

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL (ESC)

Thursday, March 21, 2019, GMHS Library, 7:30 – 9:05 p.m.

DRAFT MINUTES

1. **Call to Order: Members:** Cory Firestone Weiss (Chair), Jon Ward, Andy Crawford, Andy Young, Joy Page, Niharika Singhvi (student rep), Evelyn Duross (student rep). **City Staff Liaison:** Kate Reich (City Arborist). **City Council Liaison:** Dan Sze. **Public:** Andrew Sakallaris, Stacey Evers, Thomas Cash.
2. **Public comments:** Included in Section 4 (WFC SEE) discussion
3. **January 2019 ESC Meeting Minutes:** Approval postponed until April meeting.
4. **West Falls Church Development SEE Comments:** Attendees discussed their thoughts on the Special Exception Entitlements, which were recently referred to Boards & Commissions for comments. At a high-level, the ESC recognized its need to keep referring back to the RFDP to ensure no requirements go unmet as the WFC project evolves, and features must be included in either the SEEs or the Comprehensive Agreement. Also, given the net-zero-ready school being built adjacent, the ESC expressed an interest in the City and developer branding the development as a green neighborhood, emphasizing leaving a legacy of sustainability.

At a detailed level, the ESC identified three areas of focus for its comments to City Council:

- **Greenspace.** The plan has no greenspace except street trees and the common lawn. The voting members recommend encouraging more height (up to the allowed 15 stories) and pulling back some or all of the floors to allow more greenspace and fuller tree canopies. Green infrastructure is also missing from the Voluntary Concessions. Attendees suggested adding more plants vice grass in the commons to obtain better “ecosystem services” and adding green (living) walls on at least the garage.
- **Stormwater Management (SWM):** Despite the RFDP requiring certain SWM benchmarks, the SEEs are silent on these. The ESC agreed that SWM language from the RFDP needs to be embedded in the Comprehensive Agreement, unless City staff explains that it was removed for a reason.
- **LEED:** The attendees noted that LEED *certification*, not merely design, is important. The question arose whether the ESC, City Council or Planning Commission could influence which LEED points are pursued. Cory listed three LEED ND credits she would prioritize: addressing heat island effects; stormwater capture; and tree-lined streets.
- **ACTION ITEM 1:** [Kate Reich] Before the ESC recommends pursuing LEED ND points for trees, research the LEED ND tree requirements to make sure they are not less stringent than what the developer is currently promising.

- **ACTION ITEM 2:** [Cory Weis] Draft a letter to City Council containing the ESC's comments and recommendations.
 - **ACTION ITEM 3:** [All ESC Members] Make comments to City Council (preferably in person at a regular City Council meeting on 4/8 or 4/22) to champion the business case for green infrastructure and more trees in the WFC Project Voluntary Concessions or Comprehensive Agreement.
5. **2019 ESC Priorities:** Members felt that the two highest priorities would be (a) ensuring that the WFC Project meets the RFDP requirements while advising City Council on sustainability features and metrics, and (b) assisting the City in the completion of Chapter 5 (the environmental chapter) of the Comprehensive Plan currently under revision.
6. **ESC Membership Items:** Cory moved to nominate Andy Young for Vice Chair and was seconded by Joy Page. Andy was then elected unanimously. Cory announced that there were two openings on the ESC and would soon be a third.
7. **Subcommittee Reports:**
- **Habitat Restoration Group (HRG):** The ESC will require a new liaison to the HRG since Chris McCloud plans to leave that position.
 - **Energy Transition Subcommittee:** None.
8. **Next Meeting**
- Thursday, April 25, 2019. Thomas Jefferson Elementary School library, 7:30 p.m.

Abbreviations / Terminology:

- **LEED ND:** Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – Neighborhood Design
- **RFDP:** Request for Detailed Proposal, issued by City in June 2018
- **SEE:** special exception entitlement