

**Name of Group:** Environment

**Meeting Date:** December 7, 2021

**Meeting Time:** 6:30PM

**Meeting Location:** Zoom

**Members Present:** Carl Kolosna, Leigha Larkins, Pilar Gutierrez, Ariana Vaida, Tobin Freid, Summer Alston, Celeste Burns, Rickie White, Jennifer Hill Carrington, Nate Baker, Idreese Foxworth, Bonita Green

### **Chat Icebreaker, Group Agreements,**

- Approval of previous meeting notes
- Members of the group take turns reading each of the agreements

### **Info and Updates from Staff**

- Schedule reminder for drafting policy ideas and policy language before community-wide engagement in Spring 2022.
  - Our group will need to have an initial policy ideas list by January.
  - Once we have a draft policy list, planning staff will work with the list of ideas you've provided to fill those out into more complete policy recommendations in January.
  - We will also have another individual group meeting in January which we'll be sending a doodle poll out for after this meeting. As planning staff begin working to draft policy language from our policy ideas, we will continue to finish up this initial brainstorming process. We also have the option of meeting with another working group for a portion of our meeting if that is helpful.
    - Do folks have any thoughts on which group would be the most helpful to meet with for about half our time (about 1 hr) in January?
      - We will be reaching out to the Neighborhoods Group to discuss some of the Public Spaces and Recreation Objectives.
  - After we have completed our policy idea brainstorming and once staff has draft policy language for each group, we will work together to revise and finalize the draft policy recommendations drafted by Planning Staff in February and March.
  - Finally, community-wide engagement on the draft policy recommendations will happen in Spring 2022, roughly from April through July 2022.
  - After Spring Engagement, we will share what we heard from the general community back with these groups and publicly and will work on making further revisions and adjustments to the policies based on feedback.
- Overview of what Carl did with the Jamboard to turn it into the Google Slides doc. Staff also went through the notes and added some topic areas where there was not as much content.

- We've shared a lot of ideas and they seem to fall into two buckets: 1) policies (reactive to the development process) 2) tangible, real action where we'd have to be proactive once the plan is adopted (programming/proactive processes)
- We know there's not an equal distribution of issues and resources in our community, so we know we're not going to be able to achieve our goals as a community strictly through reactive means.
- Is there value in separating the ideas into "policy" and "programming" at this stage?
- If people see a new topic area as they're reviewing the PowerPoint, please go ahead and create a new slide.
- Minneapolis had policies that represented "big picture" ideas, supported by "action steps." Action steps can be policy (reactive) or programming (proactive).
- How do we reconcile the costs and implications of the policies we draft? Ex. Recent headlines that mining for the minerals needed to construct electric cars are killing the rainforest.

### **Policy Brainstorming Discussion**

- Need a biodiversity slide/category. We could put the biodiversity slide before the conservation/protection slide.
- Have we thought enough about generational equity?
- Have we brought in any of the policies that are in the current Comprehensive Plan? Answer: Not much, yet, explicitly. Analysis could be a good idea so that we can get an understanding of what's already been said.
- Is there a big picture topic that we want to do some brain-storming about?
- Should we have a landscaping slide? The "little spaces in urban areas that have the potential to provide ecological benefits."
- Group consensus is yes, we should have a landscaping slide, because "landscaping" plays such a large role in the minimum requirements that developers have to meet for large projects. Many ecological benefits could fall under this umbrella.
- What are the critical policies, the supporting policies, and the "nice to haves?"
- Do whatever you can to incentivize infill and redevelopment
- We know where the rare plants and ecosystems are (NHAs, floodplains, etc) - can we acknowledge those and work to protect them. Also, mass grading destroys the soil profile – there's got to be a way to incentivize less grading.
- Incentivize bikes and transit. Reduce parking requirements. De-incentivize sprawl.
- Increase wildlife spaces while encouraging urban spaces. Add greenery/ gardens even in small spaces. "Soft engineering" techniques. De-incentivize lawns and/or monoculture in landscaping.
- Utilize the green space we have, but in a more sustainable manner.
- Press more for using native species.
- Look to Saxapahaw parks for an example of integrating play spaces into forest cover.

- Will these policies add to the costs of projects to make affordable housing impossible in the eyes of the developer?
  - These policies may add to development costs for some developers but not all development products are appropriate for Durham or in line with community values. People living in affordable housing deserve environmentally-sound development as much as any member of the community. To that end, environmental requirements should be standard, no matter the price-point of the development. City/County of Durham should explore funding mechanisms, development agreements, and incentive programs to support affordable housing proposals.
- Should we “vote” or prioritize our top five policies? We could each submit our top five policies from the slideshow.
- Are we staying on track with drafting policies that can be adopted in a Comp Plan or would some of these policies fit better in other City policies?
- Members are concerned about giving staff tons of ideas but not giving them an indication of what the group’s priorities are.

### Close Out

- Next meeting will be in January and determined by a doodle poll. We will also work to coordinate which other working group we will be meeting with based on our discussion and other group’s discussions.
- What do folks want to focus on for our next meeting? Prioritization exercise?
- Staff will discuss with the larger PWG group and get back to this group when we have more clarity and direction based on how other meetings are going.
- What can we work on individually before then?
- Review and familiarize ourselves with the concepts on the Jamboard to gauge whether we’re capturing all of the concepts and topic areas we intend to capture. Continue to add ideas as we move towards the January meeting.
- What are the critical policies, the supporting policies, and the “nice to haves?”
- Brainstorm information that our group may need to share with other working groups, specifically the Spanish Lanuage Group.
- Brainstorm and share which group(s) we should meet with in January.
- Brainstorm the question of “policy” (reactive) vs. “programming” (proactive).
- Brainstorm how we should prioritize or work through the different topic areas.
- Brainstorm if there is a “big picture” topic we should focus on
- Each member submit their top five policies from the slideshow.