



Town of Elon

Sustainability Committee

Special-Called Meeting Agenda

May 29, 2024
8:30 AM In Person
Elon Town Hall, Town Council Chambers
104. S. Williamson Ave., Elon, NC

Agenda Items

A. Call to Order & Welcome

B. Minutes

1. Review and approval of the April 24, 2024, meeting minutes.

C. Public Comment

D. Old Business

1. Town Council Presentation
 - a. Review information to be shared with Council members:
 - Carbon neutrality and importance to the town
 - The energy audit process, data and framework
 2. Update from planning staff on energy audit options

E. New Business

1. Discuss date for touring fire departments

F. Other items and updates from Planning Director

G. Adjournment

Elon Sustainability Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes- April 24th , 2024, at Elon Town Hall at 8:30 am

Present: Lori Oakley, Planning Director, Isabell Cooper, Planner, David Murphy, Assistant Public Works Director, Adam Shaw, Dennis Pagano, Kelly Harer, Lamont Tyson, committee members, Randy Orwig, Town Council Member. No members of the public were in attendance.

Item A: Call to Order

Pagano called the meeting to order at 8:30.

Pagano stated that committee member Chloe Stuart resigned last night.

Pagano then stated that Cooper compiled some data and would like to discuss the data.

Item B: Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Shaw motioned to elect Pagano to chair, Harer seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0, Harer nominated Tyson for Vice chair, Shaw seconded the motion. It passed 3-0.

Harer motioned to approve the minutes from January 31st, 2024, and February 28th, 2024, Tyson seconded motion to approve the minutes. The motion passed 3-0.

Item C: Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Item D: Old Business

Shaw stated that he wanted to know how the committee will present the data to the town council. Orwig added that the Town of Elon has natural gas usage and asked if the committee wanted to add natural gas to the energy audit and described how it will give a larger picture of the Town's energy usage.

Orwig then stated that Duke Power owns Piedmont Natural Gas, and that the committee has the capabilities to add it to the audit. Oakley added that Cooper can contact Kathy Barham, the town's finance director, to get the information. Shaw added that since the goal is carbon neutrality, it would be essential to add to the energy audit and compare the amounts of energy to one another.

Shaw then stated that it may be necessary to look for other energy sources in the future. He added that it would be helpful to compare the electric usage, natural gas, and gas usage in terms of energy. Orwig then added that each department is different in terms of how much gas they use and that the audit will help show that difference. Murphy added that each

department must budget the amount of gas that they use and that it will be easy to find the amount of money that was spent, but harder to determine exactly how much gas was used due to the volatile nature of the prices.

Harer added that Elon University is trying to figure out what they are going to do to reduce the amount of natural gas they are using. She then added that there has been more of a focus on electricity, but now they are looking to make the shift to look at the amount of natural gas they are using.

Shaw added that his company eliminated natural gas as a heating source, which has helped reduce costs.

Orwig then stated that some people may see natural gas as the bridge between fossil fuels such as oil, and that we would have to look at alternative options to help the town save money and reduce impact. Pagano stated that solar might be an option. Orwig stated that solar may be debated in the town council meeting, and Harer added that solar power cannot be transmitted over public roads due to North Carolina laws regarding solar energy.

Murphy added that Duke Energy sent out mail stating that they are increasing their electric rates.

Shaw stated that natural gas usage and gas usage will be helpful in the energy audit in cost and amount used. Murphy added that some extra work may need to be done to calculate the usage of both energy usages. Shaw added that 73% of the electric usage is coming from Public Works and the Fire Department.

Murphy then stated that from 2022 only 70% of the data shows how the Travis Creek pump upped the usage, and that 2023 is the first full year of using the Travis Creek pump. He added that there is a large discrepancy between the amount of electricity that the Fire Department uses and Public Works. Orwig pointed out that it may be helpful to investigate how the Fire department uses their electricity. Pagano added that it may be helpful to do a more detailed audit of the Fire Department's electric usage. Orwig stated it may be an option to make the case for solar energy for the Fire Department. Shaw added that battery backup solar could be helpful. Harer added that Elon University is looking into becoming an electric company to sell power down the line in the future.

Pagano asked if Cooper had anything to add, Cooper added that the Fire Chief mentioned a tour of the Fire Department. She added that it would be helpful to see what practices are taking place and have someone do an efficiency audit to see if there are any ways to improve the energy efficiency of the fire department. Murphy added that the public works building is an old, converted barn and could use some upgrades. Shaw added that it would be helpful

to see what small cost-effective changes could take place to reduce electric usage. Murphy added that someone from Duke Energy can come in and make some suggestions.

Orwig stated that there are several sustainability practice options that the town needs to investigate and that something that the town does that is sustainable is operating the Farmers Market. Orwig pointed out that those who go to the market are locals who want good healthy food. Shaw added that walkways and bike ways also help promote healthy lifestyles.

Orwig also stated that the soil and soil quality impact the climate and surrounding environment. He added that there are sustainable practices that could be added, and the town should be made aware of those practices. He also pointed out that adding incentives to such practices would help promote those practices.

Pagano then said Twin Lakes is working to include more sustainable practices. An example is that they are changing their landscaping to match the natural environment by including more native plants. Harer then added that Elon University is working on promoting native plant farming by creating their own native plant farm which will be coming soon.

Orwig then added that some people may not like sustainable practices. For example, some people do not like the appearance of solar panels. He added that the benefits of solar in terms of sustainability and savings may have to be broken down to them.

Oakley then added that there may not be enough time to gather and present the information to the Town Council in May. She also added that Cooper might not have enough time to compile the data for natural gas and gas usage in time due to the amount of development projects coming into the Planning Department. Orwig then pointed out that it may be helpful to present the information in August after the budget for the upcoming fiscal year is approved.

Pagano asked if Cooper could add the data for natural gas and gas usage and if there was enough time to compile it for next month's meeting. Oakley pointed out that with the development projects coming in it will be hard to tell how much can get done over the next month.

Oakley stated that she is looking for a company other than Piedmont Triad COG that could do a more detailed energy audit since she could not get a definitive answer from Piedmont Triad Regional Council. Harer added that there are some funding options that could be investigated and grants to help with the cost of a more detailed energy audit but that there are deadlines for those grants coming up.

Pagano added that Duke Energy has an energy advisor who can advise developers on energy efficiency and provide incentives for using such methods. Oakley stated that she can give that information out to developers in the future since most development projects are already contracted and under construction.

Orwig asked the committee about the presentation, specifically what kind of timeline is the committee looking at and what information they would like to present. Pagano then added that they want the energy audit in the presentation and that in May they will discuss the contents of the presentation further. Orwig pointed out that the presentation will be informational and will give recommendations to the Town Council. Pagano asked if Cooper could create an outline based on the information she gathered, and Cooper responded that she can.

Oakley then added that the town is still looking for a trailer for the Styrofoam project. Orwig added that the church is willing to help provide a location, but that a trailer is four to five thousand dollars and that with inflation the price of trailers keeps increasing.

Pagano stated that he heard that the new Mediterranean Deli on N. Williamson is looking at composting as well as other restaurants in the downtown area. Harer added that the university is composting with Compost Now that is coming into town to pick it up currently.

Item E: New Business

There was no new business discussed.

Item F: Other Items and Updates from Planning Director

For the interest of time there were no updates from Oakley

Item G: Adjournment

Orwig asked if the next meeting could be pushed out to the 29th since Shaw and Pagano will be out of town for two weeks. Everyone agreed for the next meeting to be on May 29th, 2024.

Pagano thanked everyone for coming out today and thanked Cooper for doing the energy audit and thanked Stuart for serving on the committee.

Shaw motioned to adjourn, and Stuart seconded, the motion to adjourn passed 4-0.

The committee adjourned at 9:30 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chair Dennis Pagano

Date

Recording Secretary, Isabell Cooper
Town of Elon Planning Department, Planner

Date

DRAFT