

Environmental Sustainability Council/Energy Transition Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

March 16th, 2023 ❖ 7:30pm

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

- Call to Order
- Joseph Schiarizzi proposed a motion to allow Mike Trauberman to participate remotely. John Ferris second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Attendees: ESC Members:** Joseph Schiarizzi, (Chair), Jon Ward (Vice-Chair, ETS Chair), Mike Trauberman (via video), John Ferris, Andrew Crawford; Jennifer Tabola, Christopher Behr, Amy Crumpton (Chair-HRTG) Plannin Commission Liaison: Tim Stevens, **City Council Liaison;** Debbie Hiscott; Councilwoman Marybeth Connelly **City Staff:** Andrew Young (ESC Staff Liaison). Public (**Meridian High School:** Wendy Abstone, Ivy Anderson, Lilja Anderson, Carolyn Pollack), Fiona Wissell (ICF), Susan Elliott (ICF) Tammy Leigh DeMint (PRR), Elizabeth McCullum (PRR), Dave Hale, Jeff Peterson, David Gustafson.
- **Community Energy Action Plan Kick-Off**

ICF will support the development of two Energy Action Plans to achieve the climate change mitigation goals of the City. One EAP will focus on Government Operations (GOEAP) to be completed by June 2023, and the other EAP will focus on the broader Community (CEAP) and be completed by September of 2023.

The Energy Action Plans will support the City of Falls Church as leaders in environmental sustainability and help the City develop strategies to meet its goals:

- The City's 2040 Vision affirms that the City will strive to be a leader in environmental sustainability.
- In 2017, City Council resolved to adopt the regional goals established by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% below 2005 levels by 2050. In 2020, it supported the adoption of a regional interim goal by MWCOG to achieve a 50% reduction in regional GHG emissions by 2030.

The Plans will be developed with feedback and input from the ESC, key stakeholders, the general public, City staff, and feedback and approval from the City Council. PRR Inc. will design and implement an inclusive, on the ground, and collaborative stakeholder and community engagement program.

The plan currently will not include distinction between in-city transportation and pass through transportation. It could be a follow on item.

The plan will consider land use, economic development plans and population growth to model emissions over time. Some of the data will come from the City and some from MWCOG. Transportation modeling is likely to be downscaled from Fairfax data. It was acknowledged that Fairfax transportation is different in some ways from Falls Church, so the city will need to consider ways to utilize biking increases and mass transit usage.

In the strategy modeling, ICF will work with City staff to determine how to take into account hybrid work environment and appliance upgrades.

The strategy conversations are just beginning to determine how to include regional changes, such as the energy transition, and virtual power purchase agreements.

In response to the question of what areas of focus were most important, the following was raised:

- Ways to reduce our dependence on cars.
- Sustainable development/green building policy development
- Determining ways to measure GHG reductions from transportation specific to Falls Church.
- Making sure we have an accurate picture of Falls Church to better understand the initiatives we can take, including policy changes.
- Effectiveness of programs, including outreach to homeowners.
- How do we avoid greenwashing to reach our goals.
- How to we ensure the public is well informed.
- Utilization of community gardens
- Consider distinguishing between individual vs collective approaches.
- Consideration for trash management to reach reductions.
- Education for what individuals can do in their homes to reduce emissions.
- How to utilize Policy (green building) and Education as collective approaches.
- Addressing policy, education and budget implications
- How to utilize Inflation Reduction Act funding to make individual changes.
- Keeping an equity lens on the costs of making changes.
- Making a campaign to show progress.
- Understanding the scenarios of how urban forests contributes to reductions. How to use the urban forests for our benefits.
- How are we creating a sustainable community and its individual impacts.
- Educating individuals on what they can do to reduce GHG emissions.
- Ways to negotiate with commercial buildings to reduce emissions.
- Relative cost effectiveness of various approaches to get biggest bang for the dollar.
- What up front capital is necessary to options and how would such approaches be financed.

- What land use policies can be utilized to reduce emissions, including better use of land by narrowing transportation corridors, increasing pervious surfaces, green space and trees.

In response to a question about existing plans/programs ICF should consider, the following were identified:

- East End Area Plan
- Bike Master Plan
- Solid Waste Master Plan-how to identify the value of sequestration.
- Green Building Policy
- Green Power Community-Government purchasing RECs
- Solar Panels on schools/electric school buses/native vegetation
- T Zones, Missing Middle Housing
- How to learn from Arlington's experience with land use policy and education.
- Proclamation for Earth Day
- How to utilize domino effect of small changes.
- ESC projects for 2023: green building policy, Inflation Reduction Act funding education, bike infrastructure, renewable energy, composting, recycling waste in city buildings.

In response to a question about how to ensure public engagement, the following was provided, including recommendations for groups for outreach efforts:

- Add more neighborhood organizations. Have the organizations made part of the development before "pop-ups"
 - Add Urban Forest and Falls Church Garden Club
 - Operation Earthwatch
 - Outdoor Classrooms
 - Sustainability in Action, Student Council
 - Village Preservation
 - Faith-Based Organizations
 - Chamber of Commerce
 - School morning announcements
 - Tying it to EarthDay
- **Approval of February 2023 ESC Meeting Minutes**

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

- **Proposed New ESC Policies**

o **Remote Participation**

Jon Ward moved to approve the policy for remote participation. John Ferris second the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

o **All-Virtual Meeting Option**

Jon Ward moved to approve the policy for All-Virtual Meetings. Chris Behr second the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

o **Process to Complete 2022 ESC Annual Report**

- o Joseph is completing a first draft. Andy distributed a request for the subcommittees for additions. The goal is to have this report completed remotely due to the Energy Action Plans taking up so much time of the meetings.

o **Solar Panels on the New High School Update**

- o Joseph contacted the school board. The financing stage has been completed. The system has a 500 KW capacity. Next year should be a good base year, as the air exchange requirements of COVID are reduced. Installation should take place this summer. School will have a dashboard that can be used to monitor the energy output of the panels, but training will be needed. There is also the possibility of the City owning the solar panels down the road, but will need maintenance staff training.

o **ESC Input on T-Zone Sustainability Requirements**

- o The T-Zone proposal is with the City Council. Included in the Planning Commission recommendation is to have the buildings ready for solar system and EV. City is considering a list a preferences for a special use permit.

o **Park Avenue Great Streets Bike Boulevard Discussion**

- o Park Ave Great Street project is at 60%, but does not include a designated bike lane. Joseph requested ESC members engage in having a bike lane as part of the Great Streets project. Jon noted the lack of data on who is parking on Park Ave, if parking is the reason for not having bike lane. Councilwoman Hiscott noted that key constituencies, Library Foundation and Chamber of Commerce, identified parking as an issue but this was anecdotal data. The bulk of the funding will be used to make Park Ave more pedestrian friendly. Joseph proposed a temporary (Pop-UP) bike lane to study the impacts it would have on transportation and parking on Park Ave.
- o Councilwoman Hiscott noted that the Falls Church Education Foundation is hosting a Home and Garden tour with 2 native pollinator gardens and net-zero house which will be on tour. The tour will include a bike map for participants.

o **Adjourn**