

Sustainability Commission Overview for Prospective Members



Purpose

The Sustainability Commission is an advisory commission that promotes, encourages and makes recommendations on the development and implementation of Sustainability into all Town operations, both internally in governmental operations, as well as externally in community-wide efforts.

Vision

A sustainable Manchester is a community taking bold action toward climate justice by reducing emissions, centering equity, and building resilience. A sustainable Manchester integrates environmental and public health, community needs, and economic wellbeing to weave Sustainability into all Town programs, serve as a model for other communities, and benefit all residents, especially those most vulnerable to climate change.

Guiding Principles

We want our work to have an impact by:

- Improving resiliency
- Reducing emissions
- Being transformative, instilled in the Town's culture
- Serving as a model for other communities

Equity is important. We want to center equity within all actions and for changes to be affordable and accessible. We want to ensure the work of the commission does not have unintended harmful consequences, but rather benefits all.

We want to increase awareness about Sustainability, for it to be considered when there are choices, and for it to guide strategy and serve as a framework for investment decisions.

Community health, well-being, and the 3 pillars of Sustainability – environmental, social, and economic - are important outcomes for our work.

Membership

The commission is comprised of 15 Manchester residents appointed by the Board of Directors who each serve a three-year term. This is a volunteer position.

History

In 2019, the Manchester Board of Directors appointed a Sustainability Task Force of 25 citizens.

The goal of the task force was to analyze and make recommendations to initiate or improve Town policies, programs and practices that promote Sustainability actions to ensure that Manchester remains a thriving, efficient, healthy, and vibrant place for its residents of today and tomorrow. The task force achieved a Bronze Certification by Sustainable CT and recommended that the board establish a permanent commission to advance Sustainability in Town government, and also appoint a senior level leader to lead and implement the initiative.

Task Force Final Report: sustainability.townofmanchester.org/index.cfm/task-force-final-report/.

Courtney Lindberg was recruited and hired as the Town's Deputy Director of Public Works (<https://patch.com/connecticut/manchester/manchester-fills-Sustainability-materials-management-position>).

The first meeting of the Sustainability Commission was held on October 20, 2020.

Meeting Environment

With the commission being so new, it has a genuine startup feel to it. Discussion is heavy in analysis and development of ideas and process, and all members share responsibility in conducting research outside of meetings and reporting back to the full commission. There is often gray area to evaluate before moving forward on an issue, so things could feel slow-moving at times.

The commission held a virtual retreat in February, 2021 where its priorities were vetted and three committees were established: Building and Energy, Community, and Town Infrastructure.

Meeting Minutes

<https://ecode360.com/documents/pub/MA2034/Minutes/?subCategory=Sustainability+Commission>

Meeting Schedule

The commission meets the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm (virtual meetings until further notice).

The Sustainability Commission furthers the work of the Manchester Board of Directors. Members must therefore be available to attend and actively participate in regular and special meetings. When schedule conflicts arise and result in an absence, members must notify a chairperson as soon as possible.

[Sec. 2-8](#) of Manchester Code indicates that absence from more than three (3) consecutive regular meetings shall be considered grounds for removal.

Note: If the absence is due to extenuating circumstances, flexibility can be afforded.

Responsibilities

- Attend regular commission meetings and occasional subcommittee meetings
- Raise issues of importance relating to Sustainability in Town government and operations
- Conduct research outside of meetings and report out to members
- Promptly reply to emails about meeting logistics, administrative concerns and other requests for information

Desired Qualifications

The commission seeks residents with or without a professional background in Sustainability who possess the following:

- Passion and personal interest in Sustainability
- Commitment to serving the Town of Manchester
- Availability to conduct research outside of meetings
- Active engagement in meeting discussion and implementation of new ideas