

Beit Am Sustainability Committee Charter

Mission Statement

We believe that having a sustainability committee at Beit Am furthers the Jewish principle/practice of Tikkun Olam.

The Beit Am Sustainability Committee (BASC) has the principal responsibility for environmental and sustainability affairs at Beit Am. The BASC has three main objectives:

1. To advance Beit Am's focus on sustainability and integrate sustainable principles into all aspects of the community.
2. To encourage Beit Am members to be more sustainable in their own home and business practices by involving them in Beit Am projects and increasing their knowledge.
3. To offer projects, workshops, discussions and resources on sustainability and resources on sustainability and encourage participation from the Beit Am community.

The BASC will consist of a committee chair and a secretary to take the meeting minutes with both elected by the BASC members. The Board portfolio holder will sit on, but not necessarily be the chair of the committee. The committee chair will give quarterly updates to the Board on the BASC's progress.

The BASC will meet quarterly with special meetings as needed.

Funding for projects require approval by the BA Board after discussion of a proposal submitted by the BASC.

The following will be the basis for defining sustainability in addition to The Natural Step (see addendum):

Sustainability can be defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (UN Brundtland Commission in 1987)

The BASC focuses on projects and events that address short and long term goals developed by the committee.

General:

- Explain how sustainability relates to Judaism.
- Demonstrate the importance of sustainability to Beit Am members.

Facility:

- Improve energy efficiency and conservation.
- Reduce and eliminate waste.
- Landscape with drought tolerant plants to reduce watering. Eliminate use of pesticides/herbicides in landscape.
- Protect natural resources on property.
- Encourage more bicycle riding, carpooling and public transportation.
- Integrate LEED standard and beyond for new building.
- Use non toxic cleaners in housekeeping.
- Water usage: install the most water efficient low flow toilets and reduced flow faucets in the new building.

Employee:

- Integrate a focus on sustainability into job descriptions. Employees offered basic sustainability training.
- Offer a living wage as feasible within budget.

Office:

- Implement sustainable principles when purchasing and using supplies/furnishings/equipment.
- Examine impacts of purchases: will it last? Is it toxic to use? What are the social impacts of the purchase?
- Choose suppliers based on their sustainability performance. Team up with other faith communities when buying in bulk and to influence suppliers.

Purchasing:

- Evaluate impacts of the product: will it last, toxic to make, use or in its disposal? What are the social impacts of the purchase?
- Choose suppliers based on their sustainability performance. Could team up with other faith communities when buying in bulk and to influence suppliers.

Public Relations

- Be a model for the Corvallis community.
- Coordinate with other community sustainability organizations including the Corvallis Sustainability Coalition.
- Connect with other faith community sustainability groups.

Finance

- Investments – consider sustainability for investments.

Addendum

The Natural Step (TNS) is an international organization that uses TNS principles as its framework for achieving sustainability. The original principles were developed in Sweden in the late 1980's under the leadership of pediatric oncologist Dr. Karl Robert. Dr. Robert was seeing increased rates of pediatric cancers that could only be the result of environmental toxins. He worked with fifty other Swedish scientists to develop a set of system conditions that would be protective of all life on the planet.

TNS was introduced to the country with the support of the King of Sweden. Businesses, schools, and communities have adopted this as a way to work towards a culture of sustainability.

Since the 1980's, TNS has been used in many countries and communities. Locally the Oregon Green Schools movement is based on TNS. Several local businesses also use this framework.

The Natural Step is a framework that tightly defines sustainability while being non prescriptive. Based on 4 sustainability principles it's a way to use systems thinking and a shared language:

The 4 Sustainability Principles:

In a sustainable society, nature is not subject to systematically increasing...

- 1. ...concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth's crust,**
- 2. ...concentrations of substances produced by society,**
- 3. ...degradation by physical means,**
- 4. and, in that society...people are not subject to conditions that systematically undermine their capacity to meet their needs.**

In less "scientific terms" the 4 principles could be described as...

1. You can't dig stuff out of the earth and spread it around indefinitely...
2. You can't spread human created stuff around in nature indefinitely either...
3. Don't erode nature's capacity to do all the wonderful things nature does or you'll be sorry!
4. Do your business efficiently and make sure everyone has enough.

Green vs Sustainability: People often confuse being green with being sustainable. There are important differences.

You can be GREEN by:

- Detail focused
- Tactical
- Less Bad
- Not having a common definition of success

You can be SUSTAINABLE by:

- Having a whole systems focus
- Being strategic
- Focus on aligning with nature's processes
- Define success