

Environmental Sustainability Committee December 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Rich Sampson (Vice Chair), Dan Fogel, Dana Hicks, Trisha Knight

Members Absent: Leslie Kepler (Chair), Jeremy Shook, Kerem Saral

Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Jennifer Hunt (board liaison)

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

Vice Chair Sampson called meeting to order at 3:36. New member Anne Marie O'Neill and returning member Mary Ann Sprung were welcomed to the committee.

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

Next, the committee allowed new appointees Anne Marie O'Neill and Mary Ann Sprung to introduce themselves, their experience and areas of interest, which included trees for O'Neill and Greenhouse Gas Reduction for Sprung, in particular.

Moving on, the committee went into discussion on the scope of the ESC and previous open items / old business items on the agenda.

Dan Fogel raised the question of whether the Committee has the ability to initiate potential action to promote sustainability, or if the Committee's role is to act on opportunities raised by the Town Board. After discussion by the Committee members, Mayor Pro Tem Hunt noted the committee can do both, and that's been the reason behind encouraging committee members to get out in the community for engagement and involvement, especially as priorities of the ESC arise (and those priorities should continue to be a area of focus).

To that end, Fogel suggested the ESC work with other committees to weigh in on things and what they are working on, such as the Planning Board. It was noted that may be included in the role of the ESC but will depend on the topic. The role of the ESC dictates that certain items may come to the ESC and certain items go to others from the ESC.

Related specifically to the topic of **Community Engagement**, Trisha Knight suggested use of Sign Up Genius for community members to sign up for 1 event per quarter or every 6 months to help committee members get out, share information on applicable topics and get feedback from residents. Additionally, she offered the ESC could offer tips from ESC perspective on town social media.

Looking ahead, the idea of tapping into existing events and the ESC playing a role in the planning of new events – such as Earth Day, Arbor Day, etc. – was suggested and ESC members seemed interested in that idea. General agreement was also shown for participation in larger town events and having a table like has been done at the Grower's Market to build awareness of ESC efforts and specific topics of interest. Vice Chair Rich Sampson threw out the idea of using that opportunity to help residents do their own home energy audits, referencing previous experience of his own with Duke Energy as an example others could follow. Hands on opportunities could include working with DPK, planting days, helping with invasive species removal, etc. Other opportunities could include creek cleanups working with Mecklenburg County stormwater or area neighborhoods like Huntington Green.

A takeaway from this meeting was a plan to focus on Earth Day as a major event, similar to how the Citizen Climate Lobby has helped out and been a part of the large event annually in Charlotte. ***It was requested that everyone come and share their ideas at the next ESC meeting in January for an Earth Day event in Huntersville.***

Moving to other items, the committee discussed a possible resolution related to the **Carbon Dividend Act**. After discussion, ESC members agreed to remove it from the Old Business list, noting that Greenhouse Gas reduction will remain a focus of the committee and the ESC will continue to look for what can be done locally to address the need for and importance of greenhouse gas reduction. Further, ESC members recognized and acknowledged that member Mary Ann Sprung may continue to engage town leaders around the Carbon Dividend Act, but it will not come back to the committee unless directed otherwise by the Huntersville Board of Commissioners.

Brief updates were given regarding the Sustainability Plan consultant, with update being the Town is still waiting for DOE to select TA Consultants – Committee members noted their concern and frustration with the delay in process with the DOE and asked if funds could be clawed back if there was significant further delay to support other sustainability initiatives; and LEED / other options for new town hall, with update being the Town is pursuing Green Globes certification.

As the meeting wrapped up, another addition to New Business next time was a suggestion for committee to ***discuss future field trips by the committee – either during and as part of the called ESC meeting or separately.*** an Fogel motioned to adjourn the meeting. Anne Marie O'Neill seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM