

Environmental Sustainability Committee

December 11, 2025

Minutes

Members Present: Diane McLaine (Chair), Priya Jayaram (Vice Chair), Dan Fogel, Dana Hicks, Anne Marie O'Neill, Natalie Paalova, Trisha Knight

Board/Staff present: Mayor Pro Tem Jen Hunt, Bobby Williams

Chair Diane McLaine called meeting to order.

Approval of November 2025 Minutes – Dan Fogel motioned to approve, seconded by Anne Marie O'Neill. Motion carried unanimously.

No Agenda Changes.

No Public Comments.

Pottstown Community Cleanup Report – Dana Hicks delivered a report from the recent Pottstown Cleanup and thanked members of the ESC who were able to join and help out, noting he was proud of the turnout and impact. He also added that there will be another project in 2026 there to target invasive species on the county's 32 acre Pottstown Park property and hopes they'll be interested in working with ESC to help get rid of English ivy and kudzu impacting the creeks and property. There was also lots of positive feedback from residents and lessons learned for next time, including better sorting to save time at the North Meck Recycling Center. A lot of credit was given to Augustin Hinojosa who previously spoke to ESC about litter in the Pottstown Community and initiated this partnership on the cleanup. He has started a Youtube channel and scenes from the cleanup are included there. Big thank you was also expressed to Mecklenburg County Solid Waste and Lynn Knox who helped at the North Meck Recycling Center.

Tree Save Text Amendment Update – Assistant Planning Director Brad Priest attended the meeting to provide an update since the recent passage of the text amendment aimed at changing mitigation options to save more trees from development and answer any ESC questions. Requirements depend on zoning district in terms of the number that can be mitigated and planted back. As approved, the amendment caps the amount that can be mitigated so some but not all trees are allowed to be removed to keep more mature trees. To date, no rezonings have occurred due to tree save requirements. Questions were asked about enforcement and applicability across all zoning districts, which occur during plan review phase and review of submitted tree surveys – if developers don't do what they're supposed to, they won't get approved plans for construction. It does apply in all zoning districts and added a caveat for small lot development based on a concern expressed by

the Planning Board about adverse impacts to smaller lots, especially in downtown. Mature specimen trees are required to be kept or their removal be mitigated – before a development could mitigate 100% of required tree save and now its up to 50%. (Note that required tree save is not every tree on a parcel, just mature canopy and specimen trees.) Brad noted the updates were made to Article 7 of the zoning ordinance if anyone wanted to look further. Residential requires keeping 70% of what’s required and commercial/mixed use require keeping 50% of what’s required.

Trisha Knight asked when does the Town say stop and asked if the Town had a townwide goal to keep for its tree canopy. That is referenced in the 2040 Plan and the town is limited in that regard by statutes.

Review of Committee Documents – Chair McLaine walked the committee through the file set up for sharing amongst the committee, including previous meeting documents in a repository, previous sustainability spotlight submissions, town board presentations, and info on things like treasure tree program and other topics from the goals list. This is a starting point with room to add and share ideas for the future.

Next Steps for Committee Goals – Chair McLaine asked members to identify completed goals and when others might be complete as the committee looks to new goals in the new year.

Tim Sanborn noted they’re wrapping up and he’s requested Ethan’s help with use of colors consistent with town brand to help people connect activities/presence at events with ESC. The goal is pre-developed files to use for consistency when communicating.

Dan Fogel noted upcoming sustainability spotlights are Heiner Dornburg for February 2026 and Mayor Pro Tem Hunt for April 2026.

Anne Marie O’Neill shared that goal E&I 3 is done. She has started work related to topic of re-use and recycle and created an editable document for the committee to track drop off sites for items not collected by curbside recycling program. This was also identified as an opportunity for communication to the public, possibly a magnet that could make recycling days and related information easily consumable and similar information posted on social media. This will likely become a future goal.

Priya Jayaram proposed restructuring the goal related to energy and waste as its 3 big topics and needs to be split up.

Chair McLaine suggested dedicating a meeting to hash through the next steps for goals. Dan Fogel suggested a new working document be created ideas sent in.

Goals completed – Comm-1, Comm-2, survey deferred for now to be brought back up in the future.

EWV-1 is only waste related, no time for energy and water. Priya noted she is working with Crown Town Compost on a process for possible pilot in her neighborhood.

For EWV-2, Dana has completed his first cleanup, North Meck Park will be in March 2026 and Huntington Green pond(s) targeted for June 2026, with another cleanup for Pottstown later in 2026.

Goal EWV-3 is being taken over by Natalie Paavola, who expressed interest in researching opportunities for things like biodiesel and more EV charging.

For E&I-1, Trisha noted progress meeting with planning staff regarding wildlife corridors and looking at bridges and culverts and other nearby resources to identify for safe passage for area animals (and to protect local motorists from meeting them on local roadways).

E&I-2 is moving forward via the Treasure Trees program and Chair McLaine shared that the nomination form is online and a QR code was setup and recently used at a tree planting event at Bradford Park. Now through March 1st, applications will be accepted with a target of April (Arbor Day) for first selections for Treasure Trees. It was noted the Town's arborist, once hired, will be a big help to these efforts.

For E&I-3, Anne Marie O'Neill stated that will become part of a bigger future goal.

Action Items:

- Treasure Trees – can a separate email address be set up for questions related to the program vs individual committee member email addresses?
- Opportunities for T-shirts and Hats once branding and colors is sorted out (this may get added under new goals for future).

Adjournment – Anne Marie O'Neill made motion to adjourn, seconded by Dana Hicks. Motion carried unanimously. be