

Environmental Sustainability Committee

July 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Leslie Kepler (Chair), Rich Sampson (Co-Chair), Dan Fogel, Dana Hicks, Mary Ann Sprung, Diana Truman, Kerem Saral

Members Absent: Trisha Knight, Jeremy Shook

Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Jennifer Hunt (board liaison)

Staff: Tracy Houk, Assistant Director – Parks and Recreation (staff liaison)
Bobby Williams, Assistant Town Manager (staff liaison)

Chair, Leslie Kepler called the meeting to order (3:30 pm).

Approval of June Minutes – Approved unanimous vote

Agenda Changes

- M. Sprung asked that the resolution be added to the agenda so a motion could be made.
 - It will be discussed under updates/comments
 - A few members of the committee requested the agenda format moving forward be revised to indicate an “old business” section

Public comments, presentations, or requests

- L. Kepler – In order to keep the business portion of the meeting focused, a suggestion was made for presenters to be moved to the end of the meeting.

Business items:

- **Review ESC Purpose and Rules of Procedure**
 - L. Kepler – In conversations with Commissioner Hunt we decided to revisit why we are here and gathered the 5 categories. We may be ahead of ourselves without figuring out where to place our time & efforts. How are we going to engage with the public?
 - Commissioner Hunt – Main areas of focus for the committee:
 - Community, Education, & Engagement
 - Green Building and infrastructure
 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
 - Enhancing the natural beauty and livability of Huntersville
 - Staff B. Williams – We received a grant from the Department of Energy for around \$100,000 where a consultant will be assigned to us to help create a plan.
 - Commissioner Hunt – The main purpose is to function as an advisory basis to the Town Board. Look at the different categories and come up with initiatives you want to take to the Town Board.
 - Commissioner Hunt – Identify resources, grants, and programs towards sustainability goals, and act as a liaison between the Town Board and the citizens. Make sure we are all coming to the meetings and if you are not able to make it, please let us know. We need to make sure we have a quorum for our meetings.

- Staff B. Williams – Hybrid meetings may be an option.
 - D. Fogel – We as a committee need to make a recommendation to the Town Board to make it official. We will make every effort to be in person, but if someone is out of town we will have the option to be Hybrid.
 - Staff T.Houk – If we decide to move forward with this, every meeting will be made hybrid no matter what – the public can come on at any time even if we are all in person.
 - Commissioner Hunt – let's table this and bring it back to discussion at another meeting.

 - **Use of Small Groups to focus on Specific Topics – Brainstorm**
 - Commissioner Hunt – Break into small groups (2/3ppl) – of the 4 areas: Community, Education, & Engagement, Greenbuilding and infrastructure, Reducing greenhouse gas emissions, Enhancing the natural beauty and livability of Huntersville. Once in groups, brainstorm some items the Town can do to help tackle that area. Come up with a list to report to us with some research on your ideas. We will share as a group at the August meeting. When you decide what your primary idea is that is the first thing you will focus on to take to the Town Board in October. There has to be some level of community engagement in this process.
 - D. Fogel – Budget, this would be part of the proposal correct?
 - D. Hicks – Grants are key and any area should have at least one or two ideas for grants when presenting to the Town Board.
 - Staff B. Williams – Correct, January is when we start making recommendations to Town Board for budget items, so starting in October is perfect timing.
 - D. Truman – As we are in the small groups, Leslie had suggested we go through the 2040 Plan and look at some items that have already been identified or should we think outside of the box to new items?
 - Staff B. Williams – I have an update on the 2040 Plan we will look at later, there is an implementation schedule in the 2040 Plan that helps keep us on track. I have a few slides on the Plan and there isn't much called out directly on "sustainability" in the 2040 Plan.

 - Enhancing beauty and livability
 - Leslie Kepler | Dan Fogel
 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
 - Mary Ann Sprung | Karem Saral | Jeremy Shook
 - Community education and engagement
 - Rich Sampson | Diana Truman
 - Green Building and Infrastructure
 - Dana Hicks | Trisha Knight

 - Commissioner Hunt – Reminder, share your list with us for the minutes.
- Homework:** Do more research on topics you listed and if you didn't get through more than one idea, brainstorm more ideas to discuss with your group at the

next meeting. You are able to meet in small groups outside of this meeting to discuss your topics.

- **2040 Plan – Background Information**

- Staff B.Williams – This plan was created in 2019 and adopted in December of 2020. This is essentially our comprehensive plan. The big pull-out vision statement was: *“The Most Livable Community in North Carolina”*. There are a lot of maps and data about what we have from our land use inventory. 17% of the Town’s total land mass use of our 62 sq. mile jurisdiction is in conservation and parks. Which is pretty good. Looking at how the town develops, zoning ordinance – higher density to lower density in the outer edges. Something this committee might be interested in is the Environment and Open Space section of the 2040 Plan – there are 10 total policy areas. We are working towards assessing our tree canopy in the downtown area. We will eventually explore the other areas of the Town as well. Check out the Action Plan for our short-term and long-term goals.

- **Repository**

- Staff B.Williams - Send items to Bobby and he will add them as needed and send out to the group weekly or as needed.
 - Everyone is good with this method.

Updates & Comments

- **Open Items:** Emissions (Mary Ann), Small Group updates, Meeting Decision – Hybrid/In-person, Pollinator Garden, Community Engagement – who is going? What is expected during the engagements?
- The August meeting will be in person.
- **Update:** Installation of 3 EV Chargers on the 2nd level of the Town Center Parking Deck. Partnership with Atom Power, located here in Huntersville.

Meeting adjourned – 4:57 pm