

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL (ESC) and ENERGY TRANSITION SUBCOMMITTEE (ETS)

Thursday July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022, Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

## DRAFT MINUTES

### 1. Call to Order: 7:30 p.m.

### 2. Reading of Virtual Meeting Notice

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. Roll Call

**Attendees: ESC Members:** Joseph Schiarizzi (Chair), Jon Ward (ETS Chair), Sarah Bayldon, Andy Crawford, Tatiana Eaves, John Ferris, Mike Trauberman, Jennifer Tabola (via phone), Andy Young; **Student Members:** Gia Khan; **City Council Liaison:** Debbie Hiscott; **Planning Commission Liaison:** Tim Stevens; **City Staff:** Cindy Mester, ESC Staff Liaison; **Public:** Christopher Behr, Mary Chaves, Lauren Thomas, Fred Thompson.

### 4. Introduction of New Member

Joseph Schiarizzi introduced John Ferris as the newest member of the ESC. Mr. Ferris shared that he has lived in the City of Falls Church for 11 years and has worked for the federal government for 32 years, mostly recently as an environmental engineer for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

### 5. Public Comments.

Written comments were received prior to the meeting from Fred Thompson, on behalf of the Broadway Condominium T-Zone Task Force, a group of citizens living at 502 West Broad Street. The two-page document urged the ESC and City Council to consider the following points related to the proposed changes to Transition Zones within the City: 1) the net effect on green spaces; 2) the net effect on traffic, pollution, and parking; 3) the removal of the ESC from future review of B-1 equivalent zoning design; 4) the impact on quality of life for adjacent residents; and 5) the potential lost opportunity for future environmental concessions. Mr. Schiarizzi shared that while he didn't necessarily agree with all of the points made, he appreciated the input provided to the ESC on this important topic.

### 6. Park Ave Great Streets Capital Improvement Plan Project

Cindy Mester shared that a walking tour was scheduled for Monday 8/1 from 7:00-8:30pm. The tour meets at Mary Riley Styles Library and will include three stops. Mr. Schiarizzi encouraged everyone to attend and highlighted that it would be a great experience for the ESC student members. Debbie Hiscott mentioned that she had heard 92 parking spots

would be impacted by the proposed bicycle lane option and asked for confirmation that the figure was correct (it seemed high for that section of Park Ave). Ms. Mester mentioned that several members of the Chamber of Commerce had voiced concern about the potential parking impact. Mr. Schiarizzi asked for contact information for the Chamber of Commerce to reach out in advance of the tour to share how businesses could benefit from bicycle lanes and make sure everyone had the correct information.

## **7. Zoning: Changes in 'Transition' Zones**

Staff briefing is scheduled for 8/1 at 10:30am. Mr. Schiarizzi is planning to attend, and Mike Trauberman will also try to attend. Ms. Mester offered that additional members could attend, but to let her know as soon as possible so the proper public notices could be made for an official meeting. She also let everyone know that the briefing was intended to be a two-way dialog. Mr. Trauberman asked where the process stood since there seemed to be a lot of meetings planned but he hadn't heard any outcomes. Tim Stevens, Planning Commission Liaison, shared that the process needed to be slowed down to ensure everyone absorbed and understood the details before proceeding. Mr. Stevens also suggested that the Planning Commission may schedule a cross-Boards and Commissions session to discuss further. Mr. Schiarizzi reminded everyone that increasing density was one of the ESC's goals. Council has referred this topic to Boards and Commissions, and the ESC will need to submit comments, likely as part of its September meeting.

## **8. Fellows Park Master Plan Draft**

The draft Fellows Park Master Plan was shared with ESC members as part of the meeting read-ahead email. Andy Young observed that the document seemed to be framed to leave the park largely in its natural state, and that the urban agriculture component previously discussed might require an extra push. Comments on the master plan draft are due on August 26th.

**Action:** ESC members should submit comments to Mr. Schiarizzi by August 10th.

**Action:** Mr. Schiarizzi will reach out to former ESC member Stacey Evers to get her input, and compile ESC comments for submission to Parks and Recreation.

## **9. Staff updates**

### **○ Solid Waste Committee representation**

A position on the newly formed solid waste committee has been set aside for a member of the ESC, which must then be approved by City Council. Mr. Young move to nominate Sarah Bayldon, which was seconded by Jennifer Tabola. The ESC voted unanimously to submit Ms. Bayldon forward for City Council consideration.

### **○ Land use applications**

Ms. Mester shared the status of three land use applications currently being reviewed by the City. The developer of the senior housing building at West Falls Church has responded favorably to the ESC's previous comments except for installing on-site renewables. Founders Row 2 is still under review by City staff. The

Broadway building has applied for a voluntary concession amendment (but it has not been, and may not need to be, referred out to Boards and Commissions).

- **Climate Change Mitigation Energy Action Plan**

Ms. Mester shared that funding for the Community Plan has been encumbered as part of this year's budget, and funding has been included in next year's budget to pay for the City Organization Plan. The City is working with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) to put the contract in place. MWCOG is redoing their contracts and expects to have 7-9 vendors available in September. Selection of the final vendor will be a collaborative effort between the City of Falls Church and MWCOG. Ms. Mester also shared that MWCOG is working on a regional submission for electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- **MWCOG Greenhouse Gas Inventory**

The City of Falls Church's information from MWCOG's 2020 greenhouse gas inventory was recently received and is under review by city staff. Additional information will be available to share with the ESC in September. Jon Ward will be participating in an upcoming MWCOG meeting. Mr. Ward noted that there will be caveats associated with the 2020 greenhouse gas data due to impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **North Washington Street Multi-Modal Project**

Ms. Mester shared the good news that the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority has approved the City's \$22.5M request for a multi-modal project on North Washington Street.
- **Energy Improvements at Virginia Village**

City staff continue to work with the non-profit Community Housing Partners (CHP) on energy efficiency improvements at Virginia Village.
- **Vacant Environmental Sustainability Coordinator Position**

The City received 52 applications for the vacant environmental sustainability coordinator position. The top 10 candidates will be offered phone interviews over the next two weeks. Additional steps in the selection process have not been finalized, but Ms. Mester mentioned they are considering bringing in a peer from a neighboring jurisdiction to offer additional perspective.
- **Virginia Municipal League (VML) Draft Infrastructure Policy Statement**

Ms. Mester shared the draft VML Infrastructure Policy Statement via email ahead of the meeting. This document is prepared annually to be used as guidance for the upcoming legislative session in Richmond. The 24-page draft document combines two previously separate documents focused on environment and transportation, which has complicated this year's process. VML is targeting to finalize the draft in September, and have it formally adopted by VML at its conference in October. The ESC will discuss comments at its September meeting.
- **City Council Two-Year Work Plan Update**

The latest iteration of City Council's Two-Year Work Plan will be referred out to Boards and Commissions soon for review of their respective relevant sections. Ms. Mester shared that she sees good alignment with the ESC's goals, and highlighted

greening the fleet, LED streetlights, and stormwater improvements as examples.

Questions/discussion:

- A. **Green fleet grant:** The \$600,000 grant request is currently going through the federal process.
- B. **LED streetlight project duration:** The City is awaiting delivery of some of the equipment, and there is a pilot evaluation process that will start in September.
- C. **Park Avenue Great Streets project:** Not everything the City is doing is reflected on the work plan.
- D. **Unfunded components:** Some items on the plan are still general ideas that need more specificity to be executable.
- E. **Three inch rain retention policy:** Arlington County has legally determined they can implement a policy that requires new developments to retain three inches of rain on their property. The charter for the City of Falls Church is different and will need to be reviewed to see if something similar can be done.

#### **10. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Minutes for the June 2022 ESC meeting were approved unanimously (motion by Mr. Young, seconded by Tatiana Eaves).

#### **11. Subcommittee & Liaison reports**

**City Council:** Ms. Hiscott highlighted the upcoming Ask Your Council session scheduled for Wednesday July 27th at 9:30am at City Hall. She reinforced the importance of the Park Avenue walking tour on Monday August 1st, and also mentioned the potential for a bike safety event after the Run for the Schools event on September 16th (in conjunction with Bike Falls Church and the Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation).

**Energy Transition Subcommittee (ETS):** Mr. Ward highlighted an upcoming environmental summit being hosted by Loudon County, as well as the potential for a new Community Shared Solar Program, which Dominion Energy is required to implement. This new program would structure rates for Dominion to cover transmission costs and allow energy users to purchase solar from an independent provider. A lower income option would be available that waives the Dominion fees.

#### **12. Next Meeting**

Planned for September 15th, 2022, 7:30 p.m., virtual. Mr. Young asked that ESC members consider the benefits of returning to in-person meetings, and the topic will be added to the agenda for September's meeting.