



**WESTERN NEW YORK ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MEETING AGENDA**

DATE TIME: *February 26, 2013 @ 12:00 Noon*

LOCATION: *Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo 525 Larkin Building*

1. Call to Order Robert E. Knoer, Chair

2. Roll Call

Robert E. Knoer,	Chair	(REK)	X
Judy Einach,	Vice Chair	(JE)	X
Arthur Wheaton,	Treasurer	(AW)	X
Loren Smith,	Secretary	(LS)	X
Anthony Armstrong		(AA)	X
Jay Burney		(JBy)	X
Brian Dold		(BD)	X
Kerri Bentkowski Li		(KB)	Excused
Erin Heaney		(EH)	X
Rebekah Williams		(RW)	X
Micaela Shapiro-Shellaby		(MS)	X
Justin Booth		(JB)	X
Terry L. Yonker		(TY)	X
Ryan McPherson		(RM)	X

Also Present:

Cara Matteliano	(CM)	
Richard Stockton	(RS)	
Kristen Kaszubowski	(KK)	X
Carolyn Human	(CH)	X
Jim Simon	(JS)	X
Ken Shockley	(KS)	X
Don Duggan-Haas	(DDH)	X

3. Approval of Agenda and Prior Minutes. Agenda moved to approve – EH, AW seconds, no opposition. Minutes thanked moved by JB, Seconded by RM, approved.

4. Organizational Issues

- a. Treasures Report (AW). No report. A discussion of the budgeting process needs to occur. AW to schedule a meeting with CM
- b. List serves and GROW (Kristen Kaszubowski)
- c. Communications Subcommittee
 - a. Ryan McPherson to present strategic vision.
 - i. Remember the Green Infrastructure Forum on 3/14
 - ii. Look for an Earth Day event early evening Monday 3/22 to open the Solar Strand to the WNY community. Perhaps good to combine with the Growing Good awards.
 - iii. Strategic Vision. From Ryan's e-mail, see also attachment at the end of this document. Kristen's powerpoint presentation is available by request.

Over the past few months the GrowWNY team has been working to plot a strategic path forward for the next year that we will present tomorrow at the Alliance board meeting. In advance of this presentation, we wanted to share the DRAFT plan (attached) as well as a summary of the plan in the body of this email below to help further our conversation tomorrow.

We value your input and counsel with this process and look forward to the conversation.

Here is a summary of the strategic plan for 2013:

Objective:

In 2013, we want to **integrate** the voices, expertise, experiences and successes of the Western New York Environmental Alliance into GrowWNY and show the **impact** the WNYEA has on our community through increased participation from Alliance Members, Affiliates and Supporters, in order to **educate** the community and increase environmental collaboration.

Goals:

The team has reviewed our analytics for our major communications tools: Website, Public Relations/Earned Media, Facebook and Twitter and set goals for 2013 that include:

Facebook - increase to 3,000 fans

Twitter - increase to 2,000 followers

Green Zine - Increase subscribers by approx. 120 people

Website - Increase the percentage of new visitors from 68% to 70% (Knight avg. is 57.76%)

Blogs - Begin to receive 12 blogs a month from Alliance partners – one from each member of the board through their working groups (recaps of the meetings, notices from attendees), the organizations they represent, etc.

Publicity - 10 mentions of Alliance, Alliance member or GrowWNY in local media

Community Engagement - Increase attendance at working group and process group meetings, Quarterly meetings and Congress.

Challenges & Solutions:

We also outlined the challenges we believe we will face in 2013 and solutions for each of those challenges. Here is a short summary of a few of the challenges that most impact you.

Challenge: Everyone is a volunteer. **Solutions:** Communications education, training, refresher courses, templates, etc.

Challenge: Building WNYEA brand and fostering a consistent brand image. **Solutions:** Create brand standards and encourage the use of the WNYEA logo.

Challenge: Membership Communication. **Solutions:** Organizational feedback, email blasts, interns, etc.

The full draft plan is attached.

Initial thoughts about trainings: How to write a blog, using video cameras, how to tag other pages, social media. How to write a press release, how to run a media event.

5. Old Business:

a. First Quarterly Meeting March 13, 2013. Judy will preside. The logistics are all set, the content is mostly set, the format for the panel discussion is being refined. Volunteers are being sought. AV needs still need to be taken care of. Mike and Podium are there. BOP has a screen and projector. RW and BD to coordinate. Samina Raja from UB will be presenting, Dan Oles from Oles Family Farm and Sean Mulligan will be discussing food policy and the local food system.

i. Growing Group:

1. Date: March 13, 2013
2. Place: Marcy Casino
3. Topic: Food Policy, some on GROW, where the alliance is going.

b. Second Quarterly Meeting (May/June) 2013

i. Habitat and Natural Resources Group

1. Date: TENTATIVE June 11, 2013 (Tuesday) (This is the first day of the BALLE conference, so a date in July might be explored.)
2. Place:
3. Topic: Hydrofracking

c. Third Quarterly Meeting

i. Presentation of Advocacy Agenda

1. Date: Sometime in September.
 2. Place:
 3. Topic: Each Working Group will have an opportunity to present the status of the 2013 Agenda and the draft proposed 2014 Agenda to the member organizations.
- d. 2014 Congress
- i. Date: November 9, 2013
 - ii. Place:
 - iii. Conference Chair (Nominees) REK says that by next meeting we should have someone in this position. EH brought up the point that there cannot be just one person to run this; is a working group in order for this?

6. New Business:

- a. Update on Speakers Bureau (LS) Don Duggan-Haas

We have an emerging speaker's bureau. The application form has been updated to address concerns about stand-alone folks and people who are members of an organization but who speak to another area of expertise – we are requesting sign-off from the relevant working group. The project is ready to roll out for new folks to sign up to be a speaker and one month after that we will roll this out through a press release. Please consider becoming a speaker and spreading the word to groups that are members of your alliance working/process group. AA suggests linking up with the PPG radio show. EH – inquired about the revenue component of this. That is beyond the service that the Alliance is providing. TY asked if those who submitted need to resubmit—Don says that they will not, although they might want to update their bios.

7. Report of Committees:

(PLEASE NOTE written minutes or a report should be submitted to the list serve prior to the meeting if possible)

- a. Membership Committee (LS,JE,AA)
- i. New Applications - Gary Carrel (individual member), NYSOEA (New York State Outdoor Education Alliance) – Member.
Motion to adopt – RW, TY seconds, unanimous.
Membership Report:

8. Report of Alliance Groups:

(PLEASE SEND Any DETAILED REPORT OF MEETINGS VIA EMAIL SO WE HAVE TIME FOR DISCUSSION)

- a. Working Groups—Privileges and responsibilities of Chairs (attached) (REK)

- i. Habitat and Natural Resources (JBy)
 - 1. Progress on Agenda
 - 2. Status of 2014 Agenda Proposals
 - 3. Working on invasive species workshops. Land use issues are being tackled by some sub-committees to work with the county against possible logging. Program work for the quarterly meeting is making way, and work on the GrowWNY site is in progress.

- ii. Parks and Recreation (BD)
 - 1. Progress on Agenda
 - 2. Status of 2014 Agenda Proposals
 - 3. Trying to reach out to Greenway and look forward to agenda items for 2014.

- iii. Energy and Climate Change (TY)
 - 1. Progress on Agenda
 - 2. Status of 2014 Agenda Proposals
 - 3. Had a webinar in the last meeting about renewables, which led to the discussion of creating a study in WNY about reaching a percentage of renewables (80%?). Our next meeting, March 7, will feature a discussion from Smart Home Buffalo about their project on the BNMC campus. Progress is being made on action agendas; a letter has been written to the governor about FIT. Climate Smart Communities has been working with many municipalities. There was a discussion about the Greenway and possible alterations to it (Robert Moses), and TY thought it would be worthwhile to outline some of the issues, etc. There is the possibility for collaboration between the working group chairs.

- iv. Pollution and Hazardous Waste (JE)
 - 1. Progress on Agenda
 - 2. Status of 2014 Agenda Proposals
 - 3. Working group members have been assigned to make visits to elected officials to move the action item forward. There is an event that the group is working with the Sierra /Club on (tonight!)

- v. Urban Regeneration (AA)
 - 1. Progress on Agenda
 - 2. Status of 2014 Agenda Proposals

3. AA recapped One Region Forward meetings and progress of the project. There was a meeting on the Green Code; the process has hit a couple snags, but it is still being actively participated in. There is progress being made on the vacant lot action item.

vi. Environmental Justice (EH)

1. Progress on Agenda
2. Status of 2014 Agenda Proposals
3. There has been a lot of work for the texting program (Grow 716)—new campaigns cover air quality (Text SMOKE if you see smoke to 877877, or SMELL if you smell a weird odor). Please share. This information will be shared DEC There has been a lot of work toward expanding the Alliance and increasing diversity. A BBQ will be held. The group is committed to continuing work on the Green Code.

vii. Growing Group (MMH)

1. Progress on Agenda
2. Status of 2014 Agenda Proposals

A lot of progress toward the quarterly meeting has been made. We've talked to Sean Mulligan last meeting. The group will ask the Alliance groups to support the recommendations Sean discussed at the last working group meeting. Sean will be speaking at the quarterly meeting. The group is working on a letter of support that will come from the Alliance, as well as samples for the individual organizations.

viii. Transportation (JB)

1. Progress on Agenda
2. Status of 2014 Agenda Proposals

Working on sections of the Green Code; working on finding measurable statistics on the effectiveness of complete streets. The group is working on their action agenda item and is holding a meeting this Thursday to gather feedback from the stakeholders. The group is monitoring when the next DOT meeting is.

b. Report of Liaisons to Process Groups

1. Issues & Advocacy (MS)

- a. Progress on Agenda
- b. Status of 2014 Agenda Proposals
- c. MS needs help with notes and distribution of information. MS thinking about a "Back to Basics" presentation at second quarterly

meeting; there could a series of workshops on messaging, WNY mapping (power mapping and politicians), etc. There is the potential to hold a conference next year.

- c. EH brought up that we need to focus on advocacy and where we want to go as an organization; REK seconds this. RW inquired whether or not there was funding for a strategic planning effort in the Alliance; REK said that this is possible as long as the Alliance comes up with a proposal that shows the Alliance has made progress on the Action Agenda.
- d. AA requests that the term “Rapid Response” be included in email subjects.
- e. Don brought up that the Museum of the Earth will be holding a conference March 18 and 19 about messaging from the Marcellus Shale.
- f. RM plugged for UB’s sustainability film series, and there are tables available at the Green Infrastructure Forum.

1. Education & Outreach (LH) no report/see Speakers Bureau Info

a. Progress on Agenda

b. Status of 2014 Agenda Proposals

2. Organizational Capacity (KB) no report

a. Progress on Agenda

b. Status of 2014 Agenda Proposals

9. Adjourn (approximately 1:30)

REK motion to adjourn, no objections, unanimously adjourned.

REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS:

Board of Directors 2013 Scheduled Meeting Dates: Fourth Tuesday of the Month

**June 25 March 26 April 30 May 28
July 23 August 27 September 24 October 22**

Quarterly Meetings

March 13, 2013 May __, 2013 August __, 2013

WNYEA Congress: Annual Meeting November 9, 2013

November 26, 2013 Organizational Meeting

Holiday Break No Meeting December 2013

2013 Strategic Plan: GrowWNY 2.0 Draft

Last Edited 02/14/13 KMK

Objective:

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Goals:

We will know that progress toward our objective is being made when we can see the successful completion of the following goals:

Benchmarking Numbers

	Dec. 31,2011	Dec. 31, 2012	2013 Goals	Knight Fdn. Numbers
Facebook	1,608 fans	1,828 fans	3,000 fans	
Website Referrals	4,262 referrals	3,799 referrals	4,000 referrals	
Unique Referrals	2,427 (45%)	2,406 (54%)		
Twitter	555 Twitter followers*	813 Twitter followers	2,000 Twitter followers and average 10 retweets/month	
Green Zine	1,336 subscribers in January 2012	1,412 subscribers in January 2013**	1,525 subscribers by the end of January 2014	
Website				
Total Visitors	44,716 visitors	53,347 visitors		
New Visitors	22,455 new (50%)	36,548 new (68%)	72% new traffic	57.76%
Bounce Rate	66.98%	59.48%	50%	62.03%
Time on Site	8:03	3:59		2.31

* The first record of Twitter followers began in July of 2012. The growth since these numbers have started being tracked has averaged about 43 new followers/month (projected 516/year)

**Number collected on January 14, 2013. This monthly report may change in the following weeks.

- **Blogs:** Approximately 20 blogs/month are needed to ensure a consistent flow of content on the GrowWNY blog; we want to increase Alliance participation on the blog so that 12 blogs a month are written by Alliance members, supporters or affiliates.
- **Alliance Membership:** TBD by the Alliance Board
- **Publicity:** We want to have 10 mentions of the Alliance, Alliance Members, or GrowWNY in local media newspapers, radio or news broadcasts over the next year. This publicity will help to increase community awareness of the Alliance and GrowWNY.
- **Engagement:** We would like to increase our engagement rates both on the website and social media platforms of GrowWNY, but also within the Alliance activities. This means increasing attendance to

Working Group and Process Group meetings, Quarterly meetings and the Congress. We also want to see more comments on our GrowWNY blogs, and more discussion on the social media platforms.

Challenges and Solutions:

These are the major challenges that we foresee impeding upon the progress of our overall objective, as well as meeting our goals. Each challenge is followed by a proposed solution or solutions that we believe will mitigate the issue without halting progress within the Alliance.

Challenge: Everyone is a volunteer.

We do not want the responsibilities of GrowWNY to seem burdensome on our member organizations; we understand that many of them are run by volunteers and already stretched staff members. We want our members to understand that contributing and working with GrowWNY is quick, easy and fits into their preexisting responsibilities. They must also understand the benefits of contributing to GrowWNY; they stand to gain attention, following, volunteers and more from GrowWNY, because it expands the reach of their organization.

Solutions: Education, training, refresher courses, templates, etc.

- 1. Why is GrowWNY valuable to your organization?** In order for any of our following suggestions to work, we must position GrowWNY as something of value to our member organizations. GrowWNY offers them another media outlet, access to an ever-growing audience (some of which may not be a part of their audiences already), and a resource to showcase their organization's work, or learn about the work of other organizations.
- 2. Education & Training:** We want to provide training to diffuse some of the blog misconceptions. We believe some people feel as though the blogs are literary pieces that require hours of research and editing. We want to show member organizations how easy it is to blog about what they are doing, or the topics that they are interested in. We could hold a brief training seminar once a month and also make training materials (videos or power point slides) available on the GrowWNY.org website.
- 3. Refresher Courses:** We also want to increase the vlogs (video blogs) and photos on the blog, so a refresher training course on the GrowWNY video cameras will help with this. This course could be posted to the GrowWNY website as a video, and sent out to all the members who were given a camera.
- 4. Meeting Blog Template:** In order to make it as easy as possible for Working Groups to contribute to GrowWNY, we want to provide a template to start easing them into the habit of submitting a blog after each meeting. This template is designed to report on the progress of the Alliance's Action Agenda at the end of each Working Group, or Process Group, meeting. This template not only helps to record the progress of the group, but once it is posted on the GrowWNY blog, it will potentially attract new participants to the group meetings.
- 5. Board Support:** Board members must lead the way for other organizations to begin contributing more. This means submitting their own content, attending training and refresher courses, and encouraging others to do so as well.
- 6. Editorial Calendar:** An editorial calendar for the Alliance Board may help to begin an increase of content contribution for the GrowWNY website. The GrowWNY team could propose a calendar that would range over the next year and assign one blog to a board member for the

year. Board members would be encouraged to contribute more, but we feel as though setting dates and expectations such as these would help to begin progress.

7. **Adding GrowWNY to media list and increasing discussion between communications staff:** By adding GrowWNY to the media lists of our partner organizations, the communications material that they are already sending out will go to GrowWNY. This will make it easier for everyone involved to ensure that the most up-to-date content is being posted on GrowWNY. Additionally, the people creating these communication materials should collaborate with the GrowWNY team. Perhaps a monthly meeting or check in between all the local, environmental communicators would help to strengthen the overall environmental communications work of Western New York.

Challenge: Process is unclear at times and sometimes halts progress.

With the newly adopted Action Agenda, the Alliance members are becoming more active in order to fulfill their plank statements. However, their progress is sometimes slowed down because they have to double-check on the policy regarding the action they want to take. For example, does the letter of support from the Alliance have to be approved by the Board or the Issues and Advocacy Committee?

Solution: Clarify the processes of the Alliance in a quick “cheat sheet.”

A refresher on the policies of the WNYEA is needed for longstanding members, as well as an introduction for new members. It could be presented in a frequently asked questions format. It should be an easy-to-read, one or two page document that also provides direction as to where to find the extended policies and procedures. It can be hosted on the GrowWNY website so all members have access to it.

Challenge: Building WNYEA brand and fostering a consistent brand image.

Many WNYEA organizations are well-known in the Western New York community, but the Alliance is not as well known. Additionally, with the newly adopted Action Agenda, more Alliance-approved material will be sent out to legislators and possibly media. We must have a system in place to ensure the consistency of these materials.

Solutions: Create brand standards and encourage the use of the WNYEA logo.

Increasing the use of the WNYEA logo, especially within the well-known member organizations, will help create awareness of the Alliance. The logo could be featured on their website to show they are a proud member of the Western New York Environmental Alliance. As for the consistency issue, a brand standards manual would include templates that could be sent to member organizations when they are preparing Alliance material (i.e letters of support). This could also be monitored by the appropriate committee, based on the policy for the proposed action. We also want to start adding the Alliance logo to the emails sent out by the info@growwny.org account.

Challenge: Membership Communication

Are we communicating the right way? The Alliance is a group of groups, which makes communication difficult, but also vital. With so many moving pieces and hands in the pot, we must have an effective method for internal communication in order to maximize the impact of our external communication. For example, we need to know what is going on with our member organizations so we can make sure their events are shared on GrowWNY.

Solutions: Organizational feedback, email blasts, interns, etc.

1. **Organizational feedback:** We need to gather feedback from our organizations and their members in order to learn the best ways to communicate with them. If an email reminder doesn't work for them, maybe a text reminder would. When we have meetings, such as quarterly

meetings or the annual congress, we need to gather this information from our members, affiliates and supporters. These gatherings will make it easy to reach out and speak to individuals about what communications methods will work best for them. If they do not attend these meetings, we must try emailing and calling them in order to update our records. The information we gather might tell us that responding via email is easier than registering via a Wufoo form, for example.

2. **Email blasts:** We already use email blasts to inform members of important updates, upcoming meetings, and more. Perhaps we should also start using them to update our database. We could send out a notice once or twice a year that requests their updated information. In order to avoid becoming bothersome to our active members, we could segment these messages to the inactive ones through some of Mail Chimp's features. We also should start thinking of personalizing the emails in order to increase our response rate on them.
3. **Interns:** Interns would be great for helping us build up the event calendar. Oftentimes, organizations do not submit their events to our community calendar because the program on our website is finicky. If they are having trouble with this program, they should email their events to the info@growwny.org account so we can upload them from the backend. One of the intern's tasks would be to do this, as well as search for additional events. The intern could also reach out to organizations and encourage them to send us their events when they are updating their own calendar.

Challenge: Technical limitations of the GrowWNY.org site (Joomla).

Without a full-time tech person, many features and functions of the GrowWNY site are unknown and unutilized. This also becomes troublesome when something new needs to be added to the website and there is not sufficient knowledge as to how it needs to be done. There are a lot of 'unknowns' surrounding the website because the majority of the GrowWNY team was not involved in its creation.

Solutions: Website analysis to determine potential restructuring of website/training on Joomla.

We need to perform a website analysis to both clean up the website, and truly learn all that it holds. In order for restructuring and cleaning of the website to occur, Joomla training may be necessary. We should also explore the possibility of moving the website to a different platform.