

MINUTES FOR THE DECEMBER 1, 2010
WSPPN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
VIA GO-TO-MEETING

Participants included Kacey Christie, Kevin Dick, Ann Heil, Al Hurt, John Katz, Dina Khadavi, Mike Morris, Karl Palmer, and Donna Walden

WSPPN held an Advisory Board Meeting on Wednesday, December 1, via Go-To-Meeting to review proposals from John Katz and Donna Walden addressing the outcome of the strategic planning process including recommendations made by consulting firm Tetra-Tek, the WSPPN advisory board, and participants in the three September focus groups regarding the WSPPN Conference and ideas moving forward. The meeting was recorded and is available on the Advisory Board page on the WSPPN site.

Much of the outcome from the strategic planning process was presented at the WSPPN advisory board meeting on October 26. The process was initiated because it was felt that this was a good time to look at the conference to see if it still serviced the network considering the downward trend in conference participation due to travel budgets and a variety of other factors. There was unanimous agreement that there was still a need for the WSPPN conference; it is unique, it has the broadest scope of any environmental conference and it is differentiable. The feedback from the three focus groups was also presented as is summarized below:

Challenges Facing the Conference

- lack of depth in certain topics (needed to justify training)
- need new topics - agenda somewhat stale (need good dynamic speakers!)
- agenda planning is too insular and doesn't leverage broad support

We need to expand and strengthen participation in conference planning (make it more a dynamic process). Identify topics that are important and get the best speakers. Look for opportunities to partner with others to leverage resources. Market more effectively to sustainability managers and other generalists. With respect to conference offerings, we need to maintain inspirational sessions; keynote or individual session; topics that push the envelope or ideas or activities going on in the world inspire us. Clearly, we have to balance with practical.

Features of Conference to Preserve

There was a group that got together at the end of WSPPN Conference that provided feedback on what WSPPN ought to look like moving forward. John recommended that we start a list of what it is we really want to preserve about the conference:

- Face-to-face meeting with focus on networking
- Focus on toxics and cross media
- Keep "core" audience
- Region-wide participation as opposed to one region (i.e., California only)
- Inspirational sessions – keynote or individual session
- Government focus – keep ability to speak openly

Beauty about having a mostly Government focus is the ability to talk about controversial topics. If one has to talk about regulation issues in front of people they regulate on a regular basis, it is going to change their tenor, they have to be more careful about the content of the presentation.

WSPPN Advisory Board Feedback on Future of WSPPN

WSPPN Advisory Board provided the following direction to EPA and WSPPN

- Try and maintain event similar to current one (i.e. focused on prevention, presentation of new trends and best practices, audience primarily Government),

Integrating the feedback on how to improve the content

- Need to address funding gap and look for opportunities to leverage other conferences, sponsorships, and explore additional funding models
 - Change agenda
 - setting process to gain more participation, greater diversity, and higher quality sessions
 - Continue to develop options for training (e.g. certification)
- Audience: state and local,

Recommendations Moving Forward

(John presented his recommendations at the Advisory Board meeting. He had previously presented to his management at EPA)

1. Plan to do another conference in 2011 or early 2012
2. Partner with an existing conference to leverage space, organization, etc.
 - a. first targets are CA-HHW (SF DoE is connected to this) and CRRRA (EPA connected). Explore other opportunities.
 - b. enter into negotiations soon to establish parameters (dates, cost-share, etc.)
3. Line up funding for coordinator as soon as possible – EPA, DTSC, others
 - a. develop options for longer-term sustainable funding sources for conference
4. Start planning more aggressive outreach to both traditional and new audiences
 - a. local government/private sector sustainability managers
 - b. university programs
 - c. local practitioners in host city
 - d. coordinate with Green Business Network
6. Explore opportunities to expand WSPPN role beyond simply a conference.
 - a. potentially serve as a rallying point or information hub for Sustainable Communities efforts across the region
 - b. reach out to potential partners (ICLEI, CA Green Cities, ASU Sustainability Cities Network) to see if there is interest

After John presenting his proposal, there was some discussion about partnerships. Kevin Dick led a discussion about partnering with another organizer vs. doing a more detailed conference. It was determined that a set of criteria would be established with respect to partnerships we are pursuing. For example, “What are the principles that we want to preserve to decide who to partner with to govern all the negotiations?” Any partnership needs to expand and build the network and not shrink and obliterate the network.

Some organizations have come up a number of times:

HHW, CRRRA are two such organizations where there is some overlap with our audience and clearly they have different focuses. They have a recycling and trash emphasis.

CAL-GOV

GOV Green

CWEA, especially the water people.

CAL-CUPA

Kevin was concerned about the organization’s bandwidth and queried whether WSPPN could establish partnerships and maintain improvements in the development of the agenda for a 2011 conference. There is complexity in working to establish a partnership. For example, WSPPN

tried to do a formal partnership with CWEA but the legal considerations and document was huge and we didn't have the recourses to continue to pursue it.

John indicated that we would not pursue a partnership unless we could figure out a way that makes it a truly joint or clearly attractive conference that embraces the goals of both organizations. Partnerships would be based upon a principle of serving our core audience. We'd also want to make sure that it has a regional focus serving all of Region 9.

Karl felt that if we considering the principals established and the core interests and governments interests; CRRRA and HHW conference is much more aligned with those core values; in part because it is a function of the waste board and now cal-recycle... John is looking at the partnerships to possibly free us up more to do more on the content side because we are not working so much on the logistics side.

Al brought to our attention that 1,500 people attended the GOVgreen conference held in December. They are hoping to launch a west coast conference and are willing to explore the possibility of speaking with WSPPN about collaboration. Donna has already been introduced to the organizers and preliminary talks are being planned.

Kevin reiterated that he was not opposed to partnerships but merely that WSPPN not get distracted from putting together a conference in the short term. Feedback we have gotten indicates that October is a good timeframe for a WSPPN conference. Conferences take a long time to organize and we need to start planning a 2011 conference now if that is what we intend to do. We need to start getting the topics out there and identifying some interest in the topics.

During WSPPN 2010, we started building pathways with sustainability partners. There are many programs out there with universities; trying to figure out how to get sustainability out into the world. We had success with SDRSP who helped us bring the local flavor into the conference. One of the omissions for WSPPN 2010 was having a green business track.

Expanding our Review Process

An outcome from the focus groups and all the other exploratory meetings was to develop a new process for reviewing and accepting topics. Perhaps we can establish a process for online voting; make an announcement when and where the conference is; suggestion tracks and conferences; do it in a way that you can get data that's useful; narrowing it down as an advisory board to narrow down the agenda.

There were 18 sessions for WSPPN 2010; perhaps we have fewer and deeper sessions.

Action: need to get a subset of the WSPPN advisory board to look at a new process for soliciting and accepting papers that is more inclusive and implement this process early in 2011.

Look at New Funding Models for WSPPN

Funding is a critical issue that we need to address, and John suggested we speak with some of our partners in Nevada, Arizona, California and Hawaii to defray some of the costs.

Donna presented some ideas for expanding the network:

- WSPPN cosponsor some regional events
- WSPPN affiliations with smaller organizations
- Create a membership dues structure
- Add exhibitors/sponsors to WSPPN conference

- Expand Webinars: experts & streaming video
- Environmental video program
- Expand P2 certificate program
- Roll out nationwide across P2Rx centers

As a possible new business model for funding WSPPN, Donna proposed a Membership Dues Structure:

- Many organizations & non-profits use to help fund their operations
- All about benefits package and perceived value
- Dues structure would need to be proposed
 - clearly outline benefits
 - large discounts received by qualifying agencies for providing P2 data results and in-kind
 - larger institutions pay more than smaller companies
 - businesses may become members to access website & tools
- Other implications
 - free public service vs. paid component to WSPPN site
 - certification program included in membership dues
- Who's on board?

John felt that this was a good idea but brought up the point that we are already providing for free what we are now proposing to charge dues for. It would be very important to articulate a value proposition and even emphasize the need for a new funding model to sustain the network.

Ann Heil felt that a membership model would be a good idea considering that her agency is already a member of a number of different organizations. Her only concern was the timing; it's a difficult time to launch a program that requires an investment.

The National P2 roundtable charges dues of \$400/year, we should look into their business model. Their membership dues include participation in their annual conference.

The group also explored charging for certification. The membership service fee can include green business or green education including webinars, conference, classes, etc. This is a great membership benefit.

In closing, John asked if anybody was willing to serve on a small committee or sub-committee; working on partnerships, working on topic development for the conference.

The group agreed to have more regular advisory board meetings (perhaps monthly or bi-monthly) to stay abreast of the developments for the conference and network.

Action Items:

- Need to determine time/location for the next WSPPN Conference 2011 or early 2012.
- Need to get the WSPPN board together in January 2011 to determine the topics for the next WSPPN Conference (please see updated topic suggestions from WSPPN conference and Donna's blog attached).
- Need to develop a process for getting topic ideas out there for feedback
- Need to establish criteria for accessing partnerships.