Environmental Sustainability Committee Meeting

February 21, 2024, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

City Hall, Work Session Room

**Meeting Minutes**

1. **7:00 – 7:05 Call to order and welcome**

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tom Peterson at 7:07 p.m. Meeting attendance is noted below.

1. **7:05 – 7:10 Public comments**

There were no public comments.

1. **7:10 – 7:15 Consideration of the January 17, 2024 meeting minutes**

Tim made a motion to approve the January 17, 2024 meeting minutes, which was seconded by Rusty. The motion passed unanimously.

1. **7:15 – 7:20 Welcome Gregory Farley to the ESC**

Greg Farley, the newly appointed member of the ESC, introduced himself to the committee. Greg is currently the Director of Sustainability at George Mason University, and works on a number of issues committee to wide-spread sustainability efforts throughout the university. In his capacity on the ESC, Greg looks forward to building a connection between the City and George Mason University.

1. **7:20 – 7:25 Recognition of Tim Killian for 10 years of service on the ESC**

The ESC recognized Tim Killian for 10 years of dedicated service as a volunteer on the ESC. Through his tenure on the ESC Tim has helped shaped many initiatives that have improved sustainable efforts throughout the City.

1. **7:25 – 7:55 Education opportunities recommendations to City Council**

Elaine provided the ESC a template to help the ESC focus on the initiatives of the committee and members, a catch all for the ESC to use and harness their volunteer-power to frame the ESC initiatives, and events.

Rusty asked if we could add a follow-up, or after-action report/discussion template for of each of the initiatives for future years to see what was done, and any revisions needed to be stored on SharePoint.

Greg asked if we should add a partner’s row, to include other organization within and outside the City in the Resources Section.

Tom asked if we should add a row to tie it to other/existing city programs.

Rusty asked if in addition to having a row for partners under the Resources Section, also having a stakeholder row. For partners to be an ‘active’ role in the initiative, and stakeholders being the ‘passive’ role in the initiative.

Greg also recommended if we should track the time commitment and volunteer hours needed for each initiative.

Tom asked if the Council publicized the ESC event or initiative.

Stefanie responded that the Mayor and City Council members are always invited to any ESC events, and is always made aware of the initiative.

Tim suggested adding a time frame, is it an annual thing, a one-time thing, recurring, etc.

Tom recommended adding a federal and state tie-in section, for funding, recommendations, etc.

Elaine discussed a National Solar Day 2025 initiative as a pilot project for the ESC. Elaine proposed to hold an event for national solar day (March 14) on the day after, Saturday March 15 2025, to help break down the barriers on the misunderstanding and misconceptions about adding solar to residential homes. This proposed event could include various city departments, residential testimonies, Dominion energy, solar installers, solarize NOVA representatives, etc.

* Stacy recommended looking to see if the city would add promotions items.
* Elaine commented to that she will see if restaurants, other businesses, and/or Dominion Energy would also consider sponsoring the event to not just use city resources.
* Elaine is going to update the blank template and the proposed solar event based on the discussion had for the next meeting.

Stacy recommended to add a section on the City’s website for all the various social media accounts and channels.

1. **7:55 – 8:30 Focus area milestones report out**

Climate Change

Tom updated the ESC:

* George Mason University has been awarded a grant to enable the university to provide technical assistance to climate adaptation and planning via their research and studies to local governments. The City of Fairfax can be one of the communities through this program through translating the science and research of the university into policies and plans within local government.

Energy Conservation and Efficiency

Elaine updated the ESC:

* The C-PACE program is planning to be incorporated into the green building policy that is being developed by the City.
* There is a lot of state programs for electric vehicle adoption and incentives, the City should be doing more targeted education and outreach, and updates to the website.
* Elaine will work on the National Solar Day 2025 form as described above.

Food Security and Sustainability

Amanda updated the ESC via an email sent to the group, outlining:

* The ESC should meet with the Planning Commission to advocate for urban agriculture and ensure it is included in the Comprehensive Plan update.
* The ESC should continue to identify potential funding and projects to implement
* With the ESC role’s as the Tree Board, we should integrate urban agriculture and trees that also provide food opportunities

Urban Forestry

Ben updated the ESC:

* The zoning text amendments were approved by council, which requires 10% tree canopy coverage during land development for the commercial urban zoning district contract award for the urban forestry management plan is being finalized and will be announced soon
* When the urban forestry management plan begins, Ben and Rusty will be the ESC representatives on the steering committee
* Anna is working with the state on a Tree Ordinance through their technical assistance program
* Rusty and Bed propose the ESC members to receive training from staff on proper tree plantings, tree care, and invasive removals to train other residents, and host neighborhood invasive removal events
* In general, the ESC can host more community level invasive removal events
* Upcoming, the ESC should help on promoting the urban forestry management plan and any outreach that needs to be done for the plan

Waste Reduction and Recycling

Tim updated the ESC:

* The glass-only purple bin in the City is looking great
* The ESC will be expressing support to the 65-gallon recycling and trash carts and the implementation of that program pending budget approval
* Tim suggests adding a curbside audit tool for residents to use to check their own recycling bin on the website.
* Stacy has inquired about composting at schools on the School Board, which unfortunately is not going to happen anytime soon.

Overarching

Tom updated the ESC on:

* Comprehensive plan – let’s be ready to review the draft by the planning commission and provide our second round of input
* Budget – let’s be ready to review the proposed budget and ensure all of our areas of focus that correlate to the budget items have our recommendations and letters of support
* Will we need to follow up with the council to provide them with a response to their inquiry form the work session on plan review
* Stormwater – the Stormwater focus area is being bundles into the climate change area
  + Rusty suggested including stormwater in urban forestry, as there is a lot of cross-cutting initiatives

1. **8:30 – 8:40 ESC project review recommendation to City Council**

Tom asked if we have capacity to do any project review to answer council’s questions.

* Tim replies in the past, it has taken 2+ hours to review a project. The problem was always the ESC was too late to get their opinions heard, and that there were no ordinances or policies in place to ensure their recommendations were incorporated (i.e. adding solar, green building designation, water efficiency, etc.)
* Ben recommended participating in the steering committee of a project to make sure the ESC is at the forefront of the project and decisions.

Tom requested the committee to be responsive to council and to the community. Request for review by a council member to review projects – and what projects should and should not be reviewed by the ESC. Questions to consider for next meeting:

* What is it the ESC should suggest to Council for our recommendation on project review? And ensure that it is done on a timely, impactful manner.
  + Should the ESC review projects by request?
  + Should the ESC say no to all project review?
  + Should the ESC choose what projects to review based on staff recommendation?
  + Should the ESC participate on steering committees/other methods for project review than just project review?
  + Do we need to officially change the charter?

If this council wants us to review a project, the ESC should request some guidelines upfront, if there is a request. Leave the door open.

1. **8:40 – 8:45 Chairperson items**

None.

1. **8:45 – 8:55 Committee member items**

None.

1. **8:55 – 9:00 Staff items**
   * FY25 Budget Presentation – February 27, 2024
   * FY24 ESC budget planning ($1,700 remaining)

* Melissa will create a spending plan to propose to the ESC at the next meeting

1. **Adjourn**

TheMeeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m. The next regular ESC meeting is March 20, 2024 at 7 p.m.

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