

Environmental Sustainability Committee November 14, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Leslie Kepler (Chair), Rich Sampson (Co-Chair), Dan Fogel, Dana Hicks, Trisha Knight

Members Absent: Jeremy Shook, Kerem Saral

Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Jennifer Hunt (board liaison)

Staff: Bobby Williams, Assistant Town Manager (staff liaison)

Chair Kepler called meeting to order at 3:35.

There were no official agenda changes but there was brief discussion of items for the future, including:

- Small group ideas and previous presentations – following up on those
- Status of consultant for the Town sustainability plan
- Opportunities for environmental education
- Davidson's Leave the Leaves Program (it was noted this ties in with a town initiative to remove plastic bags from yard waste collection, becoming effective with 2025 leaf season)

Next meeting in December, Mecklenburg County staff will be in attendance to present an update on the County's Farmland Preservation Plan and opportunities for coordination with the Town.

Dana Hicks arrived at 3:40, Quorum achieved.

Approval of October Meeting Minutes – Dan Fogel motioned to approve, Trisha Knight seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

Next, the committee continued its discussion related to the Town Tree Ordinance and Mitigation options, specifically led by Trisha Knight walking the committee through her presentation intended for the town board at its next board meeting.

Knight thanked everyone for their input thus far and began going through the slideshow.

Comments and suggestions were made from members in attendance, from fonts to colors to specific content and verbiage.

Dana Hicks relayed a recent example from Jetton Park putting bands on trees with messages related to benefits of trees that may be useful in the presentation.

Dan Fogel suggested when presenting, tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them and tell them again to get the point across that the goal with these changes is the best thing for Huntersville and its trees.

It was noted that the committee has done its due diligence in speaking to various planning staff, reviewing the town's ordinance and speaking with Trees Davidson. Another suggestion was to start with the end (goal) and hit it again at the end of the presentation.

It was also suggested that a slide be added about why the ESC was created and is presenting to the town board related to the topic of trees.

The Committee shifted at this point to Old Business.

Related to the Treasure Trees program example from Davidson, it was noted if the Town hires an arborist that they would administer such a program and work with interested folks in the community to define the criteria for the town's program.

Related to the Carbon Dividend Act, Mary Ann Sprung has reapplied and reached out to two commissioner so far to see if there is any interest from the board.

The topic of hybrid meetings was removed from the list going forward as the preference remains to meet in person.

For the Pollinator Garden idea, the town is pursuing this in partnership with the Patch on Main (via Huntersville Presbyterian Church) and working with a landscape architect who is donating time for planning plants to be planted.

Motion to Adjourn was made by Trisha Knight, seconded by Dana Hicks. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM

Trees



Trisha Knight

Committee member,
Environmental Sustainability Committee
Town of Huntersville
November 4, 2024



Agenda

- Why Trees?
- Town Priorities – Now and Future
- ESC Recommendations
- Final thoughts...





Why Trees?



He that plants trees, loves others besides himself.

Thomas Fuller



Trees give and give....

Trees:

- give us oxygen
- clean the air
- improve water quality
- lower surface and air temperatures
- help us save on energy
- benefit – and are critical – for wildlife
- help reduce the effects of climate change
- and so much more.

URBAN FORESTRY



COOLS THE AIR



**REGULATES WATER FLOW
AND IMPROVES WATER QUALITY**



**FILTERS FOR URBAN
POLLUTANTS**



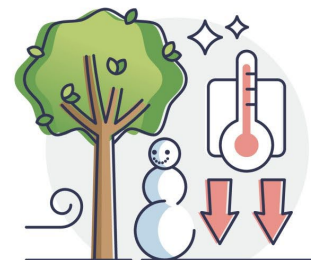
**MITIGATE
CLIMATE CHANGE**



**IMPROVES PHYSICAL AND
MENTAL HEALTH**



**REDUCES AIR
CONDITIONING NEEDS**



**SAVES ENERGY USED
FOR HEATING**



**INCREASES URBAN
BIODIVERSITY**



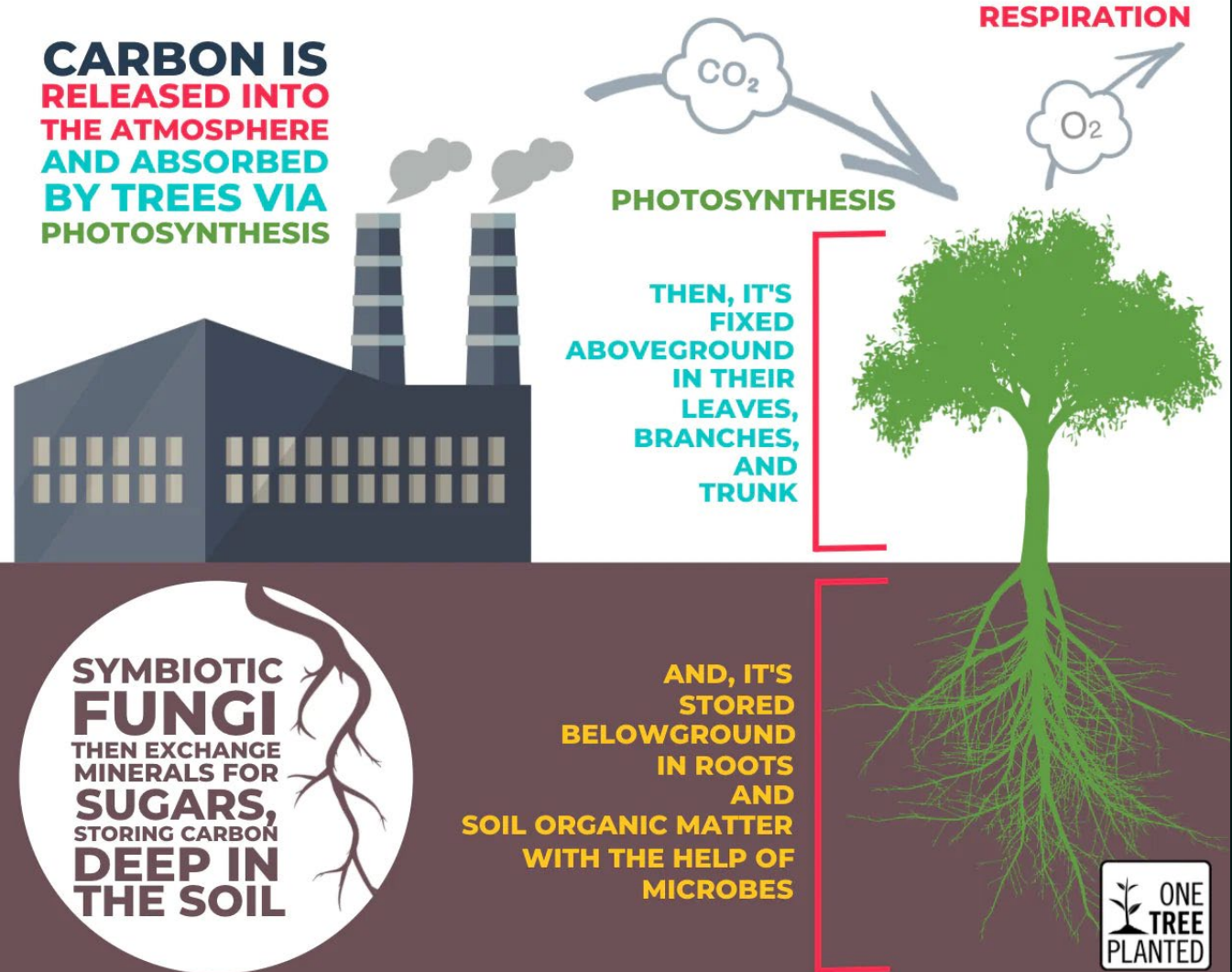
**INCREASES PROPERTY
VALUE**



...and take and give.

HOW HEALTHY TREES SEQUESTER CARBON

**CARBON IS
RELEASED INTO
THE ATMOSPHERE
AND ABSORBED
BY TREES VIA
PHOTOSYNTHESIS**





Town Priorities – Now and Future



What are the priorities?

The Huntersville 2040 Community Plan is a great start and reference; however, the discussion of growth and nature may be at odds with one another.

- In July 2023, Huntersville had a population of 64,688 (Census.gov).
- The 2040 Plan projects an increase to 106,567 by 2040 (The 2040 Plan, p.19).
- That is an additional 40,000 people in less than 17 years.

We currently have overcrowded roads and schools, lack of jobs, and we are encroaching on wildlife. This projected growth will mean constant construction for decades... and congestion that may be regretted.

And this expansion will have an enormous, negative effect on trees which, as discussed, are critical and beneficial.



What is the goal?

As much economic growth as possible at the expense of all else?
Or livability, comfort, beauty, and economic stability? ... Economic sustainability?

In terms of fiscal responsibility... preserving trees – with all of their intrinsic benefits – is a sound, economic choice, in part, because the trees in the ground are FREE. And planting new trees is an inexpensive investment for the future.





ESC Recommendations

Recommendations

The Environmental Sustainability Committee recommends to the Town Board to support staff regarding the following:

1. **Townwide tree survey** – Inventory all trees to quantify and track diversity, tree health, and ecosystem services.
2. **Save Specimen Trees** – Only allow 1 / 3 of the required saved Specimen Trees to be mitigated.
3. **Limited mitigation for Heritage Trees** – Revise the definition of Heritage Trees on the Heritage Tree List and put higher weight for mitigation.
(ex. if currently 1 removal:1 replacement, then perhaps 1:4)

In general, please make trees an urgent and consistent priority.



Final Thoughts

Please keep trees, nature,
and planet in mind
with all decisions.

We all depend upon them.



(And we share this planet.)



Thank you

Trisha Knight

trisha.l.knight@gmail.com

Committee member,
Environmental Sustainability Committee
Town of Huntersville

