

Elon Sustainability Committee Meeting

Meeting Minutes – Sept 27th, 2023, at Elon Town Hall at 8:30 am

Present: Lori Oakley, Planning Director, Jenna Peterson, Planner, David Murphy, Asst. Public Works Director, Dennis Pagano, Adam Shaw, Chloe Stuart, and Lamont Tyson, committee members. No members of the public were in attendance.

Item A- Chair Pagano called the meeting to order at 8:30am.

Item B- Minutes

The minutes from the August 23, 2023, meeting were approved (4-0).

Item C- Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Item D- Old Business

Item D-i- Adopting the Framework

The committee discussed promoting awareness for the committee, the goals of the committee, and cost benefits to more energy efficient alternatives.

Pagano proposed adopting the framework. Staff will add language for 4.c., specifying that building materials are energy efficient, locally sourced, sustainable, etc. Oakley asked about 4.b. water savings. Pagano stated this includes ideas like reducing water consumption and other options, such as hot water recirculation.

Oakley asked about 4.e. equipment material purchasing, specifically if this would be public works. Murphy mentioned that it could include more fuel-efficient vehicles, like hybrids or electric vehicles. Shaw stated there has been discussion about chemical usage for pesticides, and that pesticides might fit here. Oakley suggested reducing chemicals in the environment be included under 4.e or on its own as 4.f. Lamont suggested including it under education. Pagano asked if there are any requirements for what businesses can use inside their buildings. Oakley stated the town is not able to regulate this. Shaw suggested this could be an area where the town sets the standard as an example, behavior, or model for the community to follow.

Oakley asked for more information about 2.a. project management. Pagano said we need to create a sequence of activities or benchmarks or timelines, etc. and that can be done with project management. Staff will add language to specify develop project management for activities and goals that the committee identifies.

Shaw motioned to adopt the framework. Lamont seconded the motion. The framework was adopted on September 27th, 2023. (4-0).

Item D-ii- Discuss energy audit

The next item for discussion was the energy audit. The committee agreed to pursue having an energy audit conducted. Pagano asked what the first steps would be. Shaw asked what the scope of the audit would be. Tyson asked which groups would be included, the town, residents and/or businesses?

Pagano referenced Elon University as an example. They did an energy audit for every building on campus. The University's audit is continuous. Pagano asked the committee for their thoughts on whether we would want a one-time audit or a continuous audit. Shaw stated that the cost is something to consider. Typically, the more granular something is, the more cost there is. While the more granular is more helpful to see what improvements have the biggest impact, it might not be feasible based on the cost of the audit.

Stuart mentioned defining the scope of the project can help identify specific grants that we are able to pursue.

The committee agreed that the first two steps are to define the scope of the audit, then find funding.

Shaw asked, does the energy audit also assess the capability of the product, like it has a certain rating. Pagano added another example for capability could be the star efficiency. Tyson mentioned that Duke sends energy audits to people. Duke's audit is based on the size of the home and generates an estimated number of kilowatts that should be used versus what is being used. If residents are receiving Duke's audits, maybe they'd be willing to share them as part of the education, engaging goal of the committee.

Shaw stated the scope of the audit should be limited to the government. It should start with the Town conducting an audit. Murphy added that if the town hires someone to do an energy audit, then it can be used to engage the community and influence more sustainable habits. The committee agreed to the scope being the Town.

Murphy suggested one option for the Town to be a model is to explore the possibility of having solar on the Town buildings. Shaw added that conducting the audit helps assess the town's performance and where they stand being carbon neutral. It gives a baseline to work towards carbon neutrality and provides information to use as education to engage the community to make sustainable choices.

Pagano reconfirmed that first we decide the scope, then we find funding. Pagano asked if someone could find or identify grants and apply for them. Oakley stated that we could present a proposal to the Town Council and ask them to fund an energy audit. There is also an option to request for it in next year's budget, depending on the timeframe for the energy audit, whether it's this fiscal year or next fiscal year. Pagano stated the sooner the energy audit can be conducted, the better. We should identify who can do it, how much it costs, and how the results of the audit will be used.

Item E- New Business

Item E-i- Discuss usefulness of education and economics to gain support for various activities

The committee discussed promoting cost savings to advertise or encourage residents, developers, and business owners to make more energy efficient or sustainable choices.

Suggestions included incentives to developers when they pull permits or utilizing social media for education. Lamont suggested a video of a resident sharing their experience and how they saved money. Oakley mentioned the possibility for a workshop open to the town to talk about solar energy and other energy efficient alternatives or including something in the town's newsletter with residents sharing their experience from their energy efficient changes. Pagano stated that incorporating an education piece might help us secure funding. It is also important to engage with the community and find out what the community would like to know.

Stuart said one of the best ways to approach education is through faith groups, like church groups or women's groups. These groups are typically tied to moral and economic values. Lamont said business owners are another group that could be targeted since they have higher influence in the community. Business owners can take ownership to make their businesses more sustainable. Pagano mentioned a possible challenge when engaging the community is that it may be difficult to define sustainable.

Pagano asked if we have access to LINK rider information. Oakley stated we get that information when we receive invoices from LINK.

Shaw asked about our limitations within the town. He suggested we focus on setting goals and addressing limitations for the next meeting.

Item E-ii- Elon University faculty/staff on committee

Stuart will ask professors. Oakley will follow up with Kelly.

Item E-iii- Information from Elon University students who did internship at Twin Lakes

Pagano asked Stuart if she knew what the students were doing and if their work was accessible to the public. Stuart stated the students there were part of senior seminar. She believes its what Twin Lakes wants them to focus on. She will ask students and faculty for more information.

Item F- Other items and updates from Planning Director

Oakley previously mentioned requesting a position in next year's budget. Next month's agenda will include a sustainability coordinator/grant manager position. The position will take over communication with recycling and grants.

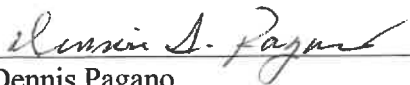
Oakley can also talk with Randy to see if the committee will need to present their ideas to Town Council.

Pagano inquired about recycling Styrofoam. Oakley stated she would discuss this with the Town Manager and have an update at the next meeting.


Shaw made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Lamont seconded the motion.

Pagano adjourned the meeting at 9:32am.

Respectfully Submitted,


Chair Dennis Pagano

4/24/2024
Date


Interim Recording Secretary, Lori Oakley, on behalf of
Recording Secretary, Jenna Peterson

4-24-24
Date

