
University of Pennsylvania
Institute for Environmental Studies

presents

Mark Alan Hughes

Mayor's Office of Sustainability
City of Philadelphia



Mayor Michael A. Nutter created the highest ranking sustainability position in U.S. local government and challenged the City to become “the greenest in America.” That goal demands pervasive and fundamental changes in the way Philadelphia government and our constituencies and partners do our work. These changes are fundamental because sustainability, as Mayor Nutter has stated on many occasions, is a commitment to meeting present needs without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their needs.

Taking that definition seriously, the Mayor emphasizes that “sustainability is not a fringe issue.” It is fundamental to the politics of democracy and has been since Pericles: what does the present owe to the future? Sustainability is the treaty framework, the negotiating table, where the present and the future come together to bargain. A problem arises, of course, with representation. Who speaks for future generations and, in their absence, what are we prepared to do on their behalf? And even if we all agree on the commitment, how do we build a present that consistently takes cognizance of the future?

The necessary initial condition for answering that challenge is leadership capable of mobilizing present interests on behalf of the absent future. While this region has many public, private, and nonprofit leaders doing this everyday, the game-changer is Michael Nutter. The strategic vision is generous with the sustainability agenda. Many people in this city and region, and many parts of their governments, have dedicated themselves to issues at the traditional core of sustainability: energy conservation, water, air, land, and food resource management, and the emerging green economy.

But as Pericles himself found out, leadership is not a device by which change becomes magically self-implementing. Being a game-changer ultimately means changing the rules of the game, changing the connections between behaviors and incentives. These changes affect every aspect of City decision-making and practice, and they require a significant early investment in three kinds of capacity: organizational, operational, and leadership.

Date: September 24, 2008

Time: NOON - 1:30 pm

Place: Carolyn Hoff Lynch Auditorium

On the Penn campus: Chemistry Building

34 & Spruce Sts. (enter on 34 St)

NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED

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NO FOOD OR DRINK PERMITTED IN THE AUDITORIUM
