



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

Regular Meeting

April 18th, 2024

The Waynesville Environmental Sustainability Board held a regular meeting on Thursday, April 18th, 2024, at 4:30 pm. in the Municipal Building Conference Room located at 16 South Main Street Waynesville, NC.

Members present:

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

Members Absent:

Staff members present:

Rob Hites, Town Manager
Julie Grasty, Asset Services Manager

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman William Hite called the meeting to order at 4:30pm.

B. APPROVAL OF 4/4/2024 MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Vice Chair Reid Conway seconded by Board Member Betsy Wall, to approve the March 21st, 2024 meeting minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

C. DOE COMMUNITIES LEAP UPDATE: ORIENTATION WEBINAR AND TEAM FORMATION

Chairman Hite recommended a team of four people to help build the relationship between technical assistance and the ESB. Board Member Keshaviah said they're hosting two webinars next week that she will be attending. She said they'll be hearing from grantees from last year and have a Q&A session.

D. 2024 STATE ENERGY CONFERENCE OF NC ATTENDEES

Chairman Hite reminded the ESB that next week is the conference.

E. TOW TREE CANOPY ASSESSMENT AND GRANT OPPORTUNITY -URBAN ECOLOGY--KAY KIRKMAN

Board Member Kirkman reported that the NC Forest Service is offering a grant program for tree canopy inventory for city properties and a tree canopy assessment for trees in the town limits. She said the Urban Ecology group met with a tree service out of Raleigh (Davey Tree Service) about doing these assessments. She said they've prepared goals and work outlines and are ready to get a quote from Davey tree service company. She said the grant program has two funding opportunities, a matching grant at 50%, and the other is a complete grant available to non-profits. Board Member Kirkman said the deadline is July, and the town could do the matching grant. She suggested Haywood Waterways Association could apply for the other grant to help with planting along the riparian corridor. Board Member Henderson said the sample reports Davey Tree provided from other counties were excellent. Ms. Grasty said there may be data from when Waynesville was Tree City certified. Vice Chair Conway asked what kind of approval the ESB would have to go through with the other communities in the county to include them in the assessment. Board Member Brown said the tree inventory would require interaction with the town and property owners. Board Member Kirkman said the tree inventory would involve someone physically getting the location of the tree, species, and health of the tree, which the grant funds would help support. Board Member Henderson asked what the non-profit's involvement would be. Board Member Kirkman said the ESB would need to be engaged with the process, so they would partner with HWA. Vice Chair Conway asked what actionable item would come from this assessment. Board Member Kirkman said it would help to set future goals, track changes over time if the town does implement tree enhancement programs, helps prioritize where trees need to be planted, and could help leverage other grant opportunities. Mr. Hites said the Tree Boards in the towns he's managed have no administrative authority, but do help carry out the programs the ESB has been discussing.

Board Member Kirkman said she asked Ms. Teague about the process of engagement with the Russ Ave project, and she said they usually present their landscaping plan towards the end of the project. Mr. Hites said the NCDOT has a landscape architect to replenish the landscaping after the project is completed. He suggested the ESB reached out to the Russ Ave. project manager to coordinate landscaping efforts. Mr. Hites said the Tree Board could work with the Planning Board

to implement ordinances. Board Member Kirkman suggested drafting some responsibilities of a Tree Board at the next meeting before recommending to Council that one be formed.

F. DOE C-SITE GRANT OPPORTUNITY DISCUSSION

Chairman William Hite reminded the ESB of a \$900,000 grant for communities to develop and use different types of technologies, and that they had discussed the rec center being an emergency shelter and a place to install solar panels. He said there were certain rules in the grant limiting what could be installed; for example, the town could only install a 60kW solar array, which wouldn't power the rec center. He said there were rules that weren't in line with their goals; for example, the town couldn't install an EV charger in the parking lot. Board Member Dickson said that's not in line with what the ESB was wanting to do. He said Waste Reduction Partners agreed to do an energy audit of the rec center. Board Member Henderson asked if there's a smaller scaled project they could do. Board Member Keshaviah said it's challenging to sell the story and the project has to impact the community. The ESB agreed not to pursue the DOE C-Site Grant.

G. OTHER BUSINESS-TEAM UPDATES, NEW PROPOSALS, ANNOUNCEMENTS (WATERSHED TOUR)

Board Member Dickson reported that the town is planning on implementing a stormwater fee which could help support and maintain the town's sewer system. He said the other Councilmembers wanted to give the employees a COLA which may make hiring a sustainability manager difficult. He said there may be an opportunity to hire one after the asset services manager retires. Board Member Ray said there are two options to support the position- philanthropy and grants. Mr. Hites said that's possible to do, but donations need to be well tracked. Board Member Ray asked Mr. Hites if charges could be installed on light posts adjacent to parking spaces. Mr. Hites said he would have to look into it. Board Member Dickson said there may be a way to incentivize hotels to install EV chargers through the Tourism and Development Authority.

Board Member Dickson reminded the ESB that the watershed tour will be on May 2nd and they will meet at the water plant.

H. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Board Member Wall, seconded by Vice Chair Conway, to adjourn the meeting at 6:07pm. The motion passed unanimously.

The next regular scheduled meeting of the Environmental Sustainability Board will be held on Thursday, May 16th at 4:30pm, located at 16 S. Main Street.

ATTEST:

William Hite, Board Chair

Candace Poolton, Town Clerk

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