

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

February 14, 2005

EMU Coquille Room

ATTENDEES: Ben Farrell, Jim Blick, Taylour Johnson, Bob Jones, Christine Thompson, Dorene Steggell, Steve Mital, Robyn Hathcock, Karyn Kaplan, Anne Forrestel, JR Gaddis, and Kay Coots

Guest: Julie Daniel, Planet Improvement Center

Julie Daniel, Director of BRING, began her presentation with an overview of the ways that they interface with the University. BRING is contracted to handle some of the material from Campus Recycling such as glass, cans, and plastic containers. They have worked with Steve Mital and the ESSLP on the first TV recycling event in Oregon. It was extremely successful and data from this collaboration was provided to the state, EPA, and the DEQ. In addition to other projects, there is mutual information sharing and referral regarding recycling markets and products handling.

Another area where BRING and the UO interface is for deconstruction projects and remodels on items that don't have to go through the state property system. Julie finds that the surplus property regulations are a major hindrance to reuse locally. University property ends up where people can buy it cheaply in Salem with no control over how it is handled, especially in regard to electronics.

BRING is transitioning away from collecting and processing to become more of an advocate for reuse and waste reduction. Their goal is to create a physical space that represents those values. They will soon begin building a demonstration facility to help promote education and create cultural change. A 1999 study conducted by the UO Community Planning Workshop led the way to developing this whole concept.

The Planet Improvement Center will be located on three acres in Glenwood (with an approved site plan). Julie said that the name was chosen in part to capitalize on the fun and event aspects of Jerry's Home Improvement Center.

They are working toward de-stigmatizing reuse by making the facility broadly acceptable, chic, interesting, and fun. Some of their goals are to:

- Demonstrate end products by making something beautiful out of something used; examples of art and gardening projects throughout the site
- Become a center for all kinds of environmental interaction and education and a bridge between the business and environmental community
- Increase educational opportunities for UO students to interact with BRING through internships and workshops (It would help to pair students up with scholarships so they would be able to receive a stipend.)
- They have an opportunity to educate people who would not normally visit an environmental center

- Follow an environmental decision matrix developed with Good Company
- Become a destination in the community

BRING has been self sufficient for 33 years and has begun fundraising for the first time. The cost for the new facility is 1.8 million, of which, \$925,000 has already been raised. They are closing in on raising the amount needed to start building the Planet Improvement Center this spring. They chose the name A lead gift of one-quarter million dollars is available through a matching grant from the Oregon Community Foundation. BRING has raised \$125,000 of this amount, primarily from individual donors.

Announcements