it was not necessary for this to be on the Greening Committee’s agenda. Patty suggested that this could be something that the Head Office Wellness Committee could take on. Patty also reported that she hoped that compact fluorescent bulbs could be provided for all lamps and other fixtures at head office.

Action item: Gary to follow-up with Wellness Committee.

Action item: Gary to follow-up with Patty on light bulbs.

8) **Green education**

a. Proposal for a one-day educational

Gary provided a proposal from Jackie Larkin in BC for a \$3,000 contribution toward development of a one-day educational on environmental issues & labour. Other organizations participating include USWA, CUPE, CUPW, SEIU, BC Fed, BCGEU. Paul clarified that it was not unusual for OPSEU to engage consultants for course development and train-the-trainer activities and that \$3,000 would be less than it would cost for OPSEU to develop the course on its own. The committee approved the expenditure. The proposal also includes three ½ day teleconference meetings with the unions involved. OPSEU should have a liaison in order to have input into the instructional design.

Action item: Gary to liaise with Geraldine Ryan to finalize plans.

Action item: Gary to see if Barb Thomas could be the liaison with Jackie.

b. “Cool Comforts” (publication)

Gary reported that he had ordered 250 copies of this new publication about global warming and the workplace which was produced by our New Brunswick sister union (NBUPPE) and NUPGE. NUPGE is co-coordinating distribution. Gary also reported that Karen Hawley has the lead for environmental issues at NUPGE. The 250 copies would be distributed to green stewards, EBMs, equity committee members and interested staff. It was hoped they would be available before Convention.

Action item: Gary to follow-up with Karen on delivery schedule and co-ordinate distribution once books are received.

9) **Green communities**

a. 2008 budget

Action item: Gary to draft proposal for 2008 budget resource allocation for environmental groups outside of OPSEU.

b. Developing criteria for outside groups to apply for grants

Action item: Gary will work with the committee to develop process and procedures for environmental groups to request grants. The Solidarity Fund and Live and Let Live fund procedures could form the basis for this.

10) Communications

a. Green webpage redesign

Gary has redesigned Greening webpage. This was vetted by Randy and Cynthia (webmaster) and approved by the committee. A document was pre-circulated & tabled outlining the redesign and plan for rollout. It was agreed that OPSEU's support for Earth Hour be the feature story for the re-launch of the page.

Action item: Gary to provide Earth Hour content to Randy and Cynthia for a re-launch of the page the week of March 10.

Action item: Gary to provide fresh content on a weekly or bi-weekly basis for the webpage. This will include finding green stewards to write articles on different topics.

b. OPSEU Eco-Net Facebook group

While the Facebook group has been static for some time, it was agreed that we should maintain this medium because there are already 60 members and it will have an appeal to our younger members.

Action item: Gary to add content.

Action item: Gary to ensure that Facebook group is linked to on OPSEU webpage.

Action item: Gary to try and recruit an eco-activist to maintain the group.

c. In solidarity & other local newsletters

It was reported that In Solidarity had at least one piece on Greening OPSEU.

Action item: Gary to contact In Solidarity about including more green content.

11) Earth Hour – March 29

a. Executive board endorsement.

Gary drafted a resolution for the executive board's consideration. Patty & Gino reported that the board would deal with this item on March 6 but that approval was expected. Gary also reiterated that the main purpose of Earth Hour was to change people's behaviour – not just to turn off the lights for one hour.

Action item: Patty to confirm Board's endorsement to Gary.

b. OPSEU owned buildings - implementation

Gary reported that he had spoke to Garnet Rowe who indicated that it was already OPSEU practice for all non-essential lighting to be turned off by cleaners at the end of the day. Garnet suggested that extra steps may need to be taken at Wellesley since the building is sometimes used on Saturdays.

Action item: Gary to check Wellesley schedule. If meetings are scheduled, measures will be put in place to ensure that lights are out.

c. Leased buildings

Action item: Gary to followup on this.

d. Communication to members & staff

Action item: Gary to provide content to Randy & Cynthia for webpage.

Action item: Gary to speak to Patty about how we can communicate with all staff. Gary suggested that we “up the ante” by also asking staff to make sure that there computers are turned off for the weekend (and on a regular basis).

Action item: Gary to talk to Randy to investigate other communication vehicles to reach members before March 29.

12) Issues for future meetings

The following items were quickly reviewed.

- a. Green pensions
- b. Green jobs
 - i. working with other unions
 - ii. Parks campaign
- c. Green workplaces – contract language

Gary reported that he had met with Annie Leung who provided some links to databases containing contract language.

Action item: Gary to try and pull together model contract language in a short report for consideration at the next meeting.

- d. Greener lifestyles – Suzuki challenge

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m.