

Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission**Wednesday, August 17, 2022 – 4:30pm**

Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center
75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville, GA 30046
Conference Room B (Second Floor)

Present: Laura Hernandez, Daniel Hilton, Krupesh Patel, Dr. Marshall Shepherd

1. Call to Order

Laura Hernandez, Chairperson, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone at 4:30pm.

- GCSC's District 4 position is still open. Any District 4 residents interested in serving should apply on Gwinnett County's website.

2. Approval of Agenda

{Action: Approved: Patel; Second: Shepherd; Vote: 3-0; Hernandez-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes; Absent: Hilton}

3. Approval of Minutes

The July 20, 2022, meeting minutes were approved subject to adding citizen Ryan's last name of Arnold.

{Action: Approved: Shepherd; Second: Patel; Vote: 3-0; Hernandez-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes; Absent: Hilton}

4. Discussion on Sustainability Commission's Annual Report

The GCSC members discussed a draft letter of recommendation to the BOC and County Administrator for 2023 budget consideration for a Director of Environmental Sustainability position to support a long-term sustainability plan for the county. The commission agreed to submit the letter with minor changes. {Action: Approved: Shepherd; Second: Patel; Vote: 3-0; Hernandez-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes; Absent: Hilton}

5. Public Comments

- Ryan Arnold suggested to add sub-committees to GCSC to give other residents the opportunity to participate in advancing sustainability initiatives.
- Scott Presson appreciates the efforts of the GCSC for recognizing the budget timeline and putting forth a letter of recommendation for the funding of a Director of Environmental Sustainability.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12pm.

{Action: Approved: Shepherd; Second: Patel; Vote: 4-0; Hernandez-Yes; Hilton-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes}

August 18, 2022

Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners & County Administrator
Gwinnett County Justice & Administration Center
75 Langley Drive
Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Dear Chairwoman Hendrickson; Comm'rs. Carden, Ku, Watkins, and Fosque; and Mr. Stephens:

As the inaugural appointees to the Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission (GCSC), we would like to thank you for your foresight in the creation of this citizen board and for the honor of serving our community in the GCSC's first 12 months of existence. Over the past year, we've enjoyed becoming better acquainted with Gwinnett County's considerable achievements in the area of environmental sustainability, as well as partnering with staff and contributing our passion and expertise to meaningfully advance the county government's progress in this space. We will soon be releasing our first annual report to share our progress and observations, but in the meantime, we submit the 2023 budget recommendation below for your timely consideration.

As the second largest and most diverse county in the state of Georgia, Gwinnett County has a remarkable opportunity—and responsibility—to be the undisputed leader on environmental issues among local governments in the South. Through a commitment to the Gwinnett Standard, the county has already achieved a high regional honor for sustainability: The Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) Green Communities Platinum Certification. But we can't stop there. With environmental crises accelerating by the day, citizens' concerns mounting¹, and the reality that environmental sustainability is ultimately a matter of quality of life and social justice for our diverse public, it is time to invest more. We strongly recommend the hiring of a Director of Environmental Sustainability, reporting directly to the County Administrator, in 2023 to lead Gwinnett County's progress on these important matters into the future.

A Director of Environmental Sustainability is responsible for managing, coordinating, facilitating, and advising on the planning, development, implementation, monitoring, and improvement of county policies and programs pertaining to sustainability. Importantly, a leader in this role networks staff, ideas, and resources across departments and throughout the community, as well as responds with agility to emerging opportunities, such as those in the Inflation Reduction Act, to achieve outcomes supported by a long-term sustainability plan. Gwinnett County is at a crossroads: The county is currently drafting our government's first-ever sustainability plan, but without a single high-level officer and any needed support staff dedicated in 2023 to its implementation and quality execution, little progress can be expected to result.

We look forward to collaborating closely with you and with county staff—including, we hope, a Director of Environmental Sustainability—to maintain the Gwinnett Standard of being an environmental pioneer. Thank you for your support and consideration.

Best regards,

The Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission
Laura Hernandez, Chair - Chairwoman's Appointment
Daniel Hilton, Vice-Chair - District 1
Krupesh Patel - District 2
Dr. J. Marshall Shepherd - District 3

¹ As evidenced by an environmental sustainability public opinion survey conducted by Gwinnett County Government this summer, which captured the environmental sustainability attitudes and concerns of more than 1,500 Gwinnett County stakeholders.