

Transition Amherst 5/12/11 meeting notes

Present: Gabor, Mona, Bernard, Molly, Jon, Betsy, Peter, Tina Clarke

Questions for Tina: 1) *Interest in connection to other groups. Point us to contacts.* 2) *How do we get to Great Unleashing? What do we prioritize?* 3) *So many groups in Amherst. Do we skip steps? Is awareness already raised?* 4) *Do we need people with skills to reach out and skills to facilitate?* 5) *What is going on in Montague and other places that are ahead of us?* 6) *We have a dedicated core but all are maxed out in their lives. How do we increase the number of active members?* 7) *What is an overview of Transition on the national level? How is Transition viewed? Who is paying attention?* 8) *Want to hear about neat things going on in places in the US – not necessarily just Transition. Not convinced that Transition is faster/better/more efficient than other models.*

Tina: History of Transition movement – Ireland, Totnes – a bunch of people having a conversation, sharing ideas. When arrived in the US three responses. Some people said, Wow, great!. Some were doing their own things and hardly noticed. Another group presented a critique – often people who didn't really know what the model was. “Curious” sustainability folks, in the trenches, not recognized. Did not do local, didn't take off. Permaculture and Transition shifted the conversation and thinking. David Orr at the NESEA conference said it doesn't matter what you call it. Do things fully, Do everything you can. We are in a crisis. 20 – 40% of people will pay more attention because it is an international movement. If use the ideas, credit Transition Movement. There are 23 initiatives in Western Mass. Do Transition – helps market.

Wherever you are, if lots of groups are doing stuff, you are further along the road. (Group in Maine – amazing skills. Transition camp? - could do this here too – where could you do it?)

Transition – start where you are. Envision 20 years in the future, and then work towards it. Best model for integrating diverse groups, avoiding founders syndrome, integrating across race and class lines. Various sustainability people already here – can be Resource Groups. How get/reach mainstream people? Head/Hands/Heart – lots of tools. Different pieces for different people. Multiple points of entry. Process works with whatever the community resources are. Not a top down check list.

“Transition Neighborhood” A lot of people want this. Also good in big cities. About having relationships, neighbor to neighbor. Keep it low to the ground.

Northfield getting ready to do Unleashing. Will be holding a Facilitators Training – How do you facilitate this conversation? A couple of the initiating group have been to trainings. All on a learning curve. In the US we have more ego/identity around thought process. If critiquing system may have trouble being part of the group. Brits have WWII memory where they all had to pull together. In US – tend towards privatism. Transition is a Team Sport. Supposed to be grassroots up. In Amherst there are many existing groups: when get to Great Unleashing, invite existing groups to bring tables, give them visibility.

Forums: Transition Putney – pick topics - “aging in place” etc. Bring in organizations, have 'em speak. Totnes would have a panel on a topic and the next day hold an open space on same topic. John Gerber organized what one could call a Food Resilience Summit recently

in Amherst. NOFA – last summer had workshop on Transition. This year will be a Transition “Track” - 6 workshops, 3 on Saturday and 3 on Sunday. A sort of Regional Gathering at NOFA, August 13, 14 and 15. Example of how to work with existing groups instead of reinventing the wheel.

Role of Initiating Group:

- 1) Welcome and encourage people to give their gifts. Sort of a talent scout. Lots of different kinds of folks needed – head/hands and heart. One public event a month.
- 2) Form Initiating Group and get advisors (John Gerber, Hitchcock Center, Clergy – key people in town, people who can open doors.)
- 3) Create a big list – everyone who would want to be invited. Keep asking who do you know, who cares about the community. On list have Groups and Individuals, Places and Networks. Not just get them, let us use their list.

Groups – Weekend training. Launch a conversation about how we are going to deal with the 4-E's. Big conversation – no one can hold all the answers. Need collective genius. Initiating group – about bringing people together, holding a party.

Will be a Training for Transition, July 9 & 10 in Northampton. For people who are in an initiating group or who have been to a training before. Go through the pieces, the components, share experiences. We have so many creative people implementing this process. Tina will volunteer, so price will be low. Hard for Tina, working 70 – 80 hours/week on Transition. Volunteering her time, only get paid when do trainings, speak at colleges. Trainings have evolved. She has learned what is needed. Key focus, bring groups together, appreciative of what do.

Rich Roth – Earth Thrives. PVSustain.org Catherine Ratte PV Sustain – fiscal sponsor. Create a data base/resource list – sign up, offer skills. Idea – Jono Neiger, neighbor. Education piece – lots of resource groups. Transitionma.org

Respect grassroots nature of the model. Service model. Remind people if someone invite you to come in – service. We lose people if we don't have stuff to plug them in to. The Initiating group list is different. Big list of everyone who cares about the community.

Find the best groups – keen on it/local. Ask if they will help facilitate a working group on a 20 year positive vision at the Great Unleashing. Invite/pick out people – “Could you support and facilitate this conversation? Here is a format for supporting the collective genius.” Teach/ Support by having a facilitator in each group. It is about nurturing people, helping people to give their gift, to feel seen and valued.

Northfield is organizing a Training for Transition part 2 (advanced), a Facilitators Training. Will take place an evening and a day.

Unleashing? Things help: if 4-5 people go to training, go together as a group. Have several people who do human development/spiritual practice/education/nursing/ preschool teachers/ beauty salon/clergy – heart based, positive, caring energy. Find these kinds of people for the initiating group.

Next Meeting: May 26, 7:00 at Betsy's house, 84 Eames Avenue (off Cottage & Chestnut)