

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

Thursday, October 20, 2022, 300 Park Ave, Dogwood Room

7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

DRAFT MINUTES

- 1. Call to Order: 7:30 p.m.**
- 2. Roll Call**

Attendees: ESC Members: Joseph Schiarizzi (Chair), Jon Ward (ETS Chair), Mike Trauberman, Sarah Bayldon, John Ferris, Andrew Crawford; Amy Crumpton (Chair HRTG) Tina Ho (ETG); City Council Liaison: Debbie Hiscott; City Council Member: Phil Duncan; Planning Commission Liaison: Tim Stevens; City Staff: Andrew Young (ESC Staff Liaison), Jack Trainor (Planner).

3. Public Comments

No public comments were submitted this month.

4. Approval of 9/15/2022 ESC Meeting Minutes

Jon Ward moved to approve the meeting minutes of September 15, 2022, with John Ferris seconding. The motion to approve (5 ayes to 0 nays).

5. Transition Zones

Joseph Schiarizzi introduced the Transition Zones presentation as ESC has been asked to provide comments to the City Council on the proposed T-Zones soon.

Jack Trainor, Case Planner provided proposed updates to the T-Zone updates (see presentation slides linked to the meeting agenda).

In response to a question from Jon Ward, Council member Hiscott noted that the T-Zone proposal is meant to address the problem of missing middle housing in the City of Falls Church by increasing the residential density, and to spur commercial in-fill redevelopment. Debbie added that this proposal was sent to Housing Commission, ESC and Planning Commission. Debbie also noted that the new T-Zones could add permeability areas because of reduced asphalt for parking. In response to a question from Jon Ward, Jack added that corner lots are distinguished from regular lots. Corner lots will not have a minimum rear yard but is considered fronts and sides yards.

Tim added that the current T Zones could put a parking lot over the entire area of the lot and the new zones would prohibit such structures. Joseph added that the least environmentally friendly use of land would be a single parking lot and second would be single family home.

In response from a question from Joseph, Jack said that the process to add other types of businesses approved in T Zones is run by the Zoning Administrator.

Debbie Hiscott noted that the 10 percent affordability proposal is based on the highest percentage the City Council has been able to negotiate for development. Additional discussion will be necessary from the Housing Commission on the applicability for the 10 percent affordability proposal

Jack Trainer noted that there is a public listening session at the Planning Commission meeting on Nov. 2 and anticipates discussing with area developers prior to this Planning Commission meeting.

Mike Trauberman estimated that under the proposed T-zone amendments, a 70,000 sq. ft. building could be developed on a half-acre site and a 140,000 sq. ft. building on a one-acre site. These would be large buildings, not dissimilar in size to some of those being developed in the City's B-zones which are reviewed using the Special Exception process. Mike noted that the energy efficiency provisions of Virginia's Uniform State Building Code are behind the times and likely won't be updated in the current code cycle. The only opportunity the City gets to encourage developers to create more environmentally friendly buildings and exceed the energy efficiency provisions of the state building code is through the Special Exception process. Some of the environmentally friendly items the City has been able to achieve via the Special Exception process include: LEED Gold certification, 20% improvement in energy efficiency; EV parking spaces; installing rooftop solar or making buildings solar ready; electrification of both building systems and residential appliances; and 10-20% decrease in stormwater runoff. These are important items, and if we don't get them in T-zone buildings, we are going in the wrong direction. We need to craft environmental criteria for larger T-zone buildings that mirror the SE criteria. For smaller buildings we might consider criteria that would be less expensive but still achieve our environmental priorities including energy efficiency. Debbie Hiscott added that we are looking for the right balance and to make progress in all directions.

Joseph added that we should recommend to the City Council all of the things we have recommended for the special exception, especially if the lot is above a half acre. Joseph also added that the city could remove all parking minimums to make it more profitable and environmentally friendly.

In response to a question from Andy Crawford, Jack discussed Arlington's work with solving the missing middle issue. Jack also provided the following slide from the Planning Commission meeting on October 19, 2022 regional examples as an example of what T Zones are hoping to accomplish.



Joseph closed this discussion by adding increasing density in Falls Church should be an essential environmental and equitable goal.

6. Operation Earthwatch Status

The program has been a leader in the community for 29 years.

Andy Y. highlighted the high school morning announcement email highlighted sustainability as an example of how far the Earthwatch program had come.

Sarah is the ESC Liaison to Operation Earthwatch. The student participation is down but that is largely due to COVID. The program is also struggling to have more volunteers, especially those who have children in the school system. Debbie Hiscott recommended having a student add the fliers to a website or app, since bringing home paper copies of documents is no longer utilized. Sarah noted that there is a website but having someone updating the website would certainly help.

Tina Ho volunteered to lead the Operation Earthwatch program for the 2022-2023 school year.

Debbie Hiscott noted that Nicole Jones is leading a sustainability scholar program in the high schools IB program. Debbie offered to set up a meeting between Nicole Jones and the Earthwatch volunteers to discuss Earthwatch program and the sustainability scholar program. Debbie also recommended contacting the Science Technology Engineering and Math programs at the middle schools for potential connections.

7. Nomination and Selection of ESC Vice Chair.

Joseph noted that the ESC does not have a Vice Chair. Joseph nominated Mike Trauberman to be the ESC Vice Chair, with Jon Ward seconding. The motion was approved (6 ayes, 0 nays).

8. Energy Action Plan Update

Andy Young presented on the Energy Action Plan, see slides linked to Agenda. Andy noted that the growth of the City works against the reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The City has committed to reduce 50% from 2005 levels by 2030. Based on the Greenhouse Gas Emissions inventory, compiled by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, a further 37% reduction from 2020 levels is necessary to reach this commitment. Andy noted that the major components of the energy emissions is residential energy, commercial energy and transportation/mobile emissions. Transportation representing the greatest source of emissions.

The Community Energy Action Plan and Government Operations Energy Action Plan will identify strategies, programs or projects that help meet or exceed the GHG reduction goals. Andy noted the importance of community engagement which will be a part of the development of this plan.

COG has already approved seven contractors that can be used to support this plan. Andy noted the importance of having a firm that understands the state of Virginia to support this development of this plan.

Debbie and Joseph agreed with the plan to combine the development of these plans into a single process. Joseph further noted that reducing the transportation emissions by 40% in the next 7 years will need to include convincing Falls Church residents to drive 50% less.

Jon Ward noted that the second goal is 80% reduction by 2050 and will need a whole spectrum of reduction options.

Andy noted that the consultant supporting the development of this plan will be included in public meetings and future ESC meetings for discussion. Andy also noted that they are looking at other comparable areas for ideas, including Burlington Vermont.

9. Energy Transition Subcommittee Focus Areas

Jon Ward provided a handout with the following possible future ETS activities:

ESC / ETS Meeting – October 20, 2022
Possible Future ETS Activities

ACTIVITY TYPE	ACTIVITY
Once-a-Year, or one-and-done	
	EV Expo (cars, e-bikes, motorcycles, etc.)
	CCMEAP data collection
	Green Expo (full ESC)
Continue / Expand	
	CCMEAP Ideas & Analysis
	External tracking (other jurisdictions, NGOs)
New / Continuous as Opportunities Allow	
	Farmers Market table / outreach
	Grant-application writers group
	Shared Solar and solar co-op outreach
	Energy efficiency outreach / energy audits

Jon noted that the ETS comprises of a small group of volunteers and is trying to create greater interest in the ETS. Debbie Hiscott suggested having some type of energy expo as part of the Falls Festival. Jon noted the suggestion to have a grant application writers’ group which could be important because of the competition for the available Federal funding

10. Subcommittee and Liaison Reports

Habitat Restoration Task Group. Amy Compton noted the need to train volunteer leadership, which will help with the retention of volunteers. Amy also noted a new flyer on the spotted lanternfly.

City Council Debbie Hiscott noted the importance of input on Virginia state legislative proposals, including joining those of Arlington and Alexandria. Let Debbie and Andy know if ESC has any state legislative proposals for the Legislative

Committee in the next couple of weeks. Legislative agenda input from the ESC is due November 9, 2022. Debbie asked for ESC to provide suggestions in the next couple of weeks on proposals to use excess funding. Joseph proposed a protected bike lane on Park Ave.

Planning Commission Tim noted the success of getting new developers to use electric appliances rather than gas appliances in new developments.

Staff Liaison. Andy is having conversations with DPW on the replacement of the HVAC system for Recreation Center. Andy gave his appreciation for those who filled out the streetlight survey. Virginia Power will likely take about a year to complete the streetlight replacement. East End Small area plan will likely be on the agenda for next month.