

## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL (ESC)

Thursday, April 15, 2021, Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams, 7:30–9:30 p.m.

### MINUTES

- 1. Attendees: ESC Members:** Andy Young (Chair); Mike Trauberman; Jon Ward; Andy Sakallaris; Andy Crawford; Joseph Schiarizzi; Stacey Evers; Sarah Bayldon. **Student Reps:** Alec Autor. **Public Participants:** Amy Crumpton (UFC; ESC HRTG). **Planning Commission:** Cory Firestone Weiss. **City Staff:** Kate Walker (ESC Staff Liaison); Jennifer Carroll, (Library Director).
- 2.** 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.
- 3. Public Comments:** None
- 4. Equity Introduction** by Jennifer Carroll, MRSLP, Library Director

In response to a City Council initiative, Falls Church has embarked on a plan to move towards racial justice and racial equity within the city, including the city's boards and commissions. Jennifer talked to the ESC about her efforts with City staff and the Library Board. She currently participates in the City staff Racial Equity Action Team. The Library Board is also actively engaged on building equity into Library plans and policies. The Library staff and Board is utilizing a tool called the 21 Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge. This tool provides 21 days (about 10 minutes a day) of reading, listening and watching information relating to racial equity. The tool has sparked racial equity conversations within both groups. The ESC then discussed what, as a group, we could do to further equity within the city and within the ESC itself. Ideas discussed included:

- Seeking input from diverse communities on environmental issues
- Initiating a City-wide intense outreach to diverse communities
- Finding ways to improve environmental benefits and environmental justice for community members
- Energy support for those in need and increasing free energy audits through Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP), possibly with help of tax information mailings.
- Increasing Board and Commission diversity through information and outreach
- Monitoring affordable housing initiatives and developer voluntary concessions
- Improving availability and use of public transportation
- Increasing access to trees and shrubs through giveaways, possibly through the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District
- Developing food security in coordination with community gardening and local grocery stores
- Coordinating with Tinner Hill Foundation

The ESC agreed to continue this discussion at its next meeting.

### **5. City Council Work Plan**

Chairperson Andy Young provided highlights of his April 12, 2021 presentation of the ESC Annual Report to City Council. City Council members were very appreciative and supportive. Topics of City Council interest included:

- Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP)
- EV charging stations and infrastructure

- Resources of City Staff to pursue ESC ideas and initiatives
- Pursuit of regional environmental initiatives
- Green roof use on development projects
- Electric police vehicles

The ESC will continue to monitor these topics and will continue to work with Council to achieve citywide goals.

### **Subcommittee Reports**

**ETS:** ETS has been discussing how requirements for EVs could be incorporated in development voluntary concessions, and submitted comments on the subject to the Founders Row II Planning Commission Town Hall. The Solarize campaign for photovoltaics (pricing is about the same as last year), Level 2 EV chargers (\$1,500 to \$2,000) and Tesla Powerwall 2 battery systems (about \$14,000). The Arlington Solar co-op, which offers rooftop solar and EV chargers, is also underway.

**ETG:** The ETG is in need of volunteers to assume leadership and Mount Daniel school liaison roles for this group, which runs an environmental action program for elementary school children in the city. Interested persons can contact Kate Walker

**HRTG:** An event was held on April 3, 2021 at Crossman Park. Volunteers planted 140 trees and shrubs, all caged for protection against deer. Beaver activity has been observed in the park. National Wildlife Federation Habitat signs have been placed in various parks in the city. The Presidents and Tricentennial gardens at West End Park are undergoing a major facelift.

### **6. Development Projects:**

Kate talked to the ESC about the new Planning process intended to get early comments and input from city boards and commissions to city staff and decision makers regarding new developments. She reiterated the requirements for private discussions between ESC Members (no more than 2 people) and “public meeting” requirements.

**Founders Row II:** Joseph briefed the ESC about his attendance at the Planning Commission April 7 meeting Town Hall on the Founders Row II development project. A video of the complete Town Hall can be found on [City of Falls Church website](#).

**West Falls Church Economic Development Project:** Andy S. briefed the ESC about his attendance at the Town Hall meeting on the [West Falls Church Economic Development](#) project. Amy noted that a living wall has been proposed for the parking lot wall of West Falls Church Project, on school property. A video of the complete Town Hall can be found on the [City of Falls Church website](#).

Kate talked about One City Center project and informed the ESC that it is currently under staff comment review. Mike volunteered to monitor future developments on this project. This project is currently on the Planning Commission agenda for April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

Mike and Andy C. volunteered to begin to formulate a Green Building Policy.

**Other updates:**

**Staff:** Kate has been researching electric lawn maintenance equipment. The city currently uses a contractor for maintenance services and does not own a lawnmower. She has been in contact with advocacy organization Quiet Communities, and with the American Green Zone Association, which provides certification and training. According to a discussion she had with a Massachusetts jurisdiction, they have found effective electric equipment in most categories, but not an electric blower that can accommodate large quantity leaf removal or wet leaf blowing.

The regional Nation's Capital Sustainability Circle is taking an interest in this area, which might help support local efforts. Montgomery County is planning a demonstration day for vendors to show their electric equipment. There is also a discussion within this group to offer rebates for people who show an interest in purchasing electric lawn maintenance products.

**Stormwater Task Force:** Andy S briefed the ESC about his attendance at the Stormwater Task Force meeting. Videos of the complete Task Force meetings can be found on the [City of Falls Church website](#). DPW has hired a Storm Water Project manager, Tony Dudley, who will also be the staff liaison to the Task Force.

**7. Review and approval of March, 18<sup>th</sup> 2021 minutes**

**8. Adjourn 9:30 p.m.**