

Environmental Sustainability Committee Meeting

September 18, 2024, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

City Hall, Work Session Room

**Meeting Minutes**

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tom Peterson at 7:00p.m. Meeting attendance is noted below.

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

**2. 7:05 – 7:10 Review and Adoption of the Agenda, and Consideration of the July 17, 2024 meeting minutes**

Tom provided an edit to correct the typo in ‘stormwater’.

Tom made a motion to approve the July 17, 2024 meeting minutes with the aforementioned edits, which was seconded by Ben. Tim abstained. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. 7:10 – 7:20 Committee Members Items**

- Amanda, Rusty, and Elaine drafted a letter that was sent forward to the mayor and city council addressing the zoning text amendments for urban agriculture.
- Tim, informed the ESC of the waste wizard and sorting game tools on the recycling website and suggested all members go and check it out.
- Faiza thanked the staff for sending information on the monthly climate movie.
- Faiza asked staff to provide more information about the Cityscene articles and news for the ESC to discuss requests for member features before it’s published.
- Rusty updated the ESC on PRAB:

- PRAB needs a new student liaison, if you know of any students interested please send them the information.
- The Thaiss Park redevelopment proposals came in higher than expected and might have to be redesigned.
- The Bylaws for a park nonprofit are still underway.
- The Parks and Recreation Masterplan is still underway.

#### **4. 7:20 – 7:50 Review and Discussion of the Principles for Community Collaboration**

Tom provided a presentation to the ESC to begin discussions on education and outreach as part of the ESC charter. Two areas that intersect that are important (1) creation of the opportunity, and (2) provision of the means. Opportunity including timing, scope, and participants who are involved. Means indicates that it is difficult to do this without help from technical assistance, facilitative assistance, and collaboration mechanisms.

- Rusty asked where the identification of needs come in?
- Rusty asked should all stakeholder groups be involved at some point of the project processes. Before, during, after, or all of the above?
- Amanda asked is it a feedback loop so people can be brought in at different levels. There needs to be an infinity loop verses feedback loop.

In identifying means, how do we best help collaborate? (1) Technical assistance, which includes information, education, tools, training, and capacity building. And, (2) facilitated assistance, convening of people, evaluation facilitation, collaborative procedures, group support and decision-making, and conflict resolution.

- Tim asked does the facilitator needs to be a technical expert in this process.
  - Tom responded that facilitators need to be sufficiently versed in subject material not to inadvertently gloss over issues.
- Rusty suggested the need should be established before the collaborative project.
  - Tom responded the need should be established at the beginning of a project process when you are defining an opportunity.
- Rusty discussed the primary output of collaboration should be with as many citizens and stakeholders as possible, and to be thorough throughout the process. Ensure we help collaborators not just comment once but provide continual engagement.
  - Faiza suggested to always start with the data points to emphasize what and who should be specifically collaborating and on what focus points. The communication process should never be closed.

#### **5. 7:50- 8:00 Public Comments**

None.

#### **6. 8:00 – 8:45 Urban Forestry Master Plan Stakeholder Interview**

Anna informed the ESC members that the consultant for the Urban Forestry Master Plan (UFMP) is here virtually to learn about the ESC's role and background and garner feedback on the current state of the urban forest in the city, and what preliminary ideas ESC hopes to identify as part of the 20-year plan.

The consultants and the ESC engaged in dialogue pertaining to the UFMP and its development:

- Rusty noted that urban forestry is a core area of focus for the ESC.
- Tom notes the ESC is also committed to cross-cutting issues and looking at things like plans and budgets to integrate environmental and sustainability best practices.
- Ben noted that he served on the hiring panel as an ESC representative for the City's Urban Forester position. Once Anna was hired, the ESC supported a lot of her initiatives, served as the Tree Board, and acted as a liaison between residents and elected officials to get their forestry and urban tree needs addressed.
- Amanda noted that the ESC works with staff on the Arbor Day proclamation and ceremony annually, invasive removal events, and the fall festival where the ESC conducts outreach.
- Tom noted that members of the ESC are appointed by the mayor and council. Tom also requested a copy of the ESC's charter be shared with the consultant.
- Tom asked how the information and feedback from the ESC is going to be used by the consultants in the development of the UFMP.
  - The consultants responded that the early stages of engagement will help drive the recommendations and steer the report.
- Tom asked if there is a work plan that can be shared with the ESC members.
  - The consultants responded yes, the work plan and engagement plan can be shared with the ESC and are also available on the Engage Fairfax page. The ESC steering committee members have also received these materials via email.
  - Anna responded that all feedback received is being tracked and documented. To help drive equitable engagement and transparency in the development of the UFMP, all materials are being translated, and all public meetings are being recorded and the meeting minutes are available on the Engage page. Hearing feedback from the first public meeting in June, a stakeholder listening session is being developed as well for the residents and 'friends of' non-profit partners who have been highly engaged at council meetings. Feedback will also be used to create a FAQ page on the Engage Fairfax page.
- Tom asked about the input that was provided back during the July public meeting, and how is that feedback also being incorporated.
  - Anna responded that all feedback is being tracked and documented. Currently, the plan is in the information gathering phase, and all feedback will be used to create and steer the plan's goals, recommendations, outcomes, etc., as more feedback is gathered.
- Faiza noted that it is important to preserve the tree canopy that is remaining in Fairfax City, as the increase in mixed-use development has seen a lot of impervious services take over natural areas.
- Tom recommended treating the visioning sessions with caution and sensitivity, and visions for the future of the city's urban forestry vary among residents.

- Faiza also recommended visiting the 4 city schools and talking to residents.

As a follow-up from the discussion, the ESC requested staff to

1. Share the slides from the June ESC meeting
2. Share UFMP work plan and engagement plan
3. Send a link to the recording from the June public meeting
4. Provide a list of questions from the consultant ahead of the next meeting

All feedback for the initial information-gathering portion of the plan development is needed by mid-December.

#### **7. 8:45 – 8:50 Arbor Day**

Faiza and Rusty have been working with Sophia to plan the Arbor Day ceremony and tree planting that will be taking place on Saturday, October 26 from 9 a.m. to noon at Kutner Park. Similar to last year, Faiza has taken the lead in coordinating a poetry contest with city students, and a prize is being supplied by the Fairfax City School Board. After the ceremony, multiple native trees will be planted at the park.

The exact number of trees is still to be determined, but there will be multiple planting spots.

#### **8. 8:50 - 8:55 Fall Festival Planning**

Fall festival is always on the second Saturday in October, this year, it is Saturday, October 12 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This year, the city is consolidating efforts and having 1 large city-centric tent on Sager Avenue where the ESC will be located. The ESC table will include activities like the recycling spinning-wheel game, the Enviroscope, prizes, and informational handouts.

All ESC members are encouraged to sign up for a 3-hour time slot on the sheet being passed around.

Detailed parking information will be emailed by staff closer to October 12.

#### **9. 8:55 – 9:00 Green Building Policy**

Stefanie updated the ESC that at the October ESC meeting, the consultant Cadmus on the project will provide a presentation on the green building policy followed by a Q&A.

- Tom asked if the green building policy would include the environmental footprint of the site itself or just the building.
- Tom asked to include the technical definition of a green building as being used by the policy development versus the popular definition.

If need be, a standalone meeting can be scheduled for engagement on the green building policy.

#### **10. 9:00 – 9:05 Staff Items**

In the interest of time, staff items will be emailed out.

#### **11. 9:05 – 9:15 Chairperson Items**

Tom provided closing comments to consider moving forward to keep all members apprised of the goings on in the City and ESC. Specifically asking staff to be copied on more items and or forwarded information to keep all members abreast, and asking committee members to cc all members to keep everyone updated as well so all members and staff can be equipped and informed for all future engagements.

## **12. Adjourn**

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