

CGEC Board Meeting 4-9-08

CGEC= Columbia Gorge Earth Center
GRC= Gorge Rebuild-it Center
GLCC= Gorge Local Currency Cooperative
GGFN= Gorge Grown Food Network
F&L= Film and Lecture Series
RP= Rediviva Press

Attendance:

Board Members> Pierce Louis, Jaimes Valdez, Ben Zimmerman
Staff and affiliates> David Skakel, Bruce Bolme, Tomi Owens
Guests> Monk

Treasurer's Report:

David presented financial reports, including: CGEC Balance Sheet, GRC Budget vs. Actual for both February and for March, and both CGEC and GRC Profit & Loss Previous Year Comparison. **GRC** appears to be close to “on track” with year-to-date Gross Profit at 98.9% of budgeted, and year-to-date total expenses at 95.1% of budgeted. Yet a closer inspection (month by month) reveals that store sales have severely slumped in February and March. For example, March sales were \$12,603 (vs. \$22,710 budgeted). Hopefully, we are not seeing a trend, associated with the “R” word... Otherwise, we just received an un-expected (last) load of ISO foam seconds. That will give us a short boost.

CGEC is getting uncomfortably low on cash, with wage overhead and \$1,200 cost for hdpe water bottles for Earth Day. We likely need to identify (soon) some event funding sources.

New business:

2008 Nutrition Project

Monk (a local plant and pest biologist) requested that CGEC be a sponsor for his “2008 Nutrition Project” research, which will more likely receive funding if tax deductible. Essentially, Monk wishes to continue research started last year to study the nutritional value of crops (namely corn and wheat?) derived from heirloom seeds (vs. modern hybridized seeds). Monk seeks 10 test farm plots in Oregon (and perhaps Southern Washington). The board was generally supportive of Monk’s intentions, but desirous that any research results be made available to the public. So Monk will ask his potential funders (Oak Hill Foundation) if that’s agreeable. Plus he will provide the board with his research results from last year, so that we better understand the proposal at hand. Also, David will look into IRS issues pertaining to disclosure of research results from 501(c)3’s. Likewise, Monk appears to be in a hurry, since the growing season is upon us. The board should expect the possibility for a proxy vote on this issue within a week or so.

Gorge Nonprofit Network

Due to inadequate organizational capacity, the CGEC board last year tabled discussion about David’s proposal for CGEC to foster an association for Gorge nonprofits. Meanwhile, Amanda Lawrence (of the Northwest Service Academy) is currently prompting meetings with local organizations to discuss similar ideas ranging from a community calendar to full blown Association. David attended the first meeting, and shared his tabled proposal (Association of Gorge Nonprofits). Next meeting at Dog River Cafe May 6th 3:30. CGEC board discussed the concept (and any possible CGEC role). Essentially we agreed that the idea of CGEC hosting a local network that has the potential to strengthen all local nonprofits does fit our mission.

However, we remain weak on organizational capacity, and are likely unable to assist in the short-term anyhow.

Correspondence:

Katie Sundby called David to discuss possible interest in a unique fundraising event for the Earth Center. She referred to the format as “100 for \$100”. Basically it’s a form of catered, entertaining auction event. David encouraged Katie to find out more and to continue dialogue. If it goes further, we will bring it to the board.

Old Business:

- Indemnification> GRC has a real problem right now. We have started our (one-yr. funded) deconstruction services (“field rep position”), with full expectation of having our construction contractor’s license. The Bond companies first declared they require that the exec. dir. (David) personally indemnify himself for the value of the bond (\$10,000). David reluctantly did. But now the bond companies are requiring that at least one board member (with adequate credit report) do the same (unlikely). Unless we can find someone else to personally indemnify themselves for this bond, our 12-month salvage strategy has hit a snag! David will pursue any other options with our insurance company.

Committee Reports:

Gorge Rebuild-it Center: Our 12-month focus on salvage and deconstruction has officially begun, with the hiring of Stan Loop as our “field rep”. Aside from bond issues (previously mentioned, we hope to “go upstream” and divert more and better quality building materials. Our relationship with Green Home Construction (GHC) is off to a busy start. GHC deconstruction ½ of the Halliday House in Parkdale. And all reusable materials came to GRC. The 2 entities are hungry to collectively improve our efficiency in decon and salvage. Big news: GHC secured a major bid to deconstruct a large house 4-car garage and 60’x60’ barn in Washougal. GRC will transport and have the materials. Importantly, we are seriously considering dismantling and relocating the pole barn to the Gorge Rebuild-it Center site. The barn has 5,000 sq ft of space (including 2,000 sq ft loft). We are waiting to hear if the Hood River Lions will give us permission to use their \$6,600 grant award (earmarked for buying 2 shipping containers) to instead put towards re-construction of that barn. Even with the \$6,600, we anticipate that GRC needs to initiate a small capital campaign (\$3-5k) in order to succeed. But what a great opportunity...With a barn package on-site and half the construction funds in hand, we offer a very tangible goal which would double our storage capacity. Storage is key, as we may be on the cusp of handling several other factory seconds and overstocked items on a regular basis.

Gorge Grown

Gorge Grown Food Network has about \$3,300 in the bank. We are working on preparations for our Farmers Market and our new project – our mobile farmers market. We had a steering committee meeting on April 7 where we reported: progress on preparations for the May 1 Business After Hours; our identity and marketing package to be provided by Owen Jones Company; Community Food Assessment; Who’s Your Farmer 2008 printed annual newsletter; and our effort to obtain our own 501[c]3 status.

RiverHOURS

Gorge Local Currency Cooperative is sponsoring a reception Monday evening the 14th for author Michael Shuman who will lead a workshop on the 15th in White Salmon; Bruce will make

presentations to the Goldendale Chamber of Commerce on April 24 and Skamania Business Association on May 6.

Film & Lecture

Next film will be at Solstice Cafe on Wednesday April 16th (How Cuba Survived Peak Oil). Discussion whether to continue thru the summer, or take a hiatus until autumn. Also, Pierce and Jared are coordinating how the proposed *Green Drinks* will interact with F&L series.

Rediviva

No hurry to break away to for profit status. April issue hit the streets.

Earth Day

April 19th. Shar is busy coordinating. All is coming together nicely, with 5k/10k fun run, Procession of the Species Parade and Ceremony all in the morning at the Twin Tunnels, and an evening Yoga benefit in Hood River. We purchased 260 HDPE non-leaching water bottles as gifts for registrants.

Gorge Games

We have heard nothing from the Gorge Games organizers since our group meeting. Not sure about the status of their proposed “partnership” with CGEC as community benefactor, or our role (if any) in the Games and their “waste free” efforts. Tomi says that they appear very organized with their event though. Pierce will contact Suzie at Solstice about that.

Climate Change

The Climate Change committee has fizzled, in part because no “champions” have surfaced, and because David (with only 4-6 hours per week as exec dir) has plenty of passion and no time to usher this initiative forward.

Important dates

April 16th-Film & Lecture Series at Solstice Cafe

April 19th-Earth Day event

May 1st- Business After Hours at GRC

Motions

Action Items

Next Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 14th 5-7 pm at GRC