

Environmental Sustainability Council
Energy Transition Subcommittee
Thursday, August 4th, 7:30 - 9:30 pm Gage House conference room

MINUTES

Call to Order: Tim Stevens (Chair), members Nisha Thirumurthy, Peter Adriance, Tom Cash, Aziz Shaik (High School student); Dan Sze (City Council member). City Staff: Loren Bruce (Planning Department), Kate Walker (Staff Liaison and Environmental Programs Coordinator).

Visitor: Dan Sehlhorst, Environment Virginia Climate Defenders Campaign

1. Public Comments

- ∨ **Environment Virginia Climate Defenders Campaign** – Dan Sehlhorst, represents this non-profit advocacy group affiliated with Environment America, the national program. Its focus is on achieving GHG emission reduction targets. Its priority energy sources are wind and solar. It recently opened an office in the City of Falls Church (CFC) and is gearing up for the January session of the Virginia legislature. He stated that he was impressed with the City’s leadership on energy and wanted to know how we might support each other.
 - o The Climate Defenders Campaign is centered around supporting implementation of the Clean Power Plan (CPP). It is in the preliminary planning stages in Virginia.
 - o Mr. Selhorst stated that groups opposing the CPP are well funded. Environment Virginia is trying to provide a counter-narrative of public support for the CPP and to present “the human side of climate change”. It will work to provide political cover to Virginia legislators to support the CPP.
 - o Tim explained our advisory role with the City Council and also suggested Dan visit the ESC in two weeks.
 - o Loren set up a time to meet with Dan next week. His cell number: 937-499-0946.

2. Approval of Minutes (July 7th, 2016) – Approved as drafted.

3. Discussions

- ∨ **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventory and Data Access** – Nisha explained the City will be using the Council of Governments (COG) GHG inventory but we will recalculate the government building GHG inventory because we have actual figures.
 - o To conduct a walk-through energy assessment of each city facility would cost roughly \$4000/building. Rather than doing that, Nisha suggested a three step process in which the City works with an energy service contractor, who would inspect buildings and take their fee from a portion of the savings in energy costs derived after improvements are implemented.
 - Step 1: Doing an overview analysis of all buildings, including the schools.
 - Step 2: Determining which would have the greatest potential for an in-depth energy assessment.
 - Step 3: Doing energy assessments for the selected buildings.

- o It was noted that having a GHG inventory is a requirement for joining the Compact of Mayors. It was also noted that Blacksburg is thinking of withdrawing from the Compact of Mayors because collecting the level of information required is so burdensome.
 - o Kate raised our concerns with the accuracy of utility community-wide data. Efforts to have Dominion check the jurisdictional accuracy of electricity data have thus far not met with success. Dan Sze recommended a letter be drafted to Dominion (for his signature), formally requesting their help. The letter should include a reminder that we have worked well with them in the past on issues such as our willingness to have smart meters installed throughout the City.
- ∇ **Final Planning for meeting with John Morrill, Energy Manager, Arlington, VA, Thursday, September 1**
- o Tim will send John the topics listed in the minutes of the July ETS meeting, indicating these are suggested, but that he should feel free to share with us what he feels would be of greatest value.
 - o Nisha suggested also asking John how we can collaborate with Arlington and other COG communities on financing projects.
- ∇ **Introduction to Density Bonus in exchange for advanced environmental performance in proposed larger commercial development projects**
- o Tim noted that a developer doesn't always have an incentive to provide strong energy efficiency. Arlington started their Density Bonus program 20 years ago to stimulate construction of buildings with greater energy efficiency. They allow a higher FAR, or floor to area ratio (building square feet / square feet of the property), in exchange for achieving a higher LEED score. They allow an increase in FAR of .25 if the contractor goes for LEED silver, .35 for LEED Gold, and .50 for LEED platinum.
 - o Arlington uses their utility tax to fund programs like this. CFC's utility tax goes to the general fund. We may wish to rethink this, as this is a good tax to fund sustainability. Tim felt such a tax strategy would likely be a tough sell.
 - Alternately, we could do a simpler plan integrated into what is happening in the City now. We may have no more than 1 or 2 of these building proposals a year. We could start simply and later approach the tax issue. We could discuss this with the Chamber of Commerce and other city institutions, attempting to get broad support.
 - Dan Sze felt this would be a modest step, and fit among other proposals pending. It has synergy with the Streetscape Taskforce proposal for greater sidewalk setbacks. Dan encouraged the ETS to bring it forward with the streetscape proposal.
 - o Tim requested that anyone interested in helping to put some structure on this proposal let him know.
- ∇ **Introduction to request funds to purchase PV for Thomas Jefferson Elementary through the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP)**
- o Tim noted that a 44KW system for Thomas Jefferson Elementary is small enough to fund it ourselves. However, after Kate and Tim met with Arlington's schools' energy manager, it

became clear that without the ability to use the 30% federal tax credit on solar systems, self-funding is not financially viable. The better alternative is to keep searching for vendors who offer Power Purchase Agreements to schools at the 9 cent range and keeping it at that level over 20 years.

- o He suggested letting the larger municipalities hammer it out and then getting the same deal for FCC.
- o Dan suggested we might advocate using the CIP to provide a loan guarantee, it would drive down the cost.
- o We may want to use the CIP for geothermal. Cindy will speak about the CIP process in September.

∇ **Virginia Energy Sense request from City Manager**

- o SCC has money to do energy related work. (see letter "Value your power"). At the Mayor's request, Kate will follow up and enroll the city.

4. **Decision**

∇ **Letter in support of efficiency upgrades for Library and City Hall**

- o Current thinking for these projects is LEED silver. Can't we do better? We will ask the architects to tell us what can be done to improve energy and what the savings would be over how long. Now is the opportunity to spend more to save more in the future. Version 4 of LEED silver is tighter on energy efficiency than previous versions.
- o Tom suggested getting a vendor, such as Mitsubishi, to provide an HVAC system they want tested and to offer a discount to the City for serving as a model. They have such a program. Dan also suggested approaching Ormat Technologies and Siemens. Tim, with Tom, will draft a letter supporting this idea to City Council and circulate it for comment.

5. **Next Meeting**

- ∇ Thursday, September 1, 2016 (Location Conference Room, Gage House)

Adjournment: 9:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Adriance