

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL (ESC)

Joint Meeting with ESC Energy Transition Subcommittee (ETS)

Thursday, March 18, 2021, Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

APPROVED MINUTES

1. **Attendees: ESC Members:** Andy Young (Chair), Mike Trauberman, Jon Ward, Andy Sakallaris, Sarah Bayldon, Jennifer Tabola, Andy Crawford, Joseph Schiarizzi **Student Reps:** Charlie Adams, **Council Member** Debbie Hiscott **Planning Commission:** Cory Firestone Weiss, Tim Stevens **City Staff:** Charles Prince (Acting ESC Staff Liaison), **Energy Transition Subcommittee:** Jon Ward (Chair) Erica Myers , **Habitat Restoration Task Group:** Amy Crumpton **Public:** Emily O’Keefe, Amy Golden
2. This meeting was held via electronic communications using ‘Microsoft Teams.’ This meeting was held pursuant to and in compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, Section 2.2-3708.2 and state and local legislation adopted to allow for continued government operation during the COVID-19 declared emergency.
3. **Public Comments:** None
4. **Environmental Policy in Arlington:** Guest Speaker John Bloom, 2020 Chair of the Arlington County Environmental and Energy Commission, past Chair of the Arlington Energy Committee, and Chair of the Sierra Club’s Potomac River Group. Mr. Bloom began his presentation with an overview of the Arlington County government structure and where the Department of Environmental Services fell within that structure. He then outlined some of the challenges that Arlington faces when dealing with climate change and environmental issues.

Challenges include: 1) time it takes to gain approval for such things as EV charging stations and solar panels, 2) level of priorities for environmental issues, and 3) implementation of environmental challenges for large new construction projects within the county. Arlington is however, making progress. Arlington has passed an Energy Plan in 2019 which provides that it become carbon neutral by 2050 and depend on 100% renewable energy by 2035. It also has a strong new building incentive program to include that each new building project be carbon neutral “ready”. Mr. Bloom suggests that three things are necessary to continue and to maintain progress. These include: 1) a whole of government approach, 2) leadership from the top and 3) an environmental “champion” on the county Board.. Mr. Bloom then led a discussion and took questions from attendees. Topics discussed included Arlington areas of success, developer incentives, how the city can lead by example, area climate change, policy improvements and local county collaboration on environmental issues.

5. **2021 Virginia Legislative Session** - Discussion tabled for future meetings
6. **West Falls Church Economic Development Project Status-**

Charles Prince gave a brief presentation on the latest developments on the West Falls Church Project. Specifically, VDOT has approved the realignment of the Chestnut St intersection and a traffic light and additional trees will also be installed.

Cory Weiss stated that the Planning Commission reviewed the amended special exception site plan and voluntary concessions at a work session on March 17th and there will be a City Council work session on April 19 and a public hearing on May 10th. She also noted that all buildings are expected to achieve LEED Gold status with the exception of the hotel, which will be LEED silver.

Council Member Hiscott expressed her appreciation for the ESC's work and expressed that she will continue to seek and be an advocate for the ESC's ideas and comments.

7. Solarize 2021 Campaign

Jon Ward stated that the Local Energy Alliance has released its RFP and selection should be made and a contract, with contract pricing, will be awarded by April 1 and go live for the public and businesses by April 12. The award will contain three technology components. Photovoltaics, Level 2 chargers and battery assistance. Jon asked attendees if they knew of any local businesses, which could be approached, especially for battery backup systems. Jon also talked about the possibility of a larger regional solar co-op, to increase purchasing power to local jurisdictions, as something, which may be in the future.

8. Subcommittee Reports and Other Discussions

Andy Young asked ESC members to review and provide comments to the DRAFT ESC Annual Report, which is due to City Council on April 12, 2021. He asked for suggestions as to what the ESC wants to work on in 2021, to set up priorities and what the ESC would encourage the City Council to pursue in the coming year.

Amy Crumpton, Vice Chair, Urban Forestry Commission, shared that the ESC and Urban Forestry have many common goals and objectives. She encouraged cooperation and coordination between our two groups to achieve our common interests.

Cory Weiss talked about the need to study climate change and about the fact that Falls Church has not yet conducted a Climate Risk Assessment. She suggested that the ESC and Urban Forestry could sharpen their focus and begin to advocate for the need for this assessment.

9. Review and Approval of ESC and ETS January and February minutes and ETS March minutes

10. Review and Approval of January and February 2021 minutes and March ETS

11. Adjourn 9:30 pm