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**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BOARD**

**Regular Meeting**

**July 18th, 2024**

The Waynesville Environmental Sustainability Board held a regular meeting on Thursday, June 21st, 2024, at 4:30 pm. in the Municipal Building Conference Room located at 16 South Main Street Waynesville, NC.

**Members present:**

William Hite (Chair)

Aparna Keshaviah

Case Brown (alternate)

Paul Carlson

Kay Kirkman

Chuck Dickson

David Henderson

**Members Absent:**

Reid Conway (Vice Chair)

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman William Hite called the meeting to order at 5:00pm. He said that Keith Ray has resigned from the ESB.

**B. APPROVAL OF 7/18/2024 MEETING MINUTES**

***A motion was made by Board Member Wall, seconded by Board Member Carlson, to approve the minutes from the July 18th, 2024 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.***

**C. UPDATE FROM URBAN ECOLOGY ABOUT TOUR AND OPPORTUNITIES WITH NC FORESTRY**

Board Member Kirkman updated the board on the status and progress of the application from the North Carolina Forestry Service for tree maintenance funding for the TOW. The application is still being written and reviewed at the time of the ESB meeting; Board Member Kirkman is still awaiting a few key pieces of information, including communication from the rec dept about its tree maintenance needs and an estimate of cost for completion of TOW tree maintenance. Board Member Kirkman stated the application would be complete the following week for submission on or before the deadline of July 30, 2024.

**D. UPDATE FROM NREL CORE GROUP ABOUT SITE VISIT ON 7/17**

Board Member Keshaviah updated the board on the site visit of National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) consultants on June 19, 2024, during which time the ESB and consultants reviewed locations for microgrid deployment/solar feasibility, including the rec center, the old town dump, the new fire station site, and the public works building. The ESB met in the afternoon with the consultants so they could better understand the town’s priorities for technical assistance. The TOW new wholesale electricity contract was discussed as an opportunity to reduce GHGs. The site visit resulted in an opportunity to better understand the use of diesel generators to power the town during high demand periods as required by our current energy contract. Potential replacement with utility scale batteries was discussed briefly. The NREL consultants were given a copy of the town’s current contract.

**E. ELECTRICITIES STAFF PRESENTATION AND VISIT**

Chairman Hite mentioned that Board Member Conway had invited Electricities representation to present the board on Auggust 1, 2024. Since Board Member Conway was absent from the meeting, Chairman Hite deferred discussion of this visit, topics, and programming until the next meeting when Board Member Conway is available.

**F. BREAK INTO GROUPS: ENERGY, ELECTRIC TRANSPORTATION, AND** **URBAN ECOLOGY FOR REMAINDER OF THE MEETING**

For the remainder of the time, the ESB split into working groups comprised of urban ecology, energy, and electric transportation. Notes from each group have been summarized below.

The electric transportation group discussed funding opportunities through the IRA, potential site location for EVSE deployment, and began a discussion about standing up an EV experience program through the utility to better familiarize Haywood County residents with electric driving. No action items came from the discussion, but Board Members Kayler and Brown agreed that obtaining project cost estimates is central to advancing these programs before the TOW’s governing board.

The urban forestry group shared with its team members the details of the NCFS program, and the criteria outlined on the NCFS website regarding building blocks for implementation of a municipal urban tree planting program. The group discussed objectives is wishes to accomplish in future funding opportunities, and it recognizes a need to prioritize the order of these activities. In August, the group will be communicating with WCU faculty, who is developing a Waynesville urban tree project for a senior environmental studies class in the fall 2024.

The energy team discussed the importance of implementing recommendation from recent Waste Reduction Partners (WRP) reports for TOW municipal buildings. Items discussed included ways to standardize and codify WRP energy efficiency recommendations, an expressed desire to begin working on simple solutions outlined by WRP (e.g. LED replacements), and a desire to monitor energy and appliance replacement. Discussion also centered on educating the community about energy efficiency and solar, including the development of resources TOW residents, and partnering with regional nonprofits and businesses to showcase opportunities and examples of existing programs that could translate well to TOW residential and commercial rate payers.

**G. OTHER BUSINESS**

The ESB discussed the importance of AMIs, or Advanced Metering Infrastructure, as a lynchpin of a smart grid. Perceived benefits were discussed, and while the town has applied for a grant to fund AMI distribution in the TOW utility district, discussion of this tool was deferred until Town Manager Hites and Board Member Conway are available..

***A motion was made by Board Member Wall, seconded by Board Member Kayler, to adjourn the meeting at 6:34pm. The motion passed unanimously.***

*The next regular scheduled meeting of the Environmental Sustainability Board will be held on Thursday, August 1st at 4:30pm, located at 16 S. Main Street.*

ATTEST:

William Hite, Board Chair Candace Poolton, Town Clerk