

COMMITTEE: University Environment Committee

MEETING DATE: February 23, 2023

PERSON PRESIDING: Kerry Sewell

REGULAR MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Lisa Beth Robinson, Akshat Kapoor, Susan Pearce, Kerry Sewell, Alison Swift

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tim Christensen, Dean Smith, Chad Carwein, Joshua Gardner, James Loudon, Tyler West, Bill Koch

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Sammy Snead

ACTIONS OF MEETING: Approval of Minutes

AGENDA

1. Call to order
 2. Approval of minutes from January meeting
 3. Conversation with Sammy Snead about Energy Manager role and focus areas for the near future
 4. Updates from subcommittees and SGA representative:
 - a. Discussion with Tyler West about SGA focus on sustainability this year, especially efforts to include sustainability in Strategic Plan
 - b. Divestment/Renewable energy
 - c. Course designation
 5. Announcements/New Business
 6. Adjourn
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ACTIONS OF MEETING

Agenda Item: Approval of minutes for February 23, 2023

Action Taken: Minutes approved.

Assigned additional duties to: n/a

ACTIONS OF MEETING

Agenda Item: Conversation with Sammy Snead, ECU's Energy Manager

Discussion:

-Sammy noted that it's his job to monitor the universities energy use and reduce it either through recommending energy conservation measures through education of our occupants, now his job is to find ways to reduce the energy that we're using.

-His office is collecting data at ECU updating the monthly index spreadsheet which uses UI or energy use index band is the way we calculate the usage of a building, based off 1000 BTU per square footage per year.

-Another thing he's working on is Arlington Building's equipment runtimes and occupancy schedules here on the Health Science campus. He'll be moving to the main campus-if he can reduce runtime on equipment then he can lower the UI of a building. He's working with an engineering firm performing an Azure Level One Audit on 11 buildings.

- The engineering firm will come back and they'll make recommendations on measures that we can do to conserve or reduce energy and what our payback would be on those on those measurements and that's where we'll use our energy carry forward money to finance those projects for next year. He is working on a creating an auditing retuning checklist that we're going to be doing on campus ourselves.

- We're having a feasibility study here on the Health Science campus for installing photovoltaic or solar cells solar panels on top of three buildings.

- West Research Campus: if you're familiar with that, it is about 500 acres. He'd like to see about 475 acres of solar panels out there; it wouldn't reduce energy but it would reduce our cost and if we're producing energy here it would reduce the energy that we're buying from someone else and they we make we can produce energy a little bit cleaner than they are with fossil fuel energy production

-ECU is charging EV (electric vehicles) but we're using some power to do it. It may not completely balance out but it's definitely a start and it shows that here at ECU we're trying to do something to reduce fossil fuel usage. The electric vehicles would be parked under solar panels charging those vehicles. He would love to apply for more grants to get additional EV chargers-there's tons of money out there right now.

- Chad and Erin Lucier have a Watch Energy Challenge going on amongst the residence halls.

- Working on controlling the schedule of the lights. A UEC member asked to bring back the "turn off the light" stickers.

- Discussion about whether the solar trees are good option for EV. The way that's going to work: these solar trees are basically giant steel structures that have solar panels on them. We're going to tie them into the Health Sciences Student Center, so it'll offset a little bit of the building's energy consumption. However, due to the proximity of the EV charging station behind the student center over there, we can basically put up signage that says "essentially these two solar trees are producing more than enough energy actually to charge two vehicles". There are four vehicles per day on that EV charger; because it's a dual port EV charger they can get fully charged in four hours so technically each port can charge two vehicles per day so that one charger serves four vehicles on a bright sunny day. Those two solar trees will produce more than enough energy for those so really it's just education demonstration and trying to relay the information to people that we're offsetting the energy consumption to charge your vehicles. He would not recommend these for installation campus wide.

-Again, this is a way to visualize sustainability, educate people, and to offset a very small portion of our energy consumption; at some point we're going to need to start recouping costs.

-Thank you, Sammy!

Action Taken: n/a

Assigned additional duties to: n/a

ACTIONS OF MEETING

Agenda Item: The Divestment and Renewable Energy Subcommittee group talks about their progress re: statement on divestment from fossil fuels and investment in renewable energy.

Discussion:

-Working on the committee's statement being put forth to the Faculty and Staff Senates and SGA for approval.

- We want to add AAUP as a signer.

- We'll query some of the former chairs of faculty Senate see if they've ever done anything like this before.

-All we need from this body is if we could get a vote on the document. all we need from this body is if we could get a vote on the document.

Action Taken: Motion made to accept and endorse this document with editorial friendly amendments. Vote taken; motion passes unanimously.

Assigned additional duties to: n/a

ACTIONS OF MEETING

Agenda Item: SGA resolution on sustainability

Discussion:

- Two weeks ago SGA passed a resolution with the primary purpose of showing student support for increased efforts with sustainability as a part of the core values or mission statement that comes within this strategic plan for 2023 to 2028.

-Reviewed other state institutions' statements and actions as well as Governor Cooper's executive orders regarding green energy and sustainability

- Plan to join a bunch of other schools in the UNC system to have sustainability listed as a value of higher importance

Action Taken: n/a

Assigned additional duties to: n/a

ACTIONS OF MEETING

Agenda Item: Sustainability Designation

Discussion:

- Goal continues to be achieving a sustainability designation.
- Reached out to the Service Learning Committee to talk to them about their progress and procedures and then will reach out to the General Education Committee.
- This will extend into next year's business
- They are working with an honors group and, depending on which ticket you selected during the ongoing SGA elections, we're revisiting the sustainability fee green fund which would be \$5 per student per year generating about \$110,000 a year for sustainability projects. Students, staff, and faculty could apply for funding.

Action Taken: n/a

Assigned additional duties to: n/a

ACTIONS OF MEETING

Agenda Item: Otter Creek site and West Research Campus (WRC)

Discussion:

- OC cleanup went well.
- On the WRC, there are two areas where we're going to stop mowing to that let the area re-naturalize and see what kind of pollinator plant species come up; we're looking at a big sort of pollinator Prairie project going on out there.
- By the University not mowing it, we're going to save staff time, fuel expenses, and maintenance expenses on the equipment, reducing emissions associated with the mowing out there.
- Chad's group coordinated a work day. He brought about 10 students out to the site and with the help of Grounds and some Biology folks, they basically cleared the ditch out opening up the area and giving the opportunity for sunlight and nutrient and water uptake to the pitcher plants.
- They are trying to coordinate some sort of visit back out there during April for earth month.
- Question: would it be possible to get a conservation easement for the WRC site?
- Can ECU Transport be used to take a class out to Otter Creek?

Action Taken: n/a

Assigned additional duties to: n/a

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

-Update on the Edible Orchard (in progress)-Bee hotels! Monthly workdates! Pears!
Need a knowledgeable person to help with pruning.

NEXT MEETING: February 23, 2023