

## Environmental Sustainability Committee

January 8, 2026 Meeting

Members Present: Diane McLaine (Chair), Prius Jayaram (Vice Chair), Dan Fogel, Dana Hicks, Tim Sanborn, Heiner Dornburg, Trisha Knight, Natalie Paavola

Members Absent: Anne Marie O'Neill

Chair McLaine called meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes from December 2025 – Dan Fogel made motion to approve. Priya seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### Presentations and Public Comment

Charlie Firth, with Parks and Rec events introduced herself and options for the committee to participate at upcoming Growers Markets and events.

Tracy Houk, Assistant Parks and Rec Director, advised the committee avoid the largest events so as not to get lost in the shuffle of activity, but seek other ways to participate and be involved (I.e trash/recycling/etc.). The market season runs May 2<sup>nd</sup> through August 29<sup>th</sup>. A popular example that got the board excited was the suggestion of creating a plaque for ESC to maintain a little bird box or bird identification board.

Tim Sanborn volunteered to be the point person with Charlie and Parks and Rec and ESC connecting to specific events/themes. Charlie offered to provide information on smaller events so the ESC can choose to meet goal of at least one per month.

Lisa Zelina, resident, spoke to ESC about her concerns about all the development going on, how its being managed and role for the public related to sustainability.

### Business Items

#### Goals Discussion

Communications and Anne Marie are closing out their goals for 2025.

Dana Hicks – Quarterly cleanups. For park cleanups, during week may be better as staff more available, less conflict from other activities. Outcome of discussion was to keep option open for greenway projects and parks for annual volunteer opportunities.

Community cleanups will continue, specifically focusing on Huntington Green and Pottstown.

Natalie Paavola – plan to continue some of what Jeremy was working on and focus on energy as there is so much under the sustainable energy umbrella with resiliency, renewables, EV chargers, solar, biodiesel, etc. and potential opportunities for demonstration projects. Will work on tasks with dates laid out into goal template.

Tim Sanborn – Communications – efforts ongoing and will continue, will work on consistency with communications.

Priya Jayaram – Focus on Education – a lot of ambition with previous goals, breaking up and restructuring for future goals. Two goals will be composting and water conservation. Have initiated contact with Crown Town Compost and wants to look into opportunities for residents to connect with water conservation.

Trisha Knight – For 2026, will focus on wildlife corridors (coordinating with Planning for opportunities with culverts and other areas, as well as future plans/development/rezonings. Will also investigate grant opportunities and continue discovery on where animals are going.

Mayor Pro Tem Hunt suggested checking out the app iNaturalist that lets you track plants and animals in a certain area to continue mapping and engaging residents on this topic.

Anne Marie was absent, but it was noted by Chair McLaine that she'll be taking over the Treasure Trees program for 2026. Look forward to working with the town arborist in the near future. Looking ahead,

For Communications goal - Dan and Tim noted they'd close out the website goal. Visibility for ESC is ongoing and encouraged members to check the calendar for newsletter assignments. Also opportunities for Did You Know? And opportunity to put larger documents on the website as appropriate. Involvement with community events will continue and will look for ways to engage volunteers and opportunities for local students needing volunteer service hours as projects arise.

Chair McLaine - stated she'll be pursuing promotion of recycling and help Anne Marie with the Treasure Trees program for her goal area focus in 2026.

As an action item, contact will be made with Lindsay Krone with the Citizen newspaper to start awareness for the treasure tree program and "where is this tree" connected to the launch of the first tree at Grand Oak in April.

Heiner Dornburg – goal is to keep Huntersville green and plant trees. Educate, preserve, grow is message he's hoping to communicate to the public and noted a need to learn more about what grows best here and an intent to share that knowledge with others. This could be through participation at events, newsletters, social posts by the town, etc.

He also wondered does or can the town have requests for tree pruning when it comes to NCDOT. Hoping to see plantings at Exit 23 with the Diverging Diamond.

Mayor Pro Tem Hunt shared that the new town arborist coming on board in early 2026 will be able to assist with community engagement and education. There are also tree mitigation funds from paid by other developments that can be used to plant trees in areas like around Exit 23.

Tim Sanborn requested efforts to save tree canopy and tree tunnels as an opportunity for greenways and as something Mecklenburg County is not doing.

Committee agreed to keep all goals on the list versus doing as subcommittees.

No further action items or final discussion.

Next meeting will focus on the calendar and newsletter assignments.

Adjournment – Priya made motion to adjourn, seconded by Chair McLaine. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned.