

# Sustainable Development in Communities Workshop - Panel Discussion

November 26, 2007

**Panelists:** Sarah Van Der Paelt, Union Gas Ltd.  
Blair Feltmate, Ontario Power Generation Inc.  
Andrew Cowan, Federation of Canadian Municipalities  
Phillip Masschelein, Sifton Properties Ltd.

## *Questions from the Floor and Panelists' Responses*

### **1. Companies that are not onboard with sustainable development reporting; how do we get them interested?**

*Blair:* Explain the basics and point out what they are already doing right in relation to sustainable development (SD). Make the business case such as return on investment (as described in my presentation this morning). The SD argument for the specific company must be applicable or appealing to the company's needs. Tell the company that they deserve to get credit for their current actions and results related to SD.

*Andrew:* There are already courses and tools or mechanisms to help businesses address sustainable development. We're not starting from scratch. Educational courses are now recognizing the need to study sustainable development. Also realize that some people will never change.

*Phillip:* The market will correct these companies. They will either adapt or disappear.

### **2. Concerning sustainable development; how do we enhance collaborations and decrease competition, overlaps, chaos, etc? How do we get initiatives to work together?**

*Andrew:* Leadership needs to come from all levels and all people. We cannot depend solely on the feds or province. If municipalities are the leaders, then plans being created must be made with community input. Then plans must be implemented (action). All parties must be committed to making these plans a reality (e.g. City of Sudbury: realistic, practical plans, with targets and timelines).

*Blair:* The Canadian electricity association (CEA) has a new focus on sustainability. This could enhance collaborations in the energy sector.

*Sarah:* it must have someone at the table during master planning at the municipal level. Plans made in isolation can't work in planning exclusiveness=base for creativity and collaboration.

- 3. This question deals with inertia (in the utility sector); utilities are used to doing business in a particular way, (e.g. regulated and deregulated operations), which can cause barriers to sustainable development (i.e. conservation equals selling less energy and lower revenue). Conventional approaches to utilities; how do we deal with these issues?**

*Sarah: Concerning “the same old way” problem, use incentive programs, and put the right rate-mechanism in place (e.g. “lost revenue mechanism”).*

*Phillip: There may be some barriers, but getting dialogue established early with utilities (gas and electric) is very important.*

- 4. Sustainable development and the end-user can be a problem; how do we convince the average consumer to look beyond (first) cost and value efficiency?**

*Phillip: People want to do the right thing, but the public is confused. We need standards for industry (from the Feds) to make information more tangible for the general consumer.*

- 5. There appears to be a lack of leadership that the Federal and Provincial levels on energy efficiency and sustainable issues. It looks like most action is happening at the municipal level. Solutions and examples of sustainability are already out there. Why can't we get senior government leaders to recognize and address barriers?**

*Andrew: Leadership needs to come from all levels and all people. We cannot depend solely on the Feds or Province. If municipalities are the leaders, then plans being created must be made with community input; then plans must be implemented (action). All parties must be committed to making these plans a reality (e.g. City of Sudbury: realistic, practical plans, with targets and timelines). Funding is needed to make actions happen. Municipalities are looking to the province and the fed's for money.*

*Phillip: Concerning sustainable development and land development; we need more direction from the Provincial level because new master plans (for municipal growth) are going through them. This will set the direction for the next twenty years.*

*Blair: U.S. politics will affect Canada's leadership (e.g. “position on climate change). There is the need for Federal recognition of sustainable development. We need a minister of sustainable development; the Liberal Party showed interest in this idea.*

- 6. I believe the oil and gas lobby in Ottawa is problematic for sustainable development and represents a major barrier; oil producers do not want to reduce profits; how do we address this?**

*Sarah: I feel union gas is trying concerning sustainable development.*

*Blair: Companies may be doing “negative” things, but they are also putting funding into community projects, R&D etc. to offset those actions. The fact that these companies recognize problems is a first step.*