



## ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

### Regular Meeting

**November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023**

The Waynesville Environmental Sustainability Board held a regular meeting on Friday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, at 4:30 pm. in the Municipal Building Conference Room located at 16 South Main Street Waynesville, NC.

#### **Members present:**

Chuck Dickson  
Kay Kirkman  
Reid Conway  
Keith Ray  
Michael Boss  
Mary Kayler  
Paul Carlson  
David Henderson  
Case Brown (alternate)  
Betsy Wall  
Aparna Keshaviah  
William Hite  
Buffy Queen

#### **Staff members present:**

Rob Hites, Town Manager  
Jesse Fowler, Assistant Town Manager  
Charam Miller, Grants Administrator  
Candace Poolton, Town Clerk

#### **A. SELECTION OF BOARD CHAIR**

Board Member Dickson called meeting to order at 4:34pm.

***A motion was made by Board Member Ray, seconded by Board Member Kirkman, to nominate Board Member William Hite as the Environmental Sustainability Board Chair. The motion passed unanimously.***

#### **B. VISION AND MISSION DISCUSSION**

Assistant Town Manager Jesse Fowler recommended that before each Board meeting, the Board takes 10-15 minutes to work on creating mission and vision statements. He said this will help the ESB shape their goals and give them guidelines. Mr. Fowler presented a worksheet and requested

the ESB members to work on some ideas for the mission and vision and come prepared to discuss at the next meeting.

Board Member Dickson introduced Charam Miller, the Town's new Grant Administrator. Town Manager Rob Hites said that Charam will look into the Inflation Reduction Act guidebook to see what clean energy programs the Town may be eligible for. He added that an energy audit began today on the Police Department and Finance buildings. Mr. Hites discussed potential grants for solar energy.

### **C. LONG TERM PLAN**

Assistant Town Manager Jesse Fowler said that once the mission and vision have been formulated, that should help provide guidance when the Board creates the long-term plan. Board Member Conway said that a strategic energy plan for the Town could be short term for a year, then re-visited, but eventually should look five years into the future. He said the plan could have different sections, such as sustainability, transportation, etc. He suggested we establish baselines first, hence the energy audit and "getting our house in order".

Councilmember Wall reminded the Board that with everything they do, they must keep in mind the community-what messaging and education will look like, and that the focus should be on increasing efficiency and saving money. Board Member Henderson said that the town must have the capability first before offering citizens ways to be more energy efficient. The example he shared was making the Town more bike and pedestrian friendly before encouraging citizens to walk or bike instead of drive. Board Member Ray Keith added that the Town must look at adaptation measures and minimize the need to burn things for energy. Board Member Brown said he investigated Santee Cooper, the Town's energy provider, and said the state agency derives 82% of its power from fossil fuels. He said that Duke is already at 50% fossil fuels and plans to eliminate coal in 10 years. He added that if the town switched to Duke today, it would reduce emissions by 50%. Mr. Hites said cost is a major factor and that Duke's bid was 45% higher than Santee Cooper's. There was discussion about electric service territory. Board Member Carlson asked if there are any prohibitions of the town producing its own power to which Mr. Hites responded that there are not. Mr. Hites said that we must accurately predict and report how much energy the Town plans on using to the energy company. Mr. Fowler said they need to take this into consideration when trying to implement solar energy production in the town.

### **D. ENERGY AUDIT**

Town Manager Rob Hites reiterated that Waste Reduction Partners are currently starting their energy audits on the Town Hall and Finance Department buildings.

### **E. GRANTS UPDATE**

Board Member Keshaviah recommended that the ESB apply for the Sustainability grant under the DOE LEAP Program. Board Member Wall said that Waynesville is identified as the only community in WNC that could apply for the grant. Board Member said that the due date for the grant is December 14<sup>th</sup>. Board Member Keshaviah added that when applying for the grant, the town would need to identify a community-based partner, which could possibly be the ESB. Board

Member Wall said the community-based partner must have a one-year history, so the Environmental Action Committee, Mountain Projects, Haywood Waterways, local churches could work. Ms. Miller said she would research the grant requirements for community partners. Board Member Conway suggested partnering with Waste Reduction Partners.

Board Member Keshaviah said the ask should be well defined and to asked ESB members bring ideas to the next meeting.

There was a discussion about microgrids and how they can help in times of emergency.

***A motion was made by Board Member Conway, seconded by Board Member Keshaviah to recommend to Town Council to look into the LEAP grant and see what it would take to apply. The motion passed unanimously.***

#### **F. SCHEDULING VISITS OF TOWN FACILITIES**

Board Member Dickson said that ESB should prioritize the upcoming LEAP grant application and perhaps schedule visits of town facilities at a later date. He mentioned that he would like to hear from Elizabeth Teague, Director of Development, about what her team is doing that would overlap with the ESB's goals. Assistant Town Manager Jesse Fowler suggested that the ESB members read through the Town's 2035 Comprehensive Plan. Town Manager Rob Hites said the 2035 Comprehensive Plan can always be amended.

#### **G. OTHER BUSINESS**

Board Member Wall requested that the Town Clerk share the ESB Purpose, Scope, Memberships, and Procedures document with the Town of Canton staff.

Board Member Conway asked Ms. Miller to give updates on the LEAP grant at the next meeting.

***A motion was made by Board Member Buffy Queen, seconded by Board Member Reid Conway, to adjourn the meeting at 6:23pm. The motion passed unanimously.***

*The next regular scheduled meeting of the Environmental Sustainability Board will be held on Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm, located in the Municipal Conference Room at 16 S. Main Street, Waynesville.*

ATTEST:

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William Hite, Board Chair

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Candace Poolton, Town Clerk