

Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) Minutes

May 18, 2023

Present: Margerat Johnson (Chairperson), Carolina Candelaria, Lee Maxwell, Chris Riegert, Allen Dearry

Absent: Maureen Burns, David Sonnenfeld, Pam Johnson

Staff: Brady Golden

Guests: Sue Davidson, Elise Snavely, Derek Williams, Sherri Hopkins

Meeting called to order at 0830hrs.

- **Motion to Accept Meeting Agenda-** 1. Chris Riegert 2. Lee Maxwell
Approved Unanimously
- **Motion to Accept April 2023 Minutes-** 1. Lee Maxwell 2. Chris Riegert
Approved Unanimously

Announcements

- David Merkle resigned. He would like to continue to manage the Smart Yards initiative.
- Town Council (TC) will review EAC applications in June 2023. There are five (5) vacancies.
- Tree City USA Banner/seal in unknown location.

Staff Report

- **Meeting with Mr. Golden:** He had a meeting with Sue Davidson and Carolina Candelaria -EAC- to discuss the forestry assessment project, Carton Council grant, Tree City signage, and special project funds.
 - **Carton Council grant:** Mr. Hatten said recycling invoices should be turned in to Debbie Morrison; Brady has code; group as a whole should decide how to use funds.
 - **Tree City USA signage at old bridge:** The area by the old bridge is state owned and needs the state's approval to install new sign. Mr. Golden stated he will also ask for approval of signage at Middleton bridge.
 - **Special projects:** Town Council has \$3-4K allocated for special projects. EAC could submit a project.
- **Straw Initiative Question:** Mr. Golden was asked by Lee Maxwell, the Plastic Straw initiative project lead, the process to access the \$550 that Town Council approved for straw initiative. Mr. Golden told him to bring invoices to Deb Morrison. Mr. Maxwell was frustrated that we don't have a defined process for allocating funding to the committees. Mr. Golden stated that he just found out about the above invoice submittal process.
- **Current Stormwater Funding:** Mr. Golden stated that the FY23 stormwater funding is all spent. He stated that Rick Patterson, Oak Island Stormwater Chief has ideas of his own for FY24 funding but did not elaborate. Ms. Margaret

Johnson, EAC Chairperson, restated EAC ***needs its own specific funding charge code.***

- **EAC Mission.** Mr. Golden reminded everyone of the EAC mission:
 - Educating residents, including the organization of events such as marsh pick-ups and construction of rain gardens,
 - Continuing to meet Tree City USA reporting requirements,
 - Assisting staff in meeting the requirements of the stormwater permit,
 - Monitoring existing conditions, and
 - Identifying areas of environmental concern and proposing remediation for those areas.

Old Business

- **EAC Webpage-** The Living Shoreline Initiative (Elise Snavely) and the Carton Council video (Sue Davidson) are being added to the EAC website (Allen Dearry/David Sonnenfeld)
- **EAC Budget Working Group (EBWG)-** Mr. Dearry, the EBWG chair, thanked the EBWG members: Carolina, Lee, David S; and volunteers: Elise, Sue. The EBWG met twice to discuss all submitted EAC budget requests, to prioritize them, and to reduce proposed costs (e.g., printing, educational materials, tables). He presented the proposed EAC budget spreadsheet with the recommended FY23-24 EAC budget total of \$3100. EBWG also discussed how to improve budget process, how to enhance efficiency and coordination across projects. The EBWG proposed strongly the need for accounting of EAC stormwater funds. EAC members requested that Mr. Golden and Mr. Patterson bring their FY24 budget details impacting the EAC mission (e.g., Stormwater, SMARTYARD, Recycling, Plastic Initiative, Living Shoreline, Tree City, Native Plants, environmentally sensitive area monitoring and protection) to the next meeting for review. Margaret Johnson suggested that EAC go to Town Council (TC) to ask for a line item in budget and code to submit invoices.

Motion: There was a Motion made to EAC go to Town Council to ask for line item in budget. The motion was made by Chris Riegert and seconded by Lee Maxwell. Approved- Unanimously. Margaret Johnson, EAC Chairperson, will get with Brady Golden to move forward on the approved motion. (Allen Dearry)

- **Smart Yards-** No report. Margaret Johnson, EAC Chairperson, will check with Town Clerk to determine if there are any rules barring David M. from continuing to lead the Smart Yard initiative. (David Merkle)
- **Earth Day/Arbor Day-** Arbor Day successful. Margaret Johnson, EAC Chairperson, indicated that Rick Patterson, Oak Island Stormwater Chief, will not approve tree planting in spring. (Carolina Candelaria)
- **Tree City USA-** No report. (Carolina Candelaria)
- **Living Shoreline-** Coastal Federation will bring more bags in June-July 2023. They want to do press a release and post to their website. They are planning September 14, 2023 event to pick up trash, to have an adoption celebration, and to

celebrate national estuaries week. Lunch will be included. It will be held from 12 to 3pm. Need more volunteers at clean up events.

Elise Snavely went to oyster summit in Raleigh that Coastal Federation hosted. Lockwood Folly River is designated as a focus site for remediation. Coastal Federation has \$15M NOAA grant. Oak Island can make a proposal to help with stormwater control/prevention. Elise will work with Brady Golden to contact Rick Patterson (Stormwater Chief) and Scott Thornail (Public Works Director) to get potential ideas that could be submitted for Coastal Federation-NOAA support. (Elise Snavely)

- **Straw Initiative-** Present objective of the plastic straw initiative lead is to access funding- \$550- approved by the Oak Island Town Council to start procuring materials for project initiation with Oak Island food businesses. (Lee Maxwell)
- **Recycling-** No report (Maureen Burns)
- **Tree Zoning Overlay-** Margaret Johnson, EAC Chairperson, stated this will be discussed at Oak Island Planning Board (PB) meeting today. Mayor Liz White wants PB and EAC to work together. Lee Maxwell suggested a joint working group between PB and EAC would provide value added input and impact to this topic.

New Business

- **Comprehensive Tree Preservation Plan-** A \$4000 tree canopy survey was already approved by Town Council (TC). A comprehensive land use plan was completed in 2016. TC wants to update the 2016 plan and approved \$180,000. An RFP was released to vendors. Carolina presented a concept for a green development and forestry management plan.

Motion: *There was a Motion* that EAC form a ~~xxx~~ Working Group to consider a “tree canopy survey and green growth development plan.” The motion was made by Allen Dearry and seconded by Carolina Candelaria. Approved- Unanimously.

Chris Riegert, Lee Maxwell, Allen Dearry and Carolina Candelaria volunteered for ~~xxx~~ Working Group. The ~~xxx~~ WG will discuss Carolina’s PowerPoint and Word documents and consider feasibility of the plan and possibility of forwarding the concept to Oak Island Planning Board and Town Council. (Carolina Candelaria)

Action Items

- *Margaret Johnson, EAC Chairperson to talk with Brady Golden, Town Planner about getting EAC budget in front of Oak Island Town Council.*
- *Mr. Golden and Mr. Patterson should bring FY24 budget details impacting the EAC mission to the next EAC meeting.*

- *Allen Dearry and David Sonnenfeld to add Living Shoreline and Carton Council video to EAC website.*
- *Elise Snavely, Living Shoreline Lead, to discuss potential stormwater control/prevention ideas with town staff.*
- *Brady Golden (Staff) to inform Lee Maxwell (EAC) how to access funds for Plastic Straw Initiative.*
- *Allen Dearry will secure permission to form a xxx WG to consider “tree canopy survey and green growth development plan.” Chris Riegert, Lee Maxwell and Carolina Candelaria have volunteered for the working group.*

Meeting was Adjourned at 10:12am

Minutes submitted by: Allen Dearry