

## Environmental Sustainability Council/Energy Transition Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2023 ❖ 7:30pm

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

- Call to Order
- **Attendees: ESC Members:** Joseph Schiarizzi, (Chair), Jon Ward (Vice-Chair, ETS Chair), Mike Trauberman, John Ferris, Andrew Crawford; Jennifer Tabola, Amy Crumpton (Chair-HRTG) **City Council Liaison;** Debbie Hiscott; **Council Member** David Snyder, **City Staff:** Andrew Young (ESC Staff Liaison).
- Public Comment Period No Public Comments
- Approval of January 2023 ESC Meeting Minutes
  - Jon Ward moved to approve the minutes. Jennifer Tabola second the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.
- Guest Speaker
  - Jeremiah Lowery, Director of Advocacy, Washington Area Bicyclist Association
  - Joseph Schiarizzi invited Jeremiah to present to the ESC to learn more about the positive outcomes of increasing bike infrastructure as the city staff initiates the update the City's Bicycle Master Plan.
  - Jeremiah's presentation included the benefits of increased bicycle infrastructure including the reduction on carbon dioxide emissions, public health and transportation benefits.
  - Jeremiah highlighted work being done in other cities, including Portland OR, Indianapolis, IN and Summit County CO.
  - Locally, Arlington, VA and the District of Columbia were also highlighted for their increased number of bike lanes.
  - City Planning department will likely initiate revisions to the Bicycle Master Plan this Summer. City staff will eventually present a draft to City Council who will refer it to the City's Planning Commission and other Councils for review.
- Status of ESC Comments on T-Zones
  - Planning Commission passed recommendations that were sent to City Council. Among the recommendations were the following:
    - Provide for an impervious surface limit of 80%
    - Include provisions for electric vehicle ("EV") and solar ready construction
    - Provide for 1 off-site parking space of less per dwelling unit, consistent with recent mixed-use project approvals.
    - Provide for grandfather clause for existing single-family residential uses with a Certificate of Occupancy dated no later than April 1, 2023
    - Add a required consideration to encourage preserving and incorporating any designed historic structure into project design.

- Joseph noted that the Planning Commission did not include many ESC suggestions from the ESC letter to the Planning Commission. However, there are other rounds of review as the City Council reviews the proposal.
  - Council Member Debbie Hiscott encouraged ESC to work with City Council as the Council reviews the T-Zone proposal.
  - Jon Ward noted that the ESC comments should be paired up with the various recommendations of the Planning Commission in an effort to simplify the ESC comments.
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- FY2024 City of Falls Church Capital Improvement Plan
    - The City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) covers Fiscal Years 2024-2029, with a \$152 million total 6-year budget.
    - Accomplishments from 2023 include 139 LED streetlights installed, 3.1 miles of sanitary sewer pipes relined, and Wren's Branch stormwater project.
    - 31 miles of sanitary sewer rehab lining completed with 17 miles to go.
    - Active projects include replacing the Community Center's HVAC and Generator, as well as Fellows Property.
    - Neighborhood traffic calming is now the focus, including Greenway downs area.
    - Andrew noted that local governments can now receive tax credits for installing rooftop solar.
    - The CIP will be presented to City Council on March 27
    - Council Member Hiscott noted the significant increase in stormwater infrastructure and Andrew noted the increase in transportation projects over the last 18 months.
    - Mike noted that he requested factoring in higher rainfall to the stormwater projects designs. Council Member Hiscott will ask for clarification.
    - Jon Ward asked about the status of the bike lanes on Park Avenue. Joseph noted that earlier proposals included bike lanes, but they appear to have been dropped as the project was designed. Andrew noted that there are no plans to include bike lanes in the Great Street project at this time. Andrew committed to ask city staff about the decision process to remove bike lanes from this project.
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- Next Steps on Priority ESC Topics from January Meeting
    - The 5 items the ESC agreed to focus on during 2023 were Federal incentives, renewable energy, composting, increasing bicycle usage and green building.
    - Because of the timing of the Energy Action Plan, Andrew requested that the ESC agendas for March and April set aside time for discussing the Energy Action Plan
    - Mike asked for the status of the City's Green Building Policy. Council Member Hiscott stated that so far it is not on the Council's scheduling agenda and

recommended that ESC discuss this ahead of time to get ahead of the Council's review.

- Subcommittee/Liaison Report-Outs
  - City Council – Council Member Debbie Hiscott
    - State legislative crossover takes place next week. We will learn over the next couple of weeks the results of the state's budget process. There is a \$1 billion difference in state budget proposals.
    - Council Member Snyder noted the work of the Council of Governments Transportation Planning Board to review major transportation projects throughout the region for how they would contribute to greenhouse gas reduction goals. Mr. Snyder highlighted that Falls Church is working with the regional transportation board to consider environmental goals earlier in the transportation design process.
    - Council Member Snyder noted seeking funding to study increased bus routes along Route 7.
    - Solar panels are to be installed on the roof of the new high school this summer.
    - Focus of the City Council is currently on Budget
  - Planning Commission
    - No Report
  - Habitat Restoration Task Group – UFC Chair Amy Crumpton
    - Planning for the Spring Habitat Restoration projects for 3 parks, dates to be provided soon.
    - HRTG is working with the Neighborhood Tree Program to have a rescue tree give away at the Farmers Market around Earth Day.
    - Council Member Hiscott noted the High School Program to get service hours for environmental projects and that ESC should encourage students to participate in the restoration projects.
  - Education Task Group
    - Council Member Hiscott noted that Operation Earth Watch is active, and the amount of energy is encouraging.
  - Energy Transition Subcommittee – Jon Ward
    - Jon noted that the subcommittees' goal to educate the community on energy usage reduction opportunities, including Draft Farmers Market Outreach Materials. The potential topics include EV credits, EV emission reductions, bike shares, charger setups, savings for homeowners from Inflation Reduction Act. Jon contacted Farmers Market staff who encouraged ESC to have a table at the market at no cost. ESC members are encouraged to support this education opportunity.
    - Jon discussed potential ways to encourage energy audits for commercial buildings, including the possible use of ARPA funds.
    - Jon also discussed ways to utilize various rate schedules for ways the school system could save money by installing solar panels on the roof of the high

school. Jon noted that the new high school currently has much higher energy usage than originally modelled. Andy has been working with school leadership on changing the rate schedule to save money due to the installation of solar panels. Council Member Hiscott noted that the school board is proposing a budget for next year and that this energy usage issue can be added to the budget discussion.

- Staff Liaison Update – Andy Young
  - Andy discussed the kickoff with the contractor and COG on the Energy Action Plan, including project management plan as well as initial discussion on engagement plan.
  - Initial ESC engagement will be at the March ESC meeting. This will be an opportunity for the ESC to provide to the consultant the priorities of the Energy Action Plan.
  - Initial engagement with city staff on Government Operations Plan will begin mid-March.
  - In-person public meeting to discuss the Energy Action Plan is proposed for the April 20 ESC meeting. Andy requested assistance from ESC on ways to reach community members on the Energy Action Plan. Suggestions included reaching out to high school students and teachers, city boards and commissions, Chamber of Commerce, community environmental groups, and writing articles in the Falls Church News Press. Amy stressed the need to give the public ample time to review the materials ahead of the public meeting.

- Adjourn