

Environmental Sustainability Committee

May 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Dan Fogel, Rich Sampson, Dana Hicks, Anne Marie O’Neill, Tim Sanborn, Jeremy Shook, Diane McLaine, Priya Jayaram, Trisha Knight

Members Absent: none

Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Jennifer Hunt (board liaison)

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

Chair Jeremy Shook called meeting to order (3:32).

Approval of April Minutes – Dan Fogel made motion to approve, seconded by Rich Sampson. Motion carried unanimously.

No Agenda Changes

No Public Comment

Chair Jeremy Shook reviewed the new agenda format and use of action items list going forward and previous shares of Goals spreadsheet (attached) and Dan Fogel’s talking points (attached).

Review of Subcommittee Goals (see spreadsheet) and discussion of goals for three subcommittees:

- 1 Community Engagement (COMM)
- 2 Energy, Water and Waste (EWW)
- 3 Environment and Infrastructure (E&I)

COMM-1 Dan Fogel led a review of goal COMM-1, including the use of talking points; use of “box” as grab and go kit for meetings/presentations, each member attend at least one event, inviting commissioners to meetings and events, etc.

As a general question, it was asked if the whole committee works on all goals or just their goals. Chair Shook responded that the subcommittee works on their own goals and assigns an owner of the goal and will give updates at meetings and keep track of progress. Subcommittees can recruit and assign new members to goals as needed.

Shook also suggested a dedicated person / task to work on the website too. That led to more discussion about what the ESC can put online and how the ESC can and should work within the Town’s existing communication program and processes and look for creative ways to get the word out on the committee and/or topics of importance. A suggestion was made to focus on “big days” like Earth Day, etc.

Action Item – Set a meeting with group ESC members and Town’s Communications Manager to better understand how and where ESC-related communications can fit in the town’s communications program in general and a committee website in particular.

EWW-1 Priya presented goal EWW-1, including a number of actions within the overall goal to execute education campaigns/challenges aimed at reaching resident involvement targets in

sustainability goals/efforts. Tasks included: education content creation for reduction of waste, energy and water usage, plus working to understand the feasibility of and recommending of incentive opportunities and creation of a resource list of local resources to support sustainability.

EWW-2 This item was skipped as Dana Hicks is the owner of this goal and was absent.

EWW-3 Jeremy reviewed this goal aimed at determining opportunities for sustainable energy production within the Town. The goal would be for a summary report to be presented to the town board including each opportunity with a description, list of available incentives, challenges and identification of next steps for evaluation. Dan suggested this goal as an opportunity to partner with local energy companies and ways to help them meet any mandates to reduce carbon emissions and look at what other local companies are doing. There may also be opportunities to look at the generation side though this goal is aimed at production.

E&I-1 Trisha reviewed this goal to determine opportunities for developing wildlife corridors throughout Huntersville. This item includes a variety of steps aimed at getting a better idea of how to address the fact that Mecklenburg was 14th in the state for traffic crashes involving wildlife in 2023-24. This goal also brings a number of opportunities for public education.

Related to wildlife corridors and protecting habitats, it was mentioned the town will be pursuing a tree canopy survey and is looking to add an arborist in the FY26 budget. These steps may help understand the bigger picture related to wildlife protection.

Tim Sanborn suggested Sampson Farker as a resource as he's the NC Wildlife Officers for Mecklenburg.

E&I-2 Diane presented this goal for launching a Treasure Trees program. We would need to define the criteria and categories and this provides an opportunities for volunteers to get involved throughout Huntersville. Minor funding needs with use of QR codes for trees to tell their stories. Davidson was referenced as an example. Once everything gets defined and are ready for implementation, plan is to present to the Town Board.

E&I-3 Anne Marie introduced this goal to determine opportunities for sustainable building and demolition practices within the Town of Huntersville and suggestion the Town should set the example with its projects. That may be through seeking various green ratings for new buildings and taking a similar approach to recycle when demolishing buildings/properties. She also shared that she's reached out to UNC as they require a lot of sustainable practices with their buildings (new and demo). This could lead to a list of resources residents can use if they want to.

For reports related to goals, intention is those reports will go to the Town Board. Chair Shook shared for all goals are aimed at making as much impact as we can, so getting it in front of the town board and out to the community will be part of engaging and making an impact. Dates for goals indicate plans to complete tasks by end of the committee year (April 1 to March 30). Due dates are targets to have done by then, not on that actual date.

Following discussion, Chair Shook asked the committee to vote to show committee alignment on the goals as provided today, with the exception of EWW-2.

Shook made motion to approve goals COMM-1, EWW-1 and EWW-3, and E&I 1, 2, and 3. Trisha Knight seconded. Motion carried unanimously, with all voting in favor.

Before adjourning, Shook shared action items from the meeting:

- 1 – Setup meeting with communications manager
- 2 – Jeremy and Dan discuss website management (related to #1)
- 3 – Jayaram will update her goal with right size plan and dates (EWW-1)

Going forward, Shook asked for any updates and he'll throw into the goals spreadsheet and maintain the master copy of document so we're all working from same version. Each meeting going forward will start with a review of the action items.

Before wrapping up, Knight expressed a willingness for the ESC to take on and investigate any small challenges town staff may be running into out in the field that could use research and creative solutions. Suggestion for more discussion offline for more interaction between committee and staff as appropriate.

Shook encouraged members to connect and reach out between meetings and suggested doing a committee social event (if that's possible without being a "meeting"). Mayor Pro Tem Hunt noted as a social function, its allowed. McLaine shared that the Greenway Commission did that previously too.

Positives were shared for conducting the meeting via Zoom.

Shook motioned to adjourn. Jayaram seconded. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned.