



DRAFT

**Town of Manchester Sustainability Commission
Long-Term Planning Working Group**

**Thursday, July 11th, 2024
5:00 p.m.**

Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting

MINUTES

Attendees (4): Gene DeJoannis (Co-Chair), Oksan Bayulgen, William Chudzik, Victoria McBrien

Attendees, Other (3): Austin Murray, Rachel Schnabel, Emma Petersen

1. Introductions

a. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Gene DeJoannis at 5:00pm.

b. Public Comment

No members of the public provided public comment.

c. Communications

None.

2. Long-Term Planning Discussion

a. SustainableCT

Rachel Schnabel provided an update on the status of the Town's progress towards Gold certification. After a review with the help of the Town's SustainableCT Fellow, the Town is roughly 100 points away from Gold.

There are some specific actions that are required for Gold, such as partnering with another municipality on an initiative, an additional Equity Toolkit, and having three representatives from Town (staff, elected, and a member of a sustainability-related group) attend equity trainings. Because we missed the first of the required equity trainings, the timeline is set back so that the Town will not be eligible for the Gold certification until the April application period.

Bill suggested that Rachel explore the fact that he attended the trainings with Courtney in the past, to see if that might count towards the requirement.

Rachel will work to provide this group and the full Commission a more digestible roadmap of the points that are available and required for Gold certification.

b. Summary and Discussion of Existing Documents
i. ISO-37101

Bill provided an overview of his framework outline document, available on the Commission's Google Drive and MS Teams channel, which consisted of the following sections:

- Purpose
- Leadership/Roles & Responsibilities
 - Create and formally adopt a Town Policy Statement (Vision/Mission Statement)
 - Board of Directors responsible for approving recommended objectives, targets, and measures, funding/resources for related initiatives, and periodically review progress.
 - Departments conducting business consistent with the Sustainability principles included in the framework.
 - Sustainability Liaison & Commission responsible for setting priorities and recommending actions, objectives, and metrics.
- Planning
 - Identify and prioritize sustainability issues facing the Town via interaction with Town, NGO's, and residents.
 - Issues could align with existing actions included in SustainableCT (see below), Manchester NEXT, etc.:
 - Inclusive and Equitable Community Impacts
 - Thriving Local Economies
 - Well-Stewarded Land and Resources
 - Vibrant and Creative Cultural Ecosystems
 - Dynamic and Resilient Planning
 - Clean and Diverse Transportation Systems and Choices
 - Renewable and Efficient Infrastructure and Systems
 - Inclusive Engagement, Communication and Education
 - Strategic Materials Management
 - Optimal Health and Wellness Opportunities
 - Healthy, Efficient and Diverse Housing
 - Efficient, Compassionate Homelessness Prevention
 - Innovative Strategies and Practices
 - Long-term objectives identified (removing food waste from MSW stream, zero emissions from Town operations, etc.)
 - Metrics to measure progress towards those long-term objectives (10% increase in tons of food waste diverted per year, % of utility use from local renewable sources, etc.)
 - Non-metric targets included as well (SustainableCT certification, etc.)
 - Prioritize existing objectives included in Manchester NEXT for completion.
 - Collaboration with outside agencies, other municipalities, nonprofits, etc.
 - Organization of data systems that will contribute to metrics.
- Execution
 - Internal awareness of plan/framework.
- Awareness & Communication
 - To both Town staff and residents.
- Assessment & Review

- Regular internal audits of progress and reports to Board.
- Modification
 - Changes to the system as a result of audits and other external factors.

One aspect of a management system that Bill did not include in his draft but would like the group to consider was a documentation and a records management process or system. Rachel agreed, and added that something like that would be very helpful for SustainableCT, as it could allow metrics to be updated as needed rather than once every few years.

ii. Manchester NEXT

Emma Petersen explained how the Planning & Economic Development department created its implementation matrix for the recommendations included in the most recent POCD update. She clarified that there is some necessary flexibility built into the plan because there are so many recommendations across different areas.

Emma will provide a document for the group that includes all Sustainability-related recommendations or areas where the Commission was called out in a lead or support role.

Bill asked Emma what the procedure was for moving forward with a specific recommendation from Manchester NEXT, since he is unsure how, once our plan/management system is finished, actions get put into motion, since the Working Group or Commission usually can't do it themselves. Emma responded that it depended on the specific action taking place, since some would require Board action, whereas others could be worked on or completed by Town staff.

Austin added that the way the Commission is supposed to function is that recommendations (in this case a recommendation to prioritize certain elements of an adopted planning document) flow from the Commission, via the Staff Liaison, to either the Department Head responsible for that area or the Board of Directors if funding is required or a policy/ordinance change is needed.

iii. Other/Miscellaneous

The group discussed how existing department head meetings could be used to share updates on this project, as well as perhaps transition into one annual sustainability-focused meeting where ideas and progress towards goals can be shared.

Bill suggested that employee progress reports/performance evaluations could be linked to sustainability goals in some way as well.

Gene outlined one of the central problems of planning around sustainability, which is the fact that the Commission can attempt to directly influence the amount of, for example, carbon emissions released via Town operations, but it has significantly less control over the emissions-related practices of residents and businesses in Town. Outreach to resident and businesses will be crucial to meaningful progress.

The group agreed that the Commission should prioritize 3-5 long-term objectives at any given time, with others still included in the final plan but not the focus of funded efforts or initiatives.

Rachel and Austin will work on the following tasks ahead of the next meeting:

- Collect potential long-term objectives and prioritize them according to crossover with other Town planning documents and SustainableCT actions.

- Review the 2019/2020 Sustainability Task Force Report and identify any recommendations that are not currently or were never followed through on.
- Explore potential Mission/Vision Statements and how other municipalities have chosen to formally adopt similar concepts.
- Explore existing documents, in particular the CRCOG Regional Climate Plan and Manchester Resiliency Workshop document, for suggestions on implementations.

3. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on August 8th, 2024.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15pm.