

History of Eco-Municipality Organizing in Chequamegon Bay from Summer, 2004 till August 30, 2005: (Background written for presentation of Eco-Municipality Resolution at Ashland City Council August 30, 2005 Meeting). By Mary Rehwald

This eco-municipality resolution is being brought forward for discussion at the Committee of the Whole by Councilor Mary Rehwald. Timed for final vote at the September 13 City Council Meeting.

History: Actions to date to explain the eco-municipality concept to councilors, city staff and community members have included many slideshow presentations by Councilor Rehwald to a variety of groups. Actions to date have included:

Summer, 2004 - Slide presentation to Ashland City Council by Mary Rehwald and Jane Silberstein on The Natural Step and their participation at a conference in the Twin Cities the preceding May.

August, 2004 - Councilor Rehwald takes tour of "Sustainable Sweden" to learn firsthand what has happened in eco-municipalities over a twenty year period.

September through August, 2004-2005 - Numerous presentations by Mary Rehwald to community groups, including Northwest Regional Planning, Cities of Washburn and Bayfield, the Bayfield Chamber of Commerce, the Red Cliff and Bad River tribal councils, Northland College, and others. Over 600 attended these presentations.

February 2005 - International conference for 200 at AmericInn in Ashland with Torbjorn Lahti of Sweden and American Planning Association (APA) member, Sarah James. 32 attendees were sponsored by the City of Ashland, including 4 City Councilors, the Mayor, City Administrator, and 6 city staff. Other attendees came from the cities of Bayfield, Washburn, LaPointe, Superior, Duluth, Stevens Point, Evanston, and the Bad River and Red Cliff tribes. The 13 co-sponsors of this conference also included Jerry Johnson, CESA#12, the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center, Northland College, and WITC.

May, 2005 - Brea Lemke accepts award at Wisconsin American Planning Association (WAPA) conference in Sheboygan for Ashland's Comprehensive Plan for best plan for a city of our size in the Wisconsin, and gives a talk on eco-municipality work to date in Chequamegon Bay area.

June 18-19, 2005 - Madison summit of 22 people, including Swedish delegation, APA members, City of Madison representatives, and attendees from The Natural Step (TNS) Canada, Mass., D.C., New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Minnesota to identify 4 regions in U.S. as good sites for eco-municipality work (Chequamegon Bay, Madison, Lawrence, New Jersey, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire).

June 20, 2005 - Return visit by Torbjorn Lahti with Swedish delegation to Chequamegon Bay. 450 attended Chautauqua discussion (standing ovation). Small meetings with groups representing Red Cliff, Bayfield, Washburn, Ashland, Bad River. Presentation to Ashland and Washburn city councils of Letter of Intent from Swedish network of eco-municipalities to provide mentoring and support for eco-municipality work in Chequamegon Bay. Keynote presentation by Torbjorn Lahti at Northland College teachers' conference sponsored by CESA#12.

July 13, 2005 - Washburn City Council passes first eco-municipality resolution in U.S.

August 17, 2005 - Meeting with David Frasher and department heads to discuss implications of implementation of eco-municipality resolution acceptance.

August 24, 2005 - Evening presentation by Mary Rehwald for councilors and other community members who had not yet had attended other presentations. This resolution will provide sustainability guidelines that support Ashland's Comprehensive Plan. City staff will be encouraged to discuss ways to save the city money, reduce waste, implement more sustainable purchasing policies, and set up benchmarks for making progress to reduce the city's "ecological footprint". This resolution provides a sustainability framework to help councilors review future purchasing decisions, as well as model good environmental practices. It is intended to encourage the growth of an environmental niche for the business sector in the Ashland area. It also encourages the city to meet with other government bodies in the region to share knowledge about efficiencies in transportation, energy use, local food distribution, waste disposal. It declares to the world that small towns like Ashland want to make a difference and do things the right way.