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**SUMMIT COUNTY GREEN POLICY AND ABANDONED AND VACANT
PROPERTY TASK FORCES TO MEET**

The Summit County Green Policy Task Force and the Summit County Abandoned and Vacant Properties Task Force will have a joint meeting on Wednesday, September 23 in the Summit County Council Chambers. The purpose of the meeting according to Green Policy Task Force Chair, Councilwoman Ilene Shapiro is, “to discuss some areas where synergies exist between the two task forces in a collaborative holistic manner. Working together would further advance the goals of the two task forces and may produce more efficient outcomes that would advance our community.”

The Green Policy Task Force (GPTF) was established in 2008 to recommend to the County Council and County Executive Russ Pry environmental policies that would create jobs, promote entrepreneurial partnerships and expand green business opportunities for those who live and work in Summit County. After an initial six month time frame, several recommendations were submitted to the Council and Executive for approval, including extending the task force for another 24 months. With the Council and Executive’s approval, the task force has continued to investigate ways that the County can adopt environmental awareness, education, and incentive strategies that reduce the use of natural resources through energy efficiency, water conservation and sustainable land use, while promoting the highest quality of life for Summit County residents.

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The GPTF has established three sub-committees dedicated to environmental initiatives related to Green Business Certification, Deconstruction and Demolition, and Community Engagement and Education. The sub-committees were an outgrowth of recommendations by the Green Policy Task Force and have been meeting regularly the past three months. These sub-committees will develop 2-3 objectives/recommendations and high level action plans to report back to the GBTF through Task Force members who sit on each sub-committee.

The Summit County Abandoned and Vacant Property Task Force (AVP) was established in February by the County Council and Executive Pry to meet and work to find ways to promote civic responsibility and engagement in maintaining local neighborhoods and reducing the number of abandoned and vacant properties in Summit County. Headed by Councilman Cazzell Smith, the group has met and discussed information on programs currently in progress to address the problem of abandoned and vacant homes.

AVP task force members have also established sub-committees to examine foreclosure prevention alternatives and to look at possible solutions for vacant and abandoned properties—including policy regulation, property rehabilitation, community gardens and green spaces.

“We are looking forward to sharing ideas and resources to improve the environment and make more productive use of vacant properties and land in our communities,” Smith concluded.

For more information, please contact the Summit County Council Office at (330) 643-2725.

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