

Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) Minutes

October 05, 2023

Present: Margerat Johnson (Chairperson), Chris Riegert, Allen Dearry, Lee Maxwell, David Sonnenfeld, Sue Davidson, Elise Snavely, Vacant, Vacant

Absent: None

Staff: Brady Golden, Rick Patterson

Guests: None

Meeting called to order at 0830hrs.

- **Motion to Accept Meeting Agenda-** 1. Sue Davidson 2. Lee Maxwell
Approved Unanimously
- **Motion to Accept September 2023 Minutes-** 1. Lee Maxwell 2. Sue Davidson
Approved Unanimously

Announcements

EAC Resignation- Chris Riegert resigned from the EAC effective October 06, 2023. His term would have ended in June 2024. Chris cited the desire to spend his volunteering time on other groups and overall dissatisfaction with town resistance to our efforts. He has been an invaluable asset with his time, logical thinking, measured approach, organization, and delightful personality. Chris will be sorely missed.

Staff Report

- Mr. Brady Golden did not have anything to report to EAC. He was asked about:
 - **Advertising EAC Vacancies-** He was asked to continue helping to advertising the open EAC vacancies. A number of options were discussed.
 - **Utilizing the Recreation Center's** – He was asked again about the possibility of advertising that Oak Island residents not bag recycling. He said he will ask Heather O'Brien, Recreation Director.
 - **Status of EAC Governance Document Review-** He was given last month a revised copy of the EAC Governance document based on feedback from the Lisa States, Town Clerk. EAC will move to approve the document at the November 2023 EAC meeting and requested he have feedback well before that meeting. A follow-up email will be sent to Brady reminding him of the request.
- Mr. Rick Patterson, Stormwater Chief, had a few items to discuss:
 - **Stormwater Educational Meeting for Contractors-** Rick has also requested that the EAC assist in planning and hosting an education dinner for local contractors to inform them on stormwater best practices. An EAC group will form to conduct this initiative. *He also stated we will use the Recreation Center versus the 801-facility due to cost. Rick has supplied the EAC group will the November dates.*

- **State Storm Water Review-** The review covered the last five (5) years and one deficiency that the EAC can assist in improving and that was public outreach regarding stormwater issues. EAC can achieve the request by dispensing information at community events regarding smart yards, rain gardens and living shoreline. EAC will have to track the number of events and the number of brochures they dispense to the public. *Rick has procured a canopy, chairs and a table for the EAC to use for the public outreach. He will also ask the Oak Island Town Council to adopt the Stormwater initiative. He wants the EAC to focus on Stormwater compliance activities.*
- **Friends of Stormwater Awards-** Rick would like the EAC to form a group (*Margaret Johnson, Elise Snively*) to design and produce an award for display in establishments that conform to stormwater containment and dispersal requirements. In addition, he would like the EAC to formulate press releases advertising awardees. *He would like the awards ready by the end of November 2023.*
- **Dune Infiltration Project-** Rick gave the group an update on the dune infiltration project located along East Beach Drive by the Oak Island 801-Facility.
- **Smart Yard Signs-** Rick has also requested that the EAC design new Smart Yard sign for exterior use to replace the previous award signs. He wants something that catches the eye better. The same EAC Group that designs the Friends of Stormwater will design the new Smart Yard sign. Both designs will be reviewed by Rick before mass produced.

In addition, he is not procuring anymore Smart Yard brochures and will rely on the softcopy version we have available on the Oak Island website. Most of the homes that would benefit from a Smart Yard implementation are older homes and we should concentrate on educating those home owners if requested.

Old Business

- **Action Items-** will be reviewed week to week at the beginning of the meeting.
- **EAC Budget Team (EBT)- FY 2024 EAC Budget Approval.** The proposed FY 2024 EAC budget was presented and a motion was made to approve the budget after a number of amended changes to line category names and cost amounts were completed and distributed to EAC members. The EAC FY 2024 budget – about \$8000- needs to be submitted to Town Staff and the Town Mayor by Monday, October 9th. (Allen Dearry- Lead, Sue Davidson, Lee Maxwell, David Sonnenfeld)

Motion: *There was a Motion that the EAC approve the amended version of the EAC FY 2024 budget as presented by the EBT Lead.* The motion was made by Allen Dearry and seconded by David Sonnenfeld. Approved- Unanimously.

- **EAC Sustainable Economic Development (SED) Team** - The SED's goals are to promote the advantages of planned green growth and recommend avenues for educating the public on green growth. The SED Lead presented their recommendations to the EAC from a briefing he distributed to EAC members before the meeting. The contents are reproduced on the last page of the minutes. A motion was made to initiate the first recommendation to educate to provide an SED educational opportunity. (Allen Dearry- Lead, Lee Maxwell, Chris Riegert)

Motion: *There was a Motion made that the EAC provide the Town of Oak Island staff, committee members and the interested public an educational workshop on the topic of "Sustainable Economic Development".* The motion was made by Allen Dearry and seconded by Elise Snavely. Approved- Unanimously.

- **New Member Recruitment-** Three (3) EAC vacancies need filled. Not only do we have to recruit new members but we must retain the ones we have on the EAC. Mr. Golden and the EAC Chairperson are working the recruitment issue along with every member of the EAC. In the meantime EAC membership must determine which EAC initiatives and projects to focus on and which to leave dormant until new members are brought on board to work them.
- **OKI Live and Local Educational Events-** Ms. Davidson proposed that EAC participate in distributing environmental information (i.e., smart yards, voluntary elimination of plastic straws, Tree City USA) at the Oak Island Live & Local events this Fall. She made a motion. **On September 23 Sue handed out materials and/or talked to about 15 people. The event was short lived due to rain.** For future events she needs more help/participation from EAC members. A number of EAC members have stepped forward and volunteered to help this endeavor.

Motion: *There was a Motion that EAC participate with the Town of Oak Island Live & Local events this Fall (9/23, 10/07, 10/28) to distribute EAC related environmental information.* The motion was made by Sue Davidson and seconded by David Sonnenfeld. Approved- Unanimously. (Sue Davidson) (Sue Davidson)

- **Skip the Plastic Straw Initiative (SPSI)- Ready to implement** –24 of 45 Oak Island establishments have accepted utilizing non-plastic straws and four (4) have not accepted the program. He is working with his volunteers during this busy time to visit all the identified establishments this summer. Reference the EAC webpage for more information. Working on ways to get the message out to the consumer and encourage them to not use plastic straws. (Lee Maxwell)

- **Living Shoreline-** There will be another workday on Saturday November 11 from 11am to 1 pm (low tide driven). This will be a trash pickup only.

On September 14th at the last workday there were about 25 volunteers and they collected about 300 lbs. of trash and debris. They also collected valuable water quality and shoreline vegetation data. Bonnie Mitchell (from the NC Coastal Federation (NCCF) and Elise Snively from the Oak Island Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) hosted the event and thanked all the volunteers for a job well done.

Elise requested a meeting with Scott Thornail, Oak Island Public Works Director, to discuss and arrange maintenance/replacement of the Living Shoreline oysters reef containment bags. Mr. Golden will facilitate arranging that meeting with Mr. Thornail and get back to Elise. (Elise Snively)

- **OKI Beautification Event-** EAC participated in the OKI Beautification event was held on September 26th for 9-12 pm. Sue talked to about 75 individuals and handed out requested EAC project related materials. (Sue Davidson)
- **EAC Governance Document-** Final draft was completed based on EAC member input and was sent to Mr. Golden for staff review right after the September EAC meeting for Town Staff feedback. A motion to approve the document and subsequent submittal to Oak Island Town Council for approval will be made at the November 2023 monthly meeting. (David Sonnenfeld)
- **EAC Procedure to Close Actions and Motions-** The issue is that EAC assigned action items and motion made closed and/or the status reasonably updated. It was decided by the group that the action items and motions would be review every month at the beginning of the old business review and the status determined and/or the action amended.
- **EAC Webpage-** September 2023 Minutes were posted.

David presented to the EAC members that the next phase of the EAC webpage development in June 2023 to add an educational section. On hold for now.

A QR Code was developed by the Town's Communicator Director and is used on education material that will link directly to the EAC webpage. (Allen Derry/David Sonnenfeld, Sue Davidson)

Motion: *There was a Motion made to the EAC to form an EAC Educational Team to determine the next steps in EAC webpage development.* The motion was made by Allen Derry and seconded by Lee Maxwell. Approved- Unanimously.
On hold until remaining EAC vacancies are filled. (Margaret Johnson)

There was a request from the EAC membership to add a Calendar table to the EAC webpage and minutes. And the membership would like to explore obtaining webpage analytics of accesses to the EAC webpage to determine the extent the EAC webpage is being utilized for information. Allen and David will work with Mike Emory, Oak Island Communicator Director, to determine what can be reasonably done. David will add a calendar table to the minutes on a trial basis in November 2024.

- **Annual vote for EAC Chairperson-** A quorum was present and the EAC Pro Tem, Lee Maxwell, filling for the EAC Chairman held the 2023 election/vote of confidence for the EAC Chairperson. This is only a procedural vote of confidence and is not based on dissatisfaction of our chairperson. Margaret Johnson was voted **Unanimously** until July 2024. **Congratulations Margaret!** (David Sonnenfeld)

New Business

- **Presentation by Adopt A Highway (AAH) (Rick Barry)-** No Show

Meeting was Adjourned at 10:30 am

Motion: *There was a Motion made to adjourn the October 2023 EAC meeting.*

The motion was made by Chris Riegert and seconded by Allen Dearry. Approved- Unanimously.

Minutes submitted by: David Sonnenfeld

ADDENDUM: SED Recommendations October 2023

Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC)

Sustainable Economic Development (SED) Team

Members: (Carolina, emeritus), Chris, Lee, Allen

Update and Recommendations to EAC

October 1, 2023

The SED team has conducted research and met several times since its creation in May 2023.

Sustainable economic development may lack a single detailed and widely accepted definition. However, as a general approach to development, it is frequently understood to encompass the following goals:

- A holistic perspective on economic, environmental, and social policies that takes into account the needs of future generations.
- Recognition of the value of a sound natural environment, including the importance of biodiversity.
- Responsible and transparent implementation of government policies.

Benefits of sustainable economic development may include:

- Creating resource efficiencies in areas such as water, land, transportation, energy, and material use makes communities more resilient while lowering the cost of living.
- Natural resources such as natural water supply systems, forests, and plant and wildlife habitat provide valuable cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities and support local industries, tourism, and public health and welfare.
- Maintaining healthy natural resources mitigates air pollution, improves water quality, reduces drought and flooding, and sustains local recreational and employment opportunities and revenue.
- The quantity and quality of drinking water is enhanced by healthy ecosystems through mechanisms such as water absorption and filtration.

Because of the rapid pace of growth in OKI, the SED team recommends that:

- The town hold an educational workshop on a weekday afternoon on the topic of “Sustainable Economic Development” in order to help inform elected officials, departmental staff, and relevant board/committee members about approaches to and benefits of SED.
- Based upon this “staff workshop,” the town should consider a second public educational workshop, including property owners, builders, and community members.
- The town contact relevant parties, such as experts at the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), UNCW, and Brunswick County to assist with planning, organizing, and participating in workshop(s).

In addition, the SED team notes that NCWRC may provide technical and funding assistance for:

- Integrating Conservation Data for Green Growth with County or City online GIS map.
- Writing a local habitat conservation plan.
- Reviewing recommendations for land use plans, incentives and ordinances, developments and review standards.
- Developing habitat management plans for parks and open space.

The SED team suggests that the workshop may address topics such as:

- What do we mean by “sustainable?”
- Financial and other benefits to the town and residents by implementing SED.
- Identifying steps to SED implementation.
- OKI-specific issues, e.g., beaches, trees, island and mainland.
- Specific technologies, e.g., GIS, and any needed resources.
- Desired short- and long-term outcomes of SED implementation.
- Relationship of SED to comprehensive land use planning.
- Engaging the larger OKI community.
- Ensuring continuity of SED efforts.

The SED team is ready to assist with further workshop planning.