

## **Sustainability Committee Annual Report**

Key General Committee Action:

Winston-Salem City Council approved the following resolution on November 16, 2020:

### **RESOLUTION OF THE WINSTON-SALEM CITY COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF A GOAL OF 100% CLEAN RENEWABLE ENERGY BY 2050 AND CREATION OF GREEN JOBS**

#### **Tree Cover Subcommittee:**

This subgroup has focused on what can be done by the city to maintain and increase tree and forest cover in Winston-Salem. This process requires that three avenues be pursued simultaneously: Inventory development, forested land maintenance, and policies to increase tree cover. The first avenue is necessary to identify the areas focused on by the other two. Forested land cover maintenance and growth can be accomplished through the adoption of city ordinances or policies.

The subcommittee's work includes:

- Completion of a tree canopy plan which suggested the following points:
  - The city adopts a “no net loss” policy
  - The city develops maps of forested areas within the city and county boundaries that are open to the public and published on city webpages
  - The city works with local communities to develop better signage, control litter, and work with the police department to ID and address safety concerns in these areas
  - The subgroup members can assist in connecting with faculty at local institutions to see if students studying GIS may be able to help with creating an inventory of forested lands
  - The spatial database of forested areas (above) could:
    - Identify properties that could be returned to a forested state
    - Identify properties that the city owns due to abandonment which are adjacent to forested city property and which could be cleared of buildings and other items left by the previous owners and the forest allowed to recover these properties.

Future research topics:

- Ways to incentivize the maintenance of trees and forest cover on private lands
- Ways to work with the state DOT to increase the abundance of natives in roadway plantings

#### **Transportation Subcommittee:**

With a focus on ways to reduce fossil fuel use, the subcommittee's work includes:

- Research on encouraging travel reduction for city employees by providing remote working and online meeting options
- Consider transitioning transportation options within the city, which fit in line with LEED for Cities and Resolution #20-0499 as passed by the City Council:
  - Transition city fleets and buses from fossil fuel to electric with a goal of 5% of vehicles per year
  - Expand EV charging infrastructure with a goal of 100 stations by 2030
  - Expand bike lane infrastructure and pedestrian-only zones and schedules

- Evaluate multimodal transportation systems including light rail and/trolley systems using a sustainability lens. Utilize ARPA funding for a modest trial project.
- Research into EV ordinances and policies at both city facility/property scale and full community scale

### **Environmental Justice and Green Jobs Subcommittee:**

The Environmental Justice and Green Jobs subcommittee hopes to support the specific needs and interests of BIPOC communities in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County via its role in the City Sustainability Committee. This subcommittee recognizes that the modern environmental movement can often focus on conservation/preservation, green lifestyle changes, and sustainability in general through a lens of white supremacy—without acknowledging the many indigenous communities who have lived in reciprocity with the land for thousands of years, or the BIPOC communities who are disproportionately affected by climate change despite contributing the least to it.

The subcommittee's work includes:

- Identified groups and individuals in our community who are already working toward environmental justice and green job promotion.
- Researched potential financial resources, including federal funding and other grants.

Future action:

- Identify potential partnerships between the city and groups or individuals working toward environmental justice and green jobs
- Work with those groups and/or individuals to set goals, create a work plan, and/or find out how we can support their existing efforts
- Explore the options for educating and connecting two separate constituencies:
  - BIPOC individuals and communities who may be interested in green jobs and/or climate resilience/sustainability in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County, and
  - Employers in Winston-Salem/Forsyth County who may be able to hire BIPOC candidates into "green" jobs
- Educational opportunities may include:
  - Speakers/webinars/videos in concert with the Office of Sustainability staff
  - Compile best practices from existing organizations to create a hiring "toolkit" to help potential employers learn how to be proactively equitable in their hiring practices
  - Promote apprenticeships/mentorships/paths to community college
  - Targeted homeowner education around energy conservation and resilience solutions

### **Recycling Subcommittee:**

With a focus on the recycling contamination issue, the subcommittee's work includes:

- Identifying specific suggestions to further educate the public:
  - Cart stickers with clear messaging
  - More transparency (such as a virtual tour) of the MRF
  - Opportunity for a Q&A around why the rules are what they are
  - A series of videos that address the transparency and Q&A aspect