

## Environmental Sustainability Council/Energy Transition Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

May 18th, 2023 ❖ 7:30pm

300 Park Ave, Dogwood Room, Falls Church, Virginia 22046

- Call to Order
- Joseph Schiarizzi proposed a motion to allow Jennifer Tabola to participate remotely. Jon Ward second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Attendees: ESC Members:** Joseph Schiarizzi, (Chair), Jon Ward (Vice-Chair, ETS Chair), Mike Trauberman, Andrew Crawford; Jennifer Tabola (via video), Christopher Behr, **Planning Commission Liaison:** Tim Stevens, **City Council Liaison;** Debbie Hiscott; **City Staff:** Andrew Young (ESC Staff Liaison). Public (**Meridian High School:** Lilja Anderson), Fiona Wissell (ICF), Susan Elliott (ICF).
- **Public Comment Period:**
  1. explore potential to phase out gas powered mowers and other lawn equipment
  2. Consider initiatives to reduce idling of vehicles and buses at St James school

Response: Debbie Hiscott indicated that she would bring these proposals up at the next council meeting

- **Approval of March 2023 ESC Meeting Minutes**

Joseph Schiarizzi moved to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2023 ESC meeting. Mike Trauberman second the motion. The motion was approved unanimously

- **Community Energy Action Plan**

ICF presented a summary of the Town Hall related to the energy action plan. Activities included: (1) tours of the school building and electric buses; (2) information stations; and (3) climate change prioritization game. ICF also presented (a) results of a survey of attendees; and (b) status of analysis of government operations and energy action plan.

Presentation 1: ~~Survey of Town Hall Participants~~ Review of Town Hall and Survey

Questions / comments from the ESC to ICF related to:

- (1) Comment: high proportion of ~~attendees~~ ~~survey respondents~~ owned EV and had completed a home energy audit. This suggested that the ~~attendees respondents~~ were ~~already aware of energy and GHG issues~~ much more attentive to and aware of decarbonization options than is the general population.

- (2) Was there anything exceptional about the characteristics of attendees, relative to similar forums elsewhere? ICF: high level of student engagement and active conversations among attendees.
- (3) Did ICF have guidance on how to implement activities in response to survey? ICF: This is an ongoing process, and is covered in part in government action plan.

## Presentation 2: Government operations and action plan

The plan has three themes: (1) Reduce Energy Use Intensity (EUI) of public buildings XX% by 2030; (2) Commit to meeting 100% of City electricity use with renewable energy starting in 2024; and (3) Adopt a sustainable fleet policy where the first option is always to consider a zero emissions vehicle

Questions / comments from the ESC to ICF related to:

- Buildings (theme 1)

- (1) Comment: need new framework for considering EVs since they are not “zero emission” vehicles. That is, 100% renewable is the goal. The process can begin with RECs and combine that with energy efficiency
- (2) Comment: MWCOG goal calls for reduction relative to 2005. City data only begins in 2022. ICF should clarify how and why 2022 is a reasonable benchmark to use instead of 2005.
- (3) Comment: want clarification on the term “net zero” and consideration of replacing with the term “carbon neutral”. The issue relates to whether buildings can generate energy beyond efficiency gains.
- (4) Comment/Questions on Renewable Energy Credits (RECs): Is there a plan to buy or sell RECs or alternatively invest in green banks? If so, there should be clarification on the type of RECs since some RECs ~~are not related to new renewable energy production, but ones that merely offset fossil fuel use~~ only weakly encourage new renewable energy facilities and merely transfer sustainability credit from the seller to the buyer.”.

- Energy use (theme 2)

- (1) Is maintenance a common issue for some equipment? ICF: No. Not usually.
- (2) Is there a LEED component to City building standards? ICF: This has not been discussed because the focus is on energy, and less for other LEED characteristics.
- (3) Is there a need for specialized skills among City staff to handle new equipment? ICF: Yes, potentially. But primarily only for major equipment or construction.

- (4) Is there a framework that can be developed that can provide a common basis for evaluating options – such as a least cost or cost-effective approach? ICF: Yes, the goal of the analysis is to develop a common form of comparison to evaluate impact of actions over time.
- (5) Comment: The ESC may want to take on the issue of REC quality and propose purchasing suggestions and guidance. The key issue is that good quality RECs are associated with additional renewable energy development. Higher quality RECs may be more costly, but more effective in reaching actual GHG reduction goals.
- (6) Comment: co-benefits of projects can help justify investments.

- Vehicles and fleet conversion (theme 3)

- (1) Comment: considering that fleet conversion entails stages of audit, evaluation, and selection for replacement, is there a regular process that can be initiated in the CIP budgeting process to plan for long-run costs?

- **Subcommittee/Liaison Report-Outs**

- City Council – Council Member Debbie Hiscott
  - City council is looking forward to the results of the ICF analysis and to developing a process to make timely and effective capital improvements over time.
  - Budget has been approved
    - From the contingency fund, \$27k has been allocated for the ESC
    - Capital expenditures are funded for \$2.4 million over three years and would primarily address sidewalks, signals and roadways. At this time, no funds are planned for bike lane infrastructure.
    - Additional spending will be developed for energy related spending on RECs, power purchase agreements and energy audits on government buildings.
- Planning Commission
  - T-zone amendments has been transferred to legal staff for review and a vote is planned for City Council in July
  - Opportunities still exist to provide comments on the T-Zone guidelines associated with making buildings solar-ready and EV-ready
  - East end small area planning is continuing with environmental impact analysis
- Education Task Force
  - This year is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary
  - Discussions are focused on how to increase engagement in the process

- Energy Transition Subcommittee
  - No major updates

- **Adjourn**