

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL (ESC)

Thursday, January 21, 2021, Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

MINUTES

- Attendees: ESC Members:** Andy Young (Chair), Mike Trauberman, Jon Ward, Andy Sakallaris, Sarah Bayldon, Jennifer Tabola, Stacey Evers. **Student rep:** Charlie Adams; Meike van der Steen
City Staff: Kate Walker (ESC Staff Liaison). **Planning Commission Liaison:** Cory Firestone Weiss. **Public:** Amy Crumpton (Habitat Restoration Task Group); Joseph Schiarizzi; Amy O’Keefe

This meeting was held via electronic communications using ‘Microsoft Teams.’ This meeting was held pursuant to and in compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Section 2.2-3708.2 and state and local legislation adopted to allow for continued government operation during the COVID-19 declared emergency.

- Planning Commission: Cory Firestone Weiss:** Cory asked for ESC comments and input language for the Planning Commission and eventually City Council action for the reexamining of Special Exception Criteria for mixed use development, specifically for renovated commercial space. The ESC was asked to look at such items as net zero ready, energy efficiency and maintaining an environmentally sustainable community. The following are specific dates relating to this item:

February 3, 2021 Planning Commission Meeting
February 8, City Council Work Session
February 22, 2021 City Council Final Decision

ESC members and public guests discussed the following two (2) issues:

Is there a reason to not ask for net zero and why hold back?
LEED gold should be the minimum standard requested

Stacey will collect and collate all comments and provide comments to Andy Y on the proposed Special Exceptions language and Andy will draft a letter to the Planning Commission before they make their recommendations to the City Council on February 3, 2021.

Cory also suggested that the ESC should focus their efforts on implementing action items from Chapter 5 of the city’s Comprehensive Plan, including the development of a Climate Resilience Plan to ensure that CIP projects and the Council Work Plan follow the strategies established in the chapter and fulfill our short, medium and long term goals.

Action Item: Andy Y to send ESC letter re Special Exceptions to Planning Commission before February 3, 2021 Work Session.

- Fellows Property Proposal:** Stacey presented a comprehensive draft proposal for the use of the Fellows property. The proposal suggests the retention of existing woodland and wildlife habitat with low-impact pathways, and the creation of a garden to be collectively managed by volunteers from the community. Photographs of similar garden projects in the region were included to clarify the

difference between what may be thought of as “community gardens” versus a shared “communal garden”. ESC discussed on how the property could be best utilized while taking into account surrounding neighborhood concerns. The Property will be a City park run by the Parks and Recreation Department and the garden would be run by volunteers. Stacey has been in contact with the TJ school nearby and has been in active discussions with the school principal and the after-school coordinator. There is a well on the property that could be used for irrigation. Great care should be taken to maintain the firefly habitat and the existing mature trees.

Action Item: Stacey will update the draft to incorporate ESC comments and submit it from the ESC to the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board as a suggestion for the use of the property.

4. West Falls Church LEED ND Scorecard Review: Kate presented a copy of the proposed West Falls Church Economic Development Project LEED ND scorecard. Concerns were raised about certification at the building level as opposed to the site level. Additional areas of concern were rainwater management and heat island reduction. Andy Y suggested that someone from the developer come and speak to the ESC, perhaps at our meeting in February.

Action Item: Kate will request that a member of the development team present to ESC in February.

5. Subcommittee Reports:

- a. **Energy Transition Subcommittee (ETS):** The ETS met on January 7, 2021. They reviewed the NVRC climate dashboard and discussed ways to promote electric vehicle ownership. Two members will meet on January 22nd with Kate and representatives from Dominion Energy Virginia to discuss the possibility of installing electric vehicles chargers on utility poles as power demands are reduced by the replacement of streetlights with LEDs.
- b. **Education Task Group (ETG):** Operation EarthWatch activities, including selection of the winning t-shirt design, are continuing online.
- c. **Habitat Restoration Task Group (HRTG):** The HRTG plans to schedule a virtual meeting for February 4, 2021.

6. Staff Report (Kate W.): Kate stated that the City Hall renovation had received LEED Silver certification. The certification checklist is available for review. Suggestions were made to recognize this accomplishment and recognize those city employees who made it possible. Suggestions included the posting of a plaque, and having a virtual tour of the LEED features given by staff in their respective areas. Kate also briefly reviewed regional Climate Risk Assessment resources, the COG Climate and Energy Action Plan, and the NVRC Dashboard. Sandy Tarpinian is working to ensure Falls Church will obtain its Community Wildlife recertification – ESC members are encouraged to participate.

7. Chair’s Report: Andy Y presented the Chair’s report listing possible future meetings for discussion to include:

- Joint meeting on February 18th with Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation (CACT) to discuss cycling promotion and safety.

- March 18th Guest speaker from Arlington E2C2 (now C2E2 Climate Change Energy Environment Commission)
- Possible future topic: Construction and Demolition Waste

8. December 17, 2020 ESC Meeting Minutes: Motion to approve by Stacey, seconded by Andy S. Approved, 8 ayes, 0 nays.

9. Next Meetings: Thursday, Feb 18, 2021 7:30 – 9:30 p.m., likely virtual via Microsoft Teams. Joint ESC and Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation
Thursday, March 18, 2021 meeting with guest speaker Mr. John Bloom, former Chair of the Arlington E2C2.