

City of Key West

Sustainability Advisory Board - Annual Report

March 21, 2012

The Key West Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB), established January 22, 2009 by the Key West City Commission, is a nine-member board, appointed one each by the Commissioners and Mayor with two high school senior student alternate members appointed by the Mayor.

Currently sitting are five regular members and one student member.

The stated mission of the SAB is to;

1. Advise and assist the City Commission in efforts to make city operations more sustainable.
2. Assist in the development of plans and policies to enhance the sustainability of the city as a whole.
3. Educate and support other Key West organizations to become more sustainable.
4. Educate and engage the public in efforts to make the community of Key West, including residents, businesses and institutions, more sustainable.

The City of Key West defines sustainability as;

"Meeting the vital human needs of the present, without compromising the ability to meet future needs".

Sustainability Advisory Board (SAB) - Annual Report 2011

The SAB set two main priorities for 2011;

1. To assist the City in prioritizing and implementing the Climate Action Plan.
2. To review the solid waste study currently underway by Kessler Consulting in order to effectively advise the City.

1. Climate Action Plan

The SAB struggled early in the year due to the loss of our main liaison to city staff with the retirement of Annalise Mannix. We were, however, fortunate and very appreciative to have had Mr. Birchard Olinger, of Engineering, and Asst. City Manager Mark Finigan step in and fill the information void by attending many of our meetings, maintaining the line of communication between the board and the City. We also thank Mr. Don Craig, from Planning, for attending several of our meetings and sharing information and ideas.

Mr. Olinger took a special interest and attended conferences on sustainability, such as the South Florida Regional 4 County Climate Compact and a conference for local governments and electric transportation.

To accomplish the SAB's goal of helping the city implement the climate action plan (CAP), we discussed the many activities needed for CAP implementation and felt that a great many of the action steps would be best done in house. As such, we felt it a priority that the City hire a staff sustainability coordinator. Mr. Finigan considered our request and during budget review found funds within the existing budget to hire a part-time coordinator. Alison Higgins was recently hired on contract as Key West's first sustainability coordinator.

Although this position is currently funded for only one year, we are confident the position will prove itself a money saver for the City and that it will become a full-time position when this first contract position expires. We see this as an important step towards fully implementing the CAP and encourage the commission to consider a permanent staff position for this important work.

2. Solid Waste Plan

It is the SAB's opinion that sustainability begins with a modern efficient solid waste system that is working towards zero waste. The city has seen little progress in recycling over the past several years despite an enormous grass-roots volunteer

effort. To help the City change this situation the SAB encouraged and supported the hiring of an outside professional solid waste consultant to conduct a comprehensive solid waste master plan. Implementation of a comprehensive solid waste plan will position the City to generate significant savings with greatly improved recycling rates and disposal of our organic yard and food waste through mulching and composting, instead of hauling it 200 miles for incineration.

Kessler Consulting, Inc. was selected and Dr. Ross Williams became the SAB's liaison to the consultant. Dr. Williams attended all public meetings and kept in communication with Kessler throughout the year, reporting progress back to the SAB.

The 18-month solid waste study is currently nearing completion. The SAB's regular meeting on May 10, 2012 will host a workshop at which Kessler Consulting, Inc will present a draft report outlining the components of the study, their findings and recommendations for achieving the City's resource recovery and waste reduction goals.

Following the report the consultant will solicit feedback from the public, elected officials and city staff in attendance. Any changes that arise from such feedback will be incorporated into the final version and placed on the commission's agenda for approval.

Our board will make recommendations to the city commission after reviewing the solid waste master plan.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ross Williams, Chair, KWSAB