

Environmental Sustainability Committee September 11, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Jeremy Shook (chair), Diane McLaine (vice chair), Dan Fogel, Dana Hicks, Priya Jayaram, Trisha Knight, Natalie Paalova

Members Absent: Anne Marie O’Neill, Tim Sanborn

Commissioners: Mayor Pro Tem Jennifer Hunt (board liaison)

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

Chair Jeremy Shook called meeting to order (3:34).

Approval of August 2025 Minutes – Dan Fogel made motion to approve, seconded by Diane McLaine. *Motion carried unanimously.*

No Agenda Changes.

No Public Comment. Resident Anne Richardson introduced herself and shared he was here to listen vs making any public comments.

Presentations

Principal Planner Jesse James made a presentation following a recent meeting and conversations with ESC member Trisha Knight with information about how a “Green Network Plan” could work across Huntersville. His presentation summarized a variety of research on the topic of a connective network and identified a number of applicable items from the 2040 Plan’s implementation schedule connected to protecting certain land from development.

See Attached Presentation.

Jesse shared that some flexibility would be allowed in such a plan as developers could have a variety of options to play a part in protecting certain areas. A map will be critical to executing such a plan so this would look to build off existing maps. Diane McLaine pointed out that the full greenway plan includes some 80 miles of protected trails between town and county sections of current and future greenways through Huntersville. Possible implementation of such a plan could lead to developers setting aside more land and/or building applicable sections of trails to provide designated areas of protection. To have something that will have teeth to get developers to follow it, the plan will need to be adopted by the Town Board.

Chair Shook asked about the next steps – Trisha Knight motioned to support the development of a green network plan. Diane McLaine seconded the plan. Motion carried unanimously. Trisha and Jesse agreed to continue coordinating on the plan and additional crash data and accident locations involving animals. **See Attachment for map and data received to date.**

Next, Diane McLaine presented on the Treasure Tree program, to share more from the Davidson example and discussions with staff as to what a Town program might look like. It was pointed out the town’s ordinance aims to protect heritage and specimen trees, but there is nothing to identify

such trees. This program would recognize and energize residents to have more awareness of development on such trees. It was noted that the Davidson program has a few more trees listed in their program than are actually standing today (lost due to development).

See Attached Presentation.

As to the structure of such a program by the Town, it was suggested that this become a subcommittee of the ESC and a process for submissions could be placed on the website with decisions made quarterly by that subcommittee, in cooperation/coordination with a new town arborist expected to be hired around January 2026. That subcommittee would conduct reviews and give final recommendations to the ESC for approval. It was envisioned this subcommittee include 5 members, 3 from current ESC members, 2 volunteers from outside ESC and the town arborist be available as a resource. Chair Shook stated the committee should be made aware of anything that could be contentious.

It was noted the tree at Grand Oak Elementary could be the first tree in the Town's program, with other opportunities for promotion, like Arbor Day coming up in April. Dan Fogel reminded everyone to work with communications to make sure any colors/branding are consistent with other ESC utilization.

Action item – This proposal will be shared by the Chair at the next quarterly update to the Town Board, potentially as soon as October 21st. With the board's blessing, the process and plan to create this program would be formalized and run by legal for review prior to implementation.

Next, the committee moved on to Other Business.

Goal Updates – Jeremy introduced a new Google Doc for tracking everyone's updates with a master calendar for events going forward.

See latest sheet

Updates were given in each goal area:

COMM – 1- Dan shared that this has been completed, sustainability spotlight underway and logistics for members to add their information.

EWV-1 and 2 – Priya and Dana provided updates. Worth noting, Dana suggested focusing clean up effort on North Meck Park as other agencies are doing other sites (previously considered) already.

Mayor Pro Tem Hunt suggested he connect with Sarah at Caterpillar Ministries (and offered to make that connection) regarding potential clean ups in Huntington Green, specifically with regard to their pond. Dana shared that he and Agustin from Pottstown had already walked through that community and it would likely be on the list for the future.

Chair Shook sought to formalize the quarterly clean up to do a park, greenway or community at least once every quarter. That list for quarterly cleanups looks like North Meck Park twice per year and Huntington Green and Pottstown the other two quarters of the year.

Chair Shook asked for a vote on the three areas mentioned for the committee year ending March 2026 – Dan Fogel made the motion to accept them and Diane McLaine seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Dates for cleanups are as follows:

October – North Meck Park

January – Pottstown

March / April – Huntington Green

EWV – 3 no update (Jeremy).

As the meeting began wrapping up, Natalie Paalova shared that she would be interested in helping out with goals related to E&I and EWW-2 since as a recent appointment, she was not previously committed. She also asked if anyone from the ESC would be interested in attending the NC Climate Week Summit as Davidson was sending a group and could be good for our towns to receive similar education for collaboration purposes. Staff advised would see if there was any available funding as funding for conferences and training has been used for town advisory boards in the past.

Chair Shook asked all members to update their goals on the google doc sheet to show how well all are making progress.

Chair Shook made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dan Fogel seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.