



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BOARD

Regular Meeting

March 7th, 2024

The Waynesville Environmental Sustainability Board held a regular meeting on Thursday, March 7th, 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
Kay Kirkman
Mary Kayler
Aparna Keshaviah
Case Brown
Betsy Wall
David Henderson
Keith Ray
Buffy Queen
Paul Carlson

Members Absent:

Reid Conway (Vice Chair)

Staff members present:

Rob Hites, Town Manager

Members of the media:

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman William Hite called the meeting to order at 4:35pm.

B. APPROVAL OF 2/1/2024 AND 2/15/2024 MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Board Member Keith Ray, seconded by Board Member Betsy Wall, to approve the February 1st, 2024 and February 15th, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

C. SUSTAINABILITY REPORT-COUNCIL RETREAT-CHUCK DICKSON

Board Member Dickson summarized his presentation he gave at the Town Council retreat. He stated that Council was in favor of the proposed stormwater fee, but warned that the public may not be receptive at first. He said that the budget is very tight this year and that the town needs to find money to solarize. He said they should look into return on investment and the proposed projects would eventually pay themselves off. Board Member Dickson said the goals of the town are to maintain its fund balance. He said funding an Environmental Sustainability Manager would be challenging, but Council was open to the idea. He referred to the Waste Reduction Partners report that was done for two town buildings and the recommended improvements, and asked how much it might cost to make those improvements. Board Member Dickson said he presented the idea to Council about purchasing an electric F-150. Mr. Hites said the Council is in support of sustainability. Board Member Dickson continued to review what he presented to Town Council. Board Member Brown asked about projected increases in the tax base with new residents moving in. Mr. Hites said there is a statewide projected 3% sales tax increase for next year. Board Member Wall said with new housing being built, there should be an increase in electric fees. Mr. Hites said those fees go into the Electric Fund and will be used to run the electric department. Board Member Dickson said some of that could be used to help pay for the ES Manager. Mr. Hites said the salary for the ES Manager is in competition with current employees' salaries and raises. Mr. Hites said the new electric rates will hit the town in 2027. He then explained the concept of supplemental power. Board Member Carlson asked if the new fire department in Hazelwood would be solar. Mr. Hites said he's going to recommend to Council that it is solar.

D. DISCUSSION OF TEAMS TO ADDRESS STRATEGIC FOCAL AREAS

Chairman Hite reminded the Board that at their retreat, they discussed ways to organize focus groups- Energy, Electric Transportation, and Urban Ecology. Board Member Wall said that within the energy group, there are two groups- renewable energy and energy efficiency. She said they do overlap, but they require their own set of strategic goals. Board Member Brown suggested working on efficiency before renewable just because it will take less time.

Board Member Carlson said he feels that urban ecology is more discreet and actionable given the experience on the board. He said that it should continue to be a focal point of the board. Board Member Henderson defined urban ecology as trees, wildlife, water, soil, etc. that are in town. Some examples he listed were equity of shade in town, ordinances that could affect pollinators and tree protection. Board Member Ray said there seems to be two tracts of the urban ecology foal group, and that's tree canopy preservation and water management issues.

There was a consensus that during the first meeting of the month the board will spend a large amount of time meeting in the breakout groups, and during the second meeting of the month, just a short amount of time.

Board Member Carlson asked what the next course of action is on the ES Manager. Mr. Hites told the board to move forward with crafting the job description, then he can present it to the Council. He requested that they give him the job description sooner rather than later. The Board said the ES Manager should be able to put together a sustainability strategic plan.

E. BREAKOUT GROUPS:

- A) Continue identification and prioritization of goals and strategies**
- B) Identify baseline data needs**
- C) Decision to begin work on one or more goals**

The ESB broke out into their three focal groups: Energy, Electric Transportation, and Urban Ecology.

F. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business to discuss.

G. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Board Member Carlson, seconded by Board Member Wall, to adjourn the meeting at 6:41pm. The motion passed unanimously.

The next regular scheduled meeting of the Environmental Sustainability Board will be held on Thursday, March 21st at 4:30pm, located at 16 S. Main Street.

ATTEST:

William Hite, Board Chair

Candace Poolton, Town Clerk