

DIVISION 14. SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

2-150.60. PURPOSES AND FINDINGS; CREATION.

(A) The City of Sterling Heights recognizes that sustainability is essential for the continued livability of the planet. While a global concern, solutions at the local level are critical. The city recognizes its responsibility to:

- (1) Provide efficient, equitable, and responsible access to and use of social, economic, and natural resources;
- (2) Use resources cost-effectively while ensuring they are used no faster than they can be replenished through natural systems;
- (3) Assure that the benefits and costs of society are equitably distributed throughout the community;
- (4) Consider the long-term environmental, economic, and social impacts of our actions;
- (5) Promote education and awareness of the benefits of sustainable practices to enhance the community;
- (6) Support citizens, organizations, businesses, and neighborhoods, both within and outside the community, to invest in sustainability and continually improve their practices and environments;
- (7) Prioritize long-term needs over short-term gains to ensure that the resources necessary to sustain life are available now and in the future.

(B) Therefore, pursuant to its City Charter authority to establish advisory boards and commissions, the City Council has determined that establishing a sustainability commission for the following purposes will serve and support the city's sustainability responsibilities and be beneficial for the City of Sterling Heights:

- (1) To advise and make recommendations to the City Council and City Manager on the city's long-range goals, policies, and programs on all matters pertaining to sustainability, including matters referred to the Commission for study as well as matters initiated by the Commission of its own accord;
- (2) To develop and advise the City Council on implementation of community-wide strategies regarding waste reduction, recycling, and sustainable growth and development;
- (3) To create a model of sustainability through efforts to advocate, educate, and promote the social, economic, and environmental health of the community, now and into the future;
- (4) To develop and implement public recognition programs promoting individual property and neighborhood level sustainability projects;
- (5) To develop educational materials and/or public campaigns regarding litter reduction, recycling, and sustainable yard and property enhancements;
- (6) To work in collaboration with city staff, officials, and existing city nonprofit partners to determine annual city and community priorities, projects, and resources relative to sustainability issues that improve the environment, save the city money, or reduce the city's carbon footprint;
- (7) To assist city staff with the engagement of the city's residents and businesses in sustainability initiatives;
- (8) To broaden the lens and scope of energy and environmental needs in the future such as wind, solar, clean air, water, and improving infrastructure;
- (9) To study and propose climate action planning, reduction of municipal energy consumption, increasing alternative energy use, and encouraging residential cultural change to embrace individual actions to help the city attain its long-term sustainability goals;

- (10) To recognize natural resources as chief assets of the city and encourage responsible stewardship of these assets;
- (11) To collaborate with state, county, and local officials, businesses, community organizations, developers, residents, educational agencies, and experts to complete studies, develop educational programs, establish volunteer programs, and identify grants;
- (12) To research initiatives outside of the city to determine how other communities are addressing sustainability;
- (13) To review the city's current plans and policies, and assist with planning, implementation, community engagement, goal setting, and progress monitoring;
- (14) To provide access for comment and input from residents and businesses in the city;
- (15) To offer recommendations for policy updates and revisions;
- (16) To educate and inform residents and facilitate sustainable practices that enable smart choices for the city and its residents which lead to a reduction of the city's carbon footprint while promoting, through education, outreach, and awareness efforts, the conservation of energy, water, and fuel; improvement of air, climate, and water quality; investment in renewable energy; reduction of waste; and protecting and restoring the community's natural resources;
- (17) To prioritize sustainability policies;
- (18) To create a Sustainability Plan by the end of its first year of existence, and thereafter update and maintain a three-year sustainability plan that outlines specific areas for City Council to study and the Commission's recommendations relating to those areas; and
- (19) To advise the City Council on any other issues and best practices related to sustainability as deemed appropriate by the Commission.

(C) Therefore, the Sustainability Commission of the City of Sterling Heights is hereby established.

(D) Members of the Sustainability Commission are expected to take their appointment seriously through display of leadership, courtesy, punctuality, and consistent attendance and participation.

(E) The Commission shall have no authority to make any expenditure on behalf of the city, or to obligate the city for the payment of any sums of money, but may request funding from the City Council for events or training.

(F) All recommendations and requests made by the Commission shall be submitted in writing. All recommendations to the City Council must first be approved by a two-thirds majority of the voting members appointed and serving, and all requests submitted to the City Council must first be approved by a majority vote of the voting members appointed and serving.

(Ord. No. 469, § 1, 3-17-20)

Charter reference:

Establishing advisory boards or commissions, Section 7.20(B)

2-150.61. MEANING OF SUSTAINABILITY.

- (A) Sustainability means balancing environmental, economic, and social demands to adopt strategies and activities for the use of resources that meet the needs of the city and its stakeholders today while protecting, sustaining, and enhancing the human and natural resources that will be needed in the future. A sustainable community seeks to enhance the socio-environmental-economic well-being of the community while taking precautions not to compromise the quality of life of future generations. Toward that end, it reduces its use of nonrenewable natural resources and its production of wastes, while at the same time improving livability.
- (B) As defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (a/k/a the 1987 Brundtland Commission), sustainability means meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

(C) Sustainability is an evolving concept and the definition will evolve over time. The Sustainability Commission may create and utilize a new definition from time to time in order to ensure its work remains modern and relevant.

(Ord. No. 469, § 1, 3-17-20)

2-150.62. MEMBERSHIP; APPOINTMENT; TERMS; OFFICERS.

(A) The Sustainability Commission shall consist of five voting members appointed by and serving at the pleasure of the City Council, who shall serve for three years or until the member's successor is appointed and takes office.

(B) The City Council shall appoint a diverse group of members, from a range of backgrounds and interests. At least three members shall have expertise and/or demonstrated interest in sustainability and issues related thereto, including but not limited to suburban sustainability, responsible environmental policies and practices, water quality, water use efficiency, water conservation, air quality, energy conservation and/or clean energy alternatives, materials management, local and regional ecology, mobility, land use/stewardship, green site planning and building, waste management, human health, and community and regional economics/finance.

(C) At all times, at least four of the five members serving on the Commission shall be residents of the city.

(D) The City Council may also appoint nonvoting ex officio members from local school districts, county government, state government, federal government, intergovernmental agencies, local businesses, local colleges and universities, other boards and commissions, local youth, nonprofit organizations, and any other category it deems beneficial to the Commission's goals and purposes. Ex officio members shall not vote on questions arising during Commission meetings and hearings, but may fully participate in meetings and hearing discussions, and may serve on, chair, and vote on issues coming before Commission committees to which they have been appointed.

(E) Members shall serve without compensation.

(F) Terms for each member shall begin on July 1. Initial appointments shall be for three years (two members), two years (two members), and one year (one member), so that terms remain staggered. Members may be reappointed to the Commission for consecutive terms, or the City Council may appoint a new member after a member's term expires. Ex officio terms need not be staggered and shall run for three years beginning on July 1.

(G) The Commission shall elect at its first meeting of each fiscal year, by a majority of its members appointed and serving, three of its members to serve as chair, vice chair, and secretary, respectively. Each officer shall serve in the position for one year, or until a successor is elected. When any officer's appointment to the Commission expires or becomes vacant, the Commission shall elect a new officer for that position. The Commission shall determine the duties of each officer position, except:

(1) The chair shall preside over all meetings and may appoint committees to research issues;

(2) The vice chair shall assume the duties of the chair in the chair's absence, and shall prepare an annual report with assistance from other members summarizing the activities of the Commission for delivery to the City Council in May; and

(3) The secretary shall call the roll for attendance and roll call votes, prepare and receive correspondence, and assist with creation of the meeting minutes.

City staff shall publish any required notices and shall prepare the formal minutes of the meetings with assistance from the secretary. Because the Commission is advisory in nature, its minutes shall include the substance of its discussions and recommendations, rather than be cursory in nature.

(H) The City Planner, or designee, shall assist the Commission as an advisor and staff liaison. The City Manager may designate additional advisors and staff liaisons to the Commission upon a request from the Commission for additional guidance and support from city departments.

(I) All Sustainability Commission members shall be selected via an open application process developed by the City Clerk. Applications must be submitted through the Office of the City Clerk, which will establish the deadlines for submission and will forward the applications to City Council for consideration.

(J) Any vacancy in a position on the Sustainability Commission may be filled by the City Council for the unexpired portion of the term of the member whose position becomes vacant.

2-150.63. MEETINGS; QUORUM; ATTENDANCE.

(A) The Commission shall hold a minimum of six meetings each year. The time and date of each meeting shall be determined by the Commission. Special meetings may be called by the chair after providing written notice to each member a minimum of 48 hours in advance. Unless good cause exists for an exception, meetings shall be held at City Hall or other city facility so that city staff may assist with organizational needs, drafting resolutions and recommendations, and creating minutes. A majority of the voting members appointed and serving shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order or such other rules as may be enacted or adopted by the Commission, except that all votes on matters for transmittal to the City Council shall be by roll call vote.

(B) The Commission may, from time to time, form sub-committees to study issues and make recommendations to the full Sustainability Commission for its consideration and recommendation to the City Council.

(C) The Commission shall prepare and maintain permanent minutes of its meetings, including actions taken, and shall submit the draft minutes to the City Council within five business days. After final minutes are approved, the minutes shall be submitted to the City Clerk for retention and archiving.

(D) Because the Commission is solely an advisory body, with no authority to deliberate on, or make decisions on, matters of public policy, its meetings are not subject to the requirements of the Open Meetings Act. The Commission may determine whether, and when, to hold meetings open to the public, as well as the format and rules for such meetings. The Commission shall hold, at a minimum, one public meeting in April, May, or June each year to review its accomplishments and ideas during that fiscal year and preceding years, and shall present a summary of its events and accomplishments to the City Council each year in June or July. At the public meeting, members of the community shall be permitted to speak about and showcase issues pertaining to sustainability during a public comment period.

(Ord. No. 469, § 1, 3-17-20)

2-150.64 - 2-150.69. RESERVED.