Environmental Sustainability Committee Meeting

September 20, 7 pm – 9 pm

City Hall, Work Session Room

**Meeting Minutes**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type** | **Name** | **Attendance** |
| Member | Faiza Alam | Present |
| Member | Marian Carroll | Present |
| Member | Timothy Killian | Present |
| Member | Ben Lebron | Present |
| Member | Alice Lippert | Present |
| Member, Chair | Thomas Peterson | Present |
| Member, Vice Chair | Amanda Stamp | Present |
| Member | Rusty Russell | Present |
| Member | Larry Kobayashi | Present |
| Member, School Board Representative | Stacy Hall | Present |
| Member, Business Representative | Elaine Wilks | Present |
| Student Representative | Asha Lowery | Absent |
| Staff | Stefanie Kupka | Present |
| Staff | Melissa Pennett | Present |
| Staff | Anna Safford | Present |

1. **Call to order and welcome**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tom Peterson at 7:05 p.m.

1. **Public comments**

None.

1. **Consideration of the July 19th, 2023 meeting minutes**

Ben moved to approve the July 19th meeting minutes, which was seconded by Tim, and passed unanimously.

1. **FY24 Sustainability Projects and Future Staff Capacity**

Stefanie provided an overview of the Environmental and Sustainability Division projects, status, budget, and estimated project timeline.

* Tom asked is an internship program existed for the sustainability program?
  + Staff informed the ESC there is funding for a temporary, part-time employee/intern which will be rolled up into a temporary, full-time climate and energy staff person to help start the climate and energy action plan development.
  + Anna noted in the SPROUT grant application, funding was requested for a stewardship coordinator to conduct more regular volunteer opportunities.
* Tim asked for a status update of the green building policy?
  + Stefanie noted the internal stakeholder group has had its first meeting at the end of August, and the external stakeholder group will meet later this fall. Elaine is the ESC representative for the external stakeholder group.
* Rusty asked for clarification on the status of Food Security and Access programming and projects as identified as a focus area of the ESC?
  + Staff indicated that no programs are identified yet, but there is an opportunity to suggest programming and budgeting with the comprehensive plan 5-year update.

Anna provided an overview of the Urban Forestry program projects, status, budget, and estimated project timeline.

1. **Work Session with the City Council**

The ESC work session with the Mayor and Council is tentatively scheduled for December 5th. The time of the presentation is yet to be determined, and will be known closer to the day of. The presentation block is set for 30 minutes.

The ESC members participated in an exorcise to rank and prioritize all of their action items to present to their ‘top-tier’ list and make recommendation to council. Some of the criteria considered when ranking all of the priorities include; costs, permanence, longevity, public acceptance, implementation, urgency, and timeline.

The ranking of the priorities include and their votes are as followed:

1. **Climate Change:** Support climate adaptation efforts, such as the development and implementation of the Community Flood Resilience Plan and Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plan. Resiliency planning efforts identify how to better prepare and reduce risk to climate change impacts (e.g. heavy precipitation and inland flooding; severe storm and wind events; extreme heat and cold; drought) for city residents, businesses, and infrastructure. **8 votes.**
2. **Energy Conservation and Efficiency:** Support solar projects, including the installation of rooftop solar, ground-mounted solar, and/or solar parking canopies at select city facilities; net metering incentive, and community outreach. Take advantage of the federal tax incentive (direct pay). **8 votes.**
3. **Urban Forestry:** Pass a tree ordinance focusing on improving the management of the public right-of-way trees. **7 votes.**
4. **Energy Conservation and Efficiency:** Adopt an ordinance to join the Virginia state-wide Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) Program. **6 votes.**
5. **Food Security and Sustainability:** Build demonstration gardens to encourage city residents to build rain, pollinator, and food production gardens at their homes. **5 votes.**
6. **Waste Management:** Evaluate expanding the city’s composting program by adding compost drop-off locations in the city, including schools and providing curbside compost collection. **5 votes.**
7. **Climate Change:** Support climate mitigation efforts, such as the development and implementation of the Climate and Energy Action Plan. **4 votes.**
8. **Stormwater:** Support more public buy-in on the stormwater utility through very targeted community outreach. **3 votes.**
9. **Urban Forestry:** Support the development of the Urban Forest Management Plan, including promoting it to internal and external stakeholders. **2 votes.**
10. **Urban Forestry:** Develop strategies for promoting urban forest education and outreach to the community, focusing on invasive species management.  **2 votes.**
11. **Waste Management:** Continue and expand refuse and recycling education and outreach efforts to communicate the importance of and how to reduce the amount of contamination within the recycling bins. **1 vote.**
12. **Waste Management**: Create a green businesses award or recognition program for businesses that apply environmental practices (e.g., glass recycling, composting, recyclable take-out containers, no single use utensils). **1 vote.**
13. **Overall:** Institutionalize sustainability goals and resources by fostering alignment, commitment, collaboration, and accountability across local government departments, other public agencies, community partners, and outside organizations. **1 vote.**
14. **Overall:** Support the approval of new full-time employees who support environmental and sustainability efforts. **1 vote.**
15. **Energy Conservation and Efficiency:** Support investments in Electric Vehicles (EV), including supporting the development of the EV Readiness Plan, supporting the installation of EV charging infrastructure, educating City residents on the benefits of EVs, and adopting a fleet electrification policy. **1 vote.**
16. **Food Security and Sustainability:** Encourage food production in new developments and encourage food production businesses in the city. **1 vote.**
17. **Food Security and Sustainability:** Educate community members on the importance of food security and reducing food waste. **1 vote.**
18. **Overall:** Identify and pursue relevant federal and state funding opportunities. **0 votes.**
19. **Overall:** Support FY25 environmental, sustainability, urban forestry, and stormwater CIP and operating budget requests. **0 votes.**
20. **Climate Change:** Continue the partnership with GMU’s Virginia Climate Center on climate mitigation and adaptation efforts. **0 votes.**
21. **Stormwater:** Consider creating a stormwater grant program for residents to start projects on their property with guidance from city staff. **0 votes.**
22. **Fall Festival Planning (10/14)**

A sign-up sheet was passed around at the meeting to schedule volunteer times for staff the ESC booth. This year’s ESC booth will feature the recycling spinning wheel game, the Enviroscape, and invasive species information. All of the activities will be supplemented with prizes, giveaways, and informational flyers.

1. **Fall Community Stewardship Day Planning (10/29)**

* Arbor Day Ceremony 9 – 10
* Community Cleanup Event 10 – noon

The Fall Community Stewardship Day will begin at 9am with the Arbor Day ceremony and proclamation, followed by a poetry reading, and a tree planting. The community cleanup event will follow and allow groups to collect supplies to clean up litter throughout the city.

A potential spring tree planting event at each of the city schools was also discussed. Each of the schools would coordinate with the libraries displaying tree-themed books, announcements at each of the schools on the events, and a poetry contest. This event would help engage students and their families more and get the community involved. More discussion and details to follow in the spring.

1. **Chairperson Items**

None.

1. **Committee Member Items**

The ESC members discussed rescheduling the December ESC meeting, currently scheduled for December 20 to be rescheduled to December 13.

1. **Staff Items**

* New ESC SharePoint Page
  + An email will be sent to all ESC members in the next week inviting them to join and access the new ESC SharePoint page to be able to edit documents more easily.
* Comprehensive Plan Update
  + In the new SharePoint page are word versions on the comprehensive plan. Prior to the next ESC meeting, please review the comprehensive plan.
* FY24 Budget Planning
  + The ESC discussed and decided to increase its annual budget from $2,500 to $3,000 due to inflation costs and increased programming

1. **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m. Next regular ESC meeting is October 18, 2023 @ 7 p.m.