

# Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) Minutes

## June 15, 2023

**Present:** Margerat Johnson (Chairperson), Carolina Candelaria, Lee Maxwell, Chris Riegert, Allen Dearry, David Sonnenfeld, Maureen Burns

**Absent:**

**Staff:** Brady Golden

**Guests:** Sue Davidson, Elise Snavelly

### Meeting called to order at 0830hrs.

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

### Announcements

- Town Council (TC) will review EAC applications on June 20 2023. There are five (5) vacancies and four (4) applicants.

### Staff Report

- Mr. Golden reviewed two(2) Items with the EAC:
  - **Urban Tree Canopy Assessment** by the North Carolina Urban Forest Council (NCUFC)- The goals of the assessment includes the understanding of the amount and distribution of the Oak Island tree canopy as a percentage of land area; locating specific gains and losses in tree canopy on Oak Island; quantifying ecosystem benefits; identifying priority locations for preservation and expansion; and assisting in understanding Oak Island's urban resources and progress toward tree canopy management goals (Handout 1). He stated that the town has been awarded a grant by NC Forest Service (NCFS) to conduct the tree canopy assessment and that it will be conducted by PlaniT Geo. Project kick-off is June 6, 2023 and deliverable are due in mid-September 2023. The results will be used to inform a new UDO Chapter 32. The NCFS grant specifics regarding usage of funds is not known. Town did not retain copy of the grant application. ***Mr. Golden will try to get a copy of the application for EAC review.*** There is EAC concern that the town does not at this time have the expertise or the tools to best exploit the assessments resulting data.
  - **Oak Island Stormwater Report** (Rick Patterson, Storm Water Chief) (Handout 2)- Two (2) items:
    - Mr. Patterson stated in his report that he is implementing a stormwater educational series of workshops from Nov23 to Feb24 for landowners, builders and developers. He requested EAC assistance to organize and participate in the workshop series. Sue

Davidson will work with the 801 Oak Island Center and ensure that the event is publicized on the EAC webpage and Oak Island website.

- He stated that the town is continuing to fund the planting of Live Oaks along Oak Island Drive (spaced to mature).
- He is planning to provide field training to the EAC in Aug23 on **What to look for in a Smart Yard**. The training should last a hour and a half. EAC asked that he work with David Merkle (EAC emeritus).

## Old Business

- **EAC Budget Working Group (EBWG)-** At the May23 meeting Mr. Dearth, 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. Mr. Golden and Margaret Johnson (EAC Chairperson) stated that it is to late this fiscal year (FY) enter a budget request into the town's budget process. EAC will have to rely on available stormwater funding and/or requested grant funding in FY 23-24. (Allen Dearth)

Because there are several budget questions regarding the town's budget process/ and procedures, the EAC is mapping and describing those processes and procedures so we can fully and successfully engage in FY 24-25. David Sonnenfeld presented his initial attempt at describing the town's budget processes (Handout 3) and has requested from **Mr. Golden answers to his posed questions and possibly a meeting with the town's budget expert.**

Need to confirm that this motion is or will be completed:

**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 Dearth)

- **Skip the Plastic Straw Initiative- Ready to implement --**The advertising and the implementing materials -including posters- are back from the printers and are ready to distribute. They were very professionally done. Lee is looking for volunteers- including from the EAC- to assist in implementing this initiative by engaging with places of business. He has a master list of businesses that potentially could implement skip the plastic straws. Reference the EAC webpage for more information. This would make a great "The Current" article. (Lee Maxwell)

**EAC Webpage-** David presented to the EAC members that the next phase of the EAC webpage development is to add an educational section, and he solicited ideas for strategies and themes to actually start this initiative. It was suggested that this requested be repeated next month after new members are selected to serve on the EAC by Town Council and that a working group (WG) be formed then. (Allen Dearry/David Sonnenfeld)

**Motion:** *There was a Motion made to the EAC to form an EAC Educational Working Group to determine the next steps in EAC webpage development.* The motion was made by Allen Dearry and seconded by Lee Maxwell. Approved-Unanimously.

- **Smart Yards-** Read the *June 2023 edition* of the town's "*The Current*". Mr. Grady stated that David Merkle – the EAC technical expert- who is no longer a member of the EAC cannot officially represent Smart Yards. Solution- if amenable with Mr. Merkle, an active member of the EAC will consult with him as a volunteer, and represent Smart Yard officially with the town. (David Sonnenfeld)
- **Living Shoreline-** Coastal Federation will bring more bags to the June-July 2023 reef cleaning event. They want to do press a release and post to their website. Coastal Federation is planning a 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. There was a discussion regarding engaging with UNCW for intern assistance with respect to oyster reef development and maintenance. (Elise Snavelly)
- **Recycling-** This was Maureen Burns last meeting as an official member of the EAC. She has led the recycle initiatives with the assistance of Sue Davidson for several years. The EAC will miss her hard work and counsel on this and several other EAC initiatives. She reminded the EAC to stay on top of the current town recycling contracts and grants that are available for other recycling projects. (Sue Davidson, Maureen Burns emeritus)
- **Sustainable Economic Development (SED) Working Group (WG)-** Members of the SED WG are Allen Dearry (Chair), Chris Riegert, Carolina Candelaria and Lee Maxwell. The SED's goals are to promote the advantages of planned green growth and recommend avenues for educating the public on green growth. SED WG recommends (Handout 4):
  - The town holds a three (3) hour workshop on a weekday afternoon in October on the topic of Sustainable Economic Development in order to help inform elected officials , departmental staffs, and relevant board/ committee members anout approaches to and benefits of SED; and

- The town planner contact NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) to initiate the workshop. NCWRC helps to organize and lead training workshops. (<https://newwildlife.org/Conserving/Programs/Green-Growth=Toolbox>)

**Motion:** *There was a Motion that EAC meet with the Town of Oak Island new Economic Development staff lead, , Hallie Willis, to discuss near-term opportunities EAC and her can work together.* The motion was made by Allen Dearry and seconded by Chris Riegert. Approved- Unanimously.

Contact the SED WG chair for more details. (Allen Dearry)

## **New Business**

The next EAC meetings will be Thursday July 20th and August 25<sup>th</sup>. Same time.

## **Action Items**

- *Margaret Johnson, EAC Chairperson to talk with Brady Golden, Town Planner about securing a budget line item in next year's FY24/25 budget.*
- *Margaret Johnson, EAC Chairperson will setup meeting with the Town of Oak Island new Economic Development staff lead, , Hallie Willis, to discuss near-term opportunities EAC and her can work together. Completed.*
- **Mr. Golden will secure a copy of the NCFS grant application and/or submitted justification used to approve the grant.**
- **Mr. Golden will secure answers to questions -and/or direct meeting to discuss answers- regarding the town's budget processes sent to him after the last EAC meeting on June 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Meeting was Adjourned at 10:00 am**

*Minutes submitted by: David Sonnenfeld\_*