

## Environmental Sustainability Council (ESC)

April 6, 2022

### Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Amanda Radosti, Michael Weber, Miriam Shakow, Nathan Magee, Angela Mo, Olivia di Giorgio, Sara Manuzza, Hannah Beckett, Raymond Gonzalez, Jared Williams, Ben Rogoff

#### Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Reviewing Meeting Minutes from [March 3, 2022](#)
  - a. Approved
3. New Business
  - a. Report from Mike Weber, Director of Grounds and Landscaping (see below)
    - i. Power Equipment
    - ii. Mulch
    - iii. Fertilizers
    - iv. Native Plantings
    - v. Pruning
    - vi. Landscape Waste
    - vii. Potential for “no mow May” policy
    - viii. Potential for Native Meadow Installation
  - b. Amanda Radosti - Call for Student, Faculty, and Staff participation in summer 2022 Delaware Riverkeeper Watershed Tour. Contact - Fred Stine. [Fred@delawareriverkeeper.org](mailto:Fred@delawareriverkeeper.org) . To be held on one Saturday AM between June 11 and July 30, 2022. Date TBA.
  - c. Dr. Magee et al ESC minigrant proposal **“Timely Data: Urban Heat Island and Air Quality Health Risks in Trenton,” Approved (\$2,650)**
  - d. People4Plants Green Hall Native Pollinator Garden Proposal, Approved (\$817)
  - e. Did not discuss: Campus as a Living Lab
    - i. [STARS: Campus as a Living Laboratory](#)
    - ii. [Resources: Campus as a Living Lab](#)
    - iii. [UBC Campus as a Living Laboratory](#)

#### Updates from Mike Weber, Director of Grounds and Landscaping

Policy Component	Updates/concerns/questions	Potential Next Steps/Questions to investigate
Power Equipment -	3 electric backpack leaf blowers	Are there funds to purchase

leaf blowers	<p>purchased and now in use. Complaints about noise and exhaust significantly down. Less powerful than gas leafblowers. Recharging is a hassle.</p> <p>One stand-on diesel leaf blower has been purchased -- equivalent to 5 backpack blowers, 15 x less time than backpacks.</p>	<p>more?</p> <p>Are newer models more powerful?</p> <p>Can more staff time with weaker blowers be justified by the health and environmental benefits of electric riding leaf blowers?</p> <p>Can charging stations be installed?</p>
Power Equipment - Chainsaws- hedge trimmers	Electric chainsaw purchased, 2 electric hedge- trimmers purchased.	<p>Will they be powerful enough?</p> <p>Can cost-benefit analysis justify purchasing more?</p>
Power Equipment - Lawnmowers	No plans to purchase electric lawnmower because electric costs \$46 K vs. \$10K gas mower	Can we get a grant to cover cost?
Fertilizing	<p>New lawn fertilizing and other maintenance contract with TCNJ alumnus-owned</p> <p><a href="https://www.lawnconnection.com/">https://www.lawnconnection.com/</a></p> <p>Fertilizing of trees only when testing reveals soil deficiencies</p> <p>No fertilizing around the lakes</p>	<p>Check with company to confirm that least harmful levels of fertilizer are being used</p> <p>Create Campus as Living Lab project to assess what's going in to the lakes from surrounding properties, as well as experiment with aeration</p>
Herbicides	Roundup used for weeds. 60x more time-efficient than hand-pulling	<p>Consult with other campuses that have reduced or eliminated roundup use</p> <p>Explore alternative products such as acetic acid solutions (<a href="https://extension.umd.edu/resource/vinegar-alternative-glyphosate">https://extension.umd.edu/resource/vinegar-alternative-glyphosate</a>)</p> <p>Explore ways to reduce weed growth, such as planting ornamental plants more densely.</p>

		Collaborate with student groups to create weeding schedule for some areas
Native perennial planting	<p>90% of new plantings are now native plants. They purchase native plants from Britton Industries (?)</p> <p>Some native trees are dying from diseases, such as Red Oak, from Sun Oak Death and Oak Wilt.</p> <p>New campus construction projects are planting as well, managed by campus Architects' office.</p>	<p>Consult with landscape architect regarding ideal planting density, locations for particular species, and standard plant variety to create repetition of plants around campus</p> <p>Coordinate with student groups, faculty courses, and faculty research for expansion and maintenance</p> <p>Look into Hopewell Elementary school as example. Dolph Gurtz was instrumental.</p> <p>Guidelines:  <a href="https://xerces.org/publications/guidelines/mid-atlantic-native-meadows">https://xerces.org/publications/guidelines/mid-atlantic-native-meadows</a> </p>
Pruning and mulching	<p>TCNJ contracts with outside vendors for pruning of large trees that require a bucket truck.</p> <p>His office carried out a tree inventory, creating a database in the program TreeKeeper</p> <p>Grounds staff have training from Rutgers Extension for pruning small trees and bushes</p> <p>Recent training has helped grounds staff reduce the mounding of mulch around tree trunks.</p>	Overuse of mulch may still be occurring -- follow up?
Landscape waste	All landscape waste is placed in a specific brush dumpster and removed by Britton Services. TCNJ then purchases wood-chip based mulch from Britton Services, dyed Cherry color with a nontoxic dye. The dye is necessary to	<p>Research ingredients in mulch dye to confirm nontoxic</p> <p>Research ways to promote healthy soil, since treated mulch may be impeding the</p>

	reduce complaints about the smell and to preserve the mulch so that it does not decompose very rapidly.	development of healthy soil
Vehicles	5 small electric carts have been purchased and are in use and 5 more have ordered Currently, there is no cost-effective electric truck than can push a snowplow, and so the current snowplow trucks are diesel	Research potential grants for higher-cost vehicles
Salt	TCNJ uses a lot and Mike is trying to reduce. He is looking into using less-toxic treated salt or brine in the future.	Collaborate with faculty and students regarding alternatives to salt
"No Mow May"	There are concerns by neighbors and grounds staff that reducing mowing would increase vermin and would be ugly, prompting complaints from neighbors and TCNJ community.	Student groups canvas neighbors to discuss benefits of meadows Research how other campuses have address neighbors' concerns Research potential for increase in pest population with meadows Carry out cost-benefit analysis
Meadow Installations	Mike can think of 2-3 areas that are lawn at present but are not adjacent to campus neighbors and therefore could host meadows. Further research and consultation necessary	Faculty-student-staff collaboration to install meadow and maintain for 2-4 years until established Seek professional support from AASHE
Conservation & collaboration on Pennington TSCC land	Tabled	
Regular Q & A grounds tours with Mike Weber	ESC member suggestion	Plan 2/year?
Ambassador		

program sustainability element		
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The next ESC meeting is scheduled for May 4th, 2022 as an in person meeting