

City of Geneva Green Committee Oct 15, 2024 Meeting

Finger Lakes Welcome Center, 5:30pm

Present: Julie Coleman (Co-Chair, Anne Hoyt (Co-Chair), Pat Wallace (Secretary), Sara Britting (Treasurer),
Marcia Cullen, Richard Cox, Jim Norwalk, James Andersen, Pat Keefe,
Special Guest: Tarang Malhotra

PW introduced Tarang Malhotra as an HWS student on the EPA National Waterworks 2nd Place winning team (having sent around their short video <<https://www.hws.edu/news/2024/hws-takes-2nd-in-national-rainworks-challenge.aspx>> for everyone to watch ahead of the meeting), and suggested that we introduce ourselves. JA started, then JN.

JN: I watched your video and am interested in the work that you're doing. I've walked the site with Maddie (another Waterworks team member) and she was talking about plants to use along the way.

RC and PW introduced themselves. JC introduced herself and thanked TM for joining us tonight. MC, AH, SB and PK introduced themselves.

PW: we're hoping that there's a way that we can collaborate.

TM: Absolutely! We're advised by Professor Kinne and Professor Piersol. Three of the other members of the team were Seniors, so they're not here anymore. It's a big project so it would take a lot of work.

PW: What would your first steps be?

TM: We're setting up meetings with B&G (Buildings & Grounds) and the Office of Advancement. B&G had to sign off on the project. We're planning to present it to the Office of Advancement to see where the money can come from. I also work as a Sustainability Intern. We get to do projects of our own, and I've been working on a Bike-Share proposal on campus, like City Bike in NYC. Part of our green infrastructure proposal was creating more of a walkable, bikeable infrastructure. I've been contacting companies and we're using our existing bikes so that we don't have to buy all new bikes.

JC: Are you still collaborating data? So now you've won the award, will you be continuing to collect some of the data?

TM: We would like to. We divided tasks among our team. Owen, the guy who was working on the quantitative side of things, he's not here anymore.

PK: Is there an avenue to getting underclassmen to fill in the gaps?

TM: I talked about this with Prof. Kinne as well. we definitely think that the interns, there's 4 of us including me, the interns could help out, which is a paid position. For the underclassmen, we'd have to think of Campus Greens. Profs Kinne and Piersol talked to the Provost to try to integrate this into the curriculum to use the Capstone to fulfill one of the goals of the project.

JN: What's the first stage of the project? The first thing that needs to happen?

TM: Are you guys familiar with the proposal?

JN and others indicated that we had watched the video.

TM: We made a Design Board. We marked where we would want the bioswales, rain gardens, tree nursery. The Design Board is a map of the Odell's Pond area, marked with where we'd like to see concrete replaced with permeable pavers. The bioswales would come first as the foundation of the whole thing.

RC: The school district where I came from in NJ had solar shields above the school busses providing all the electricity for the whole K-8 school back in the early 2000's. [why are we so far behind?]

TM: We show the car ports next to the barn and Odell's South Parking lot, a huge parking lot, to reduce storm water runoff. It would supply a certain amount of electricity. It would save money but has a big up-front cost. Prof. Drennen is also in Australia, but I'm sure he could also help with solar things.

JC: I know you're seeking funding, but do you have an idea of what you could accomplish this academic year?

TM: My main responsibility was the connectivity goal. We proposed building a path from Odell's to the arts campus, a permeable path. We identified materials that we could use for it. The goal was not only to reduce stormwater run-off, but to do that while creating a more sustainable, livable community. I can see the bikeshare happening as soon as next semester. I've already talked to companies. If the school is telling me to talk to companies, I feel that they want to see it happen.

RC: Or they at least want to see what it would cost to happen, so they can then plan and look for grants.

TM: yes, Prof. Drennen said that would be something that donors might like to fund, to see their name on a plaque on a bike., "Donated by --."

PK: Are these electric bikes or just regular bikes?

TM: I'm talking to companies that provide both, but if we were to use the bikes that we currently have, they'd just be regular bikes. One question I have for you is, if we were to partner with the City of Geneva to have a bike station downtown, would you know how I would go about that?

AH: Working through BID might be the best option. That's the Business Improvement District. BluePrint might be another option. BID is always doing downtown improvement projects. They put in all the signs with the QR codes identifying plants downtown, they sponsor events, they carried forward the Downtown Revitalization Initiative which was the \$10million installation of catchment basins for stormwater, streetscapes, and raingardens.

RC: When you plan a project, plan the funding that maintains the project. In other words, you not only need the bicycles, you also need the money to maintain the bicycles.

TM: I agree. When these companies give me quotes, I make sure I always get a quote for maintenance as well. you can also figure out maintenance on your own, which would again be a student thing, like involving the underclassmen, a smaller initiative within this project. I just don't see anyone doing it for free as a volunteer. It would have. To be a paid position, like the interns, but we need more than the 4 people.

JC: I saw the article and the video that corresponds with it. The other documents in relation to the proposal, I would like to go back to City Council as part of the Green Committee Minutes and be able to supplement and say, "This is what HWS is doing." Stormwater is an issue all over the City of Geneva. Would it be possible for

you to share anything that is able to be made public so that we can help to disseminate the information and garner support for your project as well?

TM: I'm going to check with the rest of the team as well, but I'm sure that the Design Board we can send over to you. It has a lot of information like impacts of decreasing impermeable surfaces by 25%

JC: I'm sure that a lot of great ideas can be generated off the great work that you guys have done.

TM: And support.

JC: Mmhmm.

MC: Have you been in touch at all with Trek downtown?

TM: Not really because we already have the bikes, we just need the system, a technical requirement, and Trek's bikes are really expensive.

MC: I was thinking more in terms of maintenance, if they would help out in any way with that.

TM: That's actually a good idea.

PK: the students, whether paid or volunteer, would need back-up as far as tools, and if there was a gap and you needed someone to fill it.

RC: or somebody to train.

JN: Yeah, train. Do you know Shanelle France?

TM: She's in CTL, yeah.

JN: Her husband Chuck is a bike expert and community enthusiast.

TM: Also, I meant to ask, as people outside of HWS, would you think if we integrated the rest of downtown and this part of Geneva, the State Park, with bikeshare stations, do you think that would be something that people would use?

JN: Up and down the lakefront, yes.

(Others agreed.)

JC: Especially after we just integrated the kayaks. I wonder how the bicycle center did, how Jim did, because he used to rent out bikes to be able to use downtown. They just introduced the kayaks down here; it seems like it would be a natural fit.

AH: At Trek, they retained the old staff. It was a very well-known local bike shop that was always included in the top 100 bike shops in the US, so you have some people working there who have some history, and they have some interest in the City.

PW: And also, the Cornell AgriTech Station has a lot of international people. I used to work there, and when I was there, I initiated a bikeshare program there which people used.

AH: That is a huge problem for the students there; they don't have cars. A bikeshare would be super.

TM: I'm an international student as well, and I realize there's a need for it.

RC: But if you do something with the Station, you probably need to coordinate with Cornell.

PW: Probably a single person there. I don't know if anyone has maintained it since I left 13 years ago.

JC: if you're going in that direction, you might also want to link up with FLCC.

TM: tourists.

RC: there isn't any bike rental place on the lake?

Others: No

RC: So who rents bikes to people, does Trek?

JC: IDK if Trek continued the program that the bike shop had with renting out bikes. See a need, fill a need.

TM: We might brand it that way. Most of the vendors we're talking to, it's an empty label proposal. We can make our own brand; we can call it the HWS Bike, the Geneva Bike, the bike colors. That would be a huge actor in raising money, depending on who it caters to.

JC: and you can tag it with education grants and municipal grants.

PK: You would need a company to run it, right? To move the bikes around and so-forth? Disperse them?

TM: I think that's something that students can do, but stuff like maintaining the software, or if there's something wrong with the bikes, that's when we have to use the company services. We have 30 new ones.

MC: Have you guys given any thought to scooters?

JA: We did, but someone stopped it.

MC: in the Pitt/Carnegie Mellon area, the scooters really took off. They're everywhere!

TM: this summer I researched electric vehicles, including e-scooters and e-bikes. I was calculating the lifecycle emissions of those light vehicles compared to cars. I think you'd be surprised how much those e-scooters end up emitting. With e-bikes, they're usually parked at a charging station so they charge on their own, but with e-scooters, the way the companies usually do it, you can just leave them anywhere, like on a sidewalk, and then in the middle of the night the company loads them up in vans to take them to charge them, or just take the battery to charge them, and that transportation every night ends up emitting a lot of greenhouse gasses. If it's at a larger scale, like 100 scooters, I think it would be more sustainable, but I think they're more popular, more fun.

JC: If there's any way that we can support you, answer questions, connect to us. If there's any way we can collaborate or support you, please feel free to reach out at any time.

AH: if you need BID, contact Catherine Price, talk to her about downtown, she's the Director.

JN: it's an umbrella organization that does events, maintenance.

RC: Her contact numbers are 540-556-8799 and 315- 789-0102.

JC: and her email is price@genevabid.com

RC: We will put on an eco-fair April 26th called Mission Zero. You might want to have a table there to show the City your project. The following year I want to focus on "What if We Got It Right?". I want to see if we can sponsor a contest.

TM: As a Sustainability Intern, if there's anything that you'd like us to do for Geneva, I could ask the other interns if they're interested.

JC: we're looking at improving composting in downtown Geneva and Geneva in general, so having HWS interns to help bolster composting at specific events

AH: the Tree-Lighting ceremony. (December)

PK: A neat thing for Mission Zero in the spring would be if we had a bunch of the bikes, something visible. We could help you transport them.

TM: I'm really hoping that we can start rolling out the bikes around that time, seasonally April to November or March to Nov.

AH: with some fliers, maybe, about where the bike stations are. Previously, we always had the Sustainability Coordinator of HWS come to our meetings and they were always active members. Since the Colleges eliminated that position, we've not had any regular contact with the Colleges, and it would be great to get something like that back.

TM: I would love to attend meetings, as well as in the future. Professor Drennen is the supervisor for this Sustainability Internship position and he's abroad right now. Sam Halfman at Career Services is taking over for this semester so he's my supervisor right now and we have meetings every week.

AH: One of the things we collaborated on was a mattress pick-up at the end of the school year. It was Michael Amadori, the last Sustainability Director at the Colleges, who arranged an 18-wheeler and mattress pick-up around town for old mattresses.

TM: We have the community donations at the barn at the end of every spring.

JA: What Anne was speaking of was a recycling event for old mattresses, partnered with people in town for a collection (to go to the landfill).

TM: for the green infrastructure proposal, the whole team is meeting virtually this Friday, including native plant species.

JN: I'm happy to meet with Prof. Kinne regarding tree selection but can't make it this Friday but do want to see your document if it can be shared.

JC: Thank you for coming down and meeting with us!

TM departed with general thanks to and from the GGC.

JC: Let's do rapid fire for some simple stuff. Rich and Jim, do you want to update us on the Native Plant Sale, how that went? Was it a success?

RC: Amanda brought twice as much this time and sold more. Jim sent ~30 trees and shrubs, and had ~5 left. People are getting the idea that Fall is a great time to plant.

JN: Good weather, good turn-out.

JC: Awesome! Anything we can do to improve for next Spring?

RC: It works pretty good. [One factor that probably had an impact for raising interest was the BID Native Plant events in August.]

PK: The Plant Sale is in conjunction with the Farmers' Market. Maybe we should have a presence at the Farmer's Market.

JN: That's a normal business day for me, so I can't really afford to close up shop to do that, but if you guys were at a table, we could put out some plants to display down there. There was a lot of native plant stuff this summer set up by the BID.

PK: The Farmers' Market might bring in a different mix of people.

JN: A lot of tourists, for sure.

JC: Free Stuff Day, we got rained out the first day, the rain date was a massive success. The little left-over stuff was put to the road and gone within a couple of hours. The Fix-It Clinic fixed a lot of lamps and stuff. It was a stampede. One man's trash is another man's treasure.

MC: And it doesn't go in the dump.

JC: Minimal stuff was put into scrap and recycling. It was a great event. That leads into Geneva ReUse. Sara had asked about an update. In May we incorporated, so it became Geneva ReUse Inc. Mark Venuti put in an application for 501c3 status which we had in less than a month. Right now the group is doing a retreat to refine our Mission Statement and we are starting to apply for grant funding because we were under Geneva Community Projects for ~3 weeks in case we wanted to apply for a grant. Mark is working with Ontario County right now we're looking to try to generate at least \$100k in grants. They want to start off being able to hire someone to be able to be a full-time grant-writer/executive director right off the bat. We've done a lot since March. Right now we're pulling together grant information, we have our budget all set, we've looked at a couple of different potentials for warehousing space. We've looked at Middle St, the old Family Dollar, the GDC, Cheribundy, we've talked to landlords, figured out square footage, cost per sq ft, we'll need retail space plus we'll need warehouse space, we're looking at two different options. Finger Lakes ReUse is actually going to seed our store to get us started because they have so much overflow.

AH: What about the Real Eats site?

JC: So, the Real Eats site, if we got a very large grant, that would definitely work. It was created to be a food warehouse distribution center. We could rent part of that. the amount that they're asking for vs the amount,... It would be a dream location because it's large, has ample parking; it's not off the board. There're people who have been putting offers like \$4.6 million, 2.2 million to be able to rent it but David West is giving us the inside information to what's available and what people are putting down for bids right now. The GEDC would be great warehousing space, so it's a matter of just starting off and being able to see what you can obtain through grants. It's hard to get grants when you have no original funding to be able to match, so we're in the beginning stages but we've got some really good traction right now. We would love to go for a million dollar grant and be able to put down a down payment. It's great having Mark because he's a lawyer and he's able to draw up contracts. It's moving forward but is still in the beginning stages. The Board is great, the committees are great and they're moving fast through things.

SB: any County money?

JC: Yes, we've reached out to Ryan Davis, Economic Development; we've reached out to Regina and Carla who have come to our meetings regularly, there is the ability, so the City and the Town can each apply for \$5k every year to go towards anything that is sustainability-based. David said that Council will be in support of this but it's been the Town which has taken the lead on this and if there's an employee hired it would be filtered under the Town so that they can receive municipal funding, so it would be a partnership with Geneva ReUse but they would be housed in the Town, so the Town's really taken the lead on this vs the City. It could be a joint effort, and they could get 10k, and honestly, if they ask for 20k, there's a possibility of actually getting it.

SB: I've heard that Canandaigua got 40k for sustainability. I remember a project, I think it was the blue recycling buckets for 40k...

JC: Yep.

SB: and sometimes Geneva gets cut short.

JC: Because we don't apply, and it's a real simple application process. It's literally writing a letter to the Sustainability Committee.

SB: it seems like the City and Town Supervisors could come together on this to really fight for it to have upwards of maybe 50k...

JC: Absolutely, and the Finger Lakes ReUse helped us, Cortland ReUse, as well. We've used them as consultants on this. And the fact of Geneva being an individual entity to start a template that could eventually become a county, maybe, model. Start small, be able to refine it, and be able to create it into a county-wide model, so on the outset I don't think that we want it to be an Ontario County ReUse, we want it to be small, but Ontario County is probably going to be our first set of grant funding. The thing with it being sustainability, though, is it's a reimbursement model, so you have to spend the money first and then you get the money back. It's testing the temperature of the City. You have the support of David West but it's testing the temperature of those who control the purse to be able to support the initiatives. The Town's taken the lead and working with David West as the City liaison. We're in template-development mode. We want these to be able to spur up everywhere. Everything that we do, we're creating a map, so that way, the next one that wants to open, here's our map.

I'm just going to skip over the landfill right now. James, I didn't know if you wanted to talk about the air quality monitoring project?

JA: we have ~17 air quality monitoring sensors already placed around Geneva, specifically nearer to the landfills, and we have a community collaborative which is made up of – there's one person from (___?), there's one person from Seneca Falls, and the rest of them are from Wards 5 & 6. Some people live near the industrial park of Geneva. We had them do homework, read articles prior to it about the landfill, about Bitcoin mining, about (___?) emissions, we had a conversation about it, we talked about next steps. It seemed like the energy of the group was to focus on positive solutions and getting information out to people who are not exposed to that information. We talked a lot about people who are involved with environmental issues are paying attention to it, they know about it, but it doesn't necessarily get to the rest of Geneva.

JC: Just so that you're aware, there's a website called Purple Air < https://www2.purpleair.com/?srsId=AfmBOorUdoM0qAW9B6dAnUUz6B42_yc2TkjnervyAsOEDhaXvwnMgqUj >. Right now, Cornell is part of it. They have one of these air monitoring systems at Cornell and you can see what the air quality is of Geneva with all the different stats as far as the pm10s, 2.5, all of these different measurements, and they're working on up-linking all of the information of the air monitor units that are being placed around to get that uploaded to PurpleAir so you can see what the air quality is at Courtyard Apartments or near the landfills. If you want to host an air quality monitor, the only thing that you need to have is wi-fi, an electrical connection, and you can get one. They have ones to distribute so if you want to put one at your house, to add to the data around the City of Geneva, the email address is arens@hws.edu

AH: So, this is a Hobart William Smith and BluePrint collaboration.

PW: This is the one that Nan Arens --

JC: Mmhmm.

PW: She had sent out an email to campus and noted that it would need electricity and would use very little, and was hoping to have people mostly on the northwest corner of town, but she hadn't mentioned wifi.

JA: We're looking for people kind of north or near the hospital, and also the north end.

PK: Like where I live?

JA: Yeah.

PK: I could do it.

JC: The wifi is just so they can connect it to the Purple Air monitoring.

PW: But it also has to be accessible so that students or somebody that would come by would be able to go look at it by themselves without having to bother you or check to see if you're home first.

MC: So it would be something attached to the outside of your home.

JC: Mmhmm!

PW: It doesn't have to be the house, but wherever there's an electrical connection.

JA: And they're really small, they're about the size of your fist.

MC: I'd be willing. I'm all about this air quality business. I would love to see a whole bunch of these in Seneca Falls. I'm interested in our area, too.

JA: One of the people on our community panel is from Seneca Falls and she's working on getting some funding to install an array in addition to the one we're already putting up there. They're putting 5 or 6 Purple Air sensors around the landfill.

PK: Where is your array?

JA: We have a few on HWS campus, the water treatment plant, Courtyard park, there's one downtown, a few around town like by the truck routes. The idea is to have enough around the city to see the one you're closest to.

SB: How many are around the landfill?

JA: I'm not sure entirely. I know we're placing 2 out, Purple Air, which measures particulates, and then Cornell's students have designed a sensor that measures BOC, and those are the only ones that are BluePrint's. Seneca Falls, I think she said 6. Purple Air is pretty accessible, so you can just go on your phone or laptop and look up Purple Air, and it'll pull up to your specific location you're currently at. Seneca Falls already has some installed that people put on their own house. In addition to the 6 I think they have 10 or 12.

JC: Mayor's Tree-lighting, I believe it's Dec 6th, it's the first Friday usually in Geneva. I contacted Cathrine Price and Jackie and linked them both together, and they're both supportive of trying to try out a composting initiative During the Mayor's Tree-lighting and using it as a way of education. The only thing is just coming up with volunteers so we just need to come up with a volunteer sign-up form and test the waters to see if we can get 10 volunteers for 3 hours. Anything is better than nothing. BluePrint's going to donate the compost bins for the event and provide the education provided that we can just come up with the volunteers.

JN: What's being generated that's compostable waste?

JC: Popcorn, lots of popcorn! So it's just an educational opportunity to just say, "Popcorn here," for people to just start to see compost bins downtown.

AH: Is the popcorn served in compostable containers?

JC: I'm not sure but I can see.

Mission Zero: I'm sending out the Save-the-Date Oct 26th, 6 months prior to. I got some really great feedback from the group on different aspects of it. Before I send it out, I'll send out a list of the previous vendors that we've had for the past couple of years at Mission Zero. That's where the initial one's going out to, and once we have that, if everyone here can just pitch 3 ideas of 3 additional vendors to be added to the list, it's just for vendor registration. We need the MZ subcommittee to tackle some of the planning things one other time per month.

Ontario County Landfill: I saw a lot of you guys at the presentation. Do you think that, I know some of us have already written to Jim Kennedy and other Ontario County Board of Supervisors, do you think that we should do it as a Committee?

AH: Nuance it to include a transfer station, promote recycling, ReUse, composting. During the City Council liaison reports, I haven't heard anything from Ahmad Whitfield. Will go to CC, propose closing the landfill.

MC: I have something I can send you. Sara wrote some great things.

AH: it's worth addressing the cost to households of closing the landfill, ~\$80k, coupled with having a good transfer station to bring costs down.

JC: I brought info to Joe's presentation,

SB: Who's in charge?

JC: City, because Nardozzi didn't renew. Joe was supposed to bring it to CC.

SB: It sounds like no one's really in charge.

AH: something in the paper.

JC: Vermi-composting isn't happening but we have the space and it would take very little work. The Town does it successfully.

SB: I bought a \$25 composter.

JC: Growing Cycle, backyard composting, anything is better than nothing.

SB: Regulation should come from the State. Yvonne Taylor has been in touch. We've lost power by being divided.

AH: I agree completely, Resource Recovery Park. County should be doing this, but nothing has come from the County. The City wonders "why invest if the County is already invested?"

RC: I dropped off yard debris and a front-end loader dumped it into the guy's machine.

MC: I take my compost there; you dump it into the loader bucket. They're doing it.

PK: We should ask to see the operation.

JC: Who do we ask?

RC: Joe would know.

PK: I'd be happy to go over.

JC: whole committee!

PK: We can ask lots of questions.

MC: When does DEC make that decision?

AH: It's the County Supervisors who decide, because we own the landfill. It's publicly owned, privately operated by Casella. Important to go to meetings. DEC decides if it's meeting regulations.

JC: Jump to Jim, zoning, has Catherine submitted anything?

AH: David West picked that up. It's definitely changed but not approved yet, so that's a question for David West regarding where that's at.

AH expressed gratitude to other GGC members but needs to step back from leadership, will remain in the GGC, but needs to focus on other things. Gratitude expressed for AH and multiple GGC members. JC asked for recommendation for another Co-Chair. AH asked PW, who accepted.

JC: Can we have a motion to approve the meeting minutes from last month?

RC moved, SB seconded.

AH: I move that PW is the Co-Chair.

JC: I second. I move to close this meeting.

JA: Second!

Meeting adjourned.