

# **CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

## **SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE**

### **RULES AND PROCEDURES**



Prepared by the Planning and Sustainability Department

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## **SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE RULES AND PROCEDURES**

### **SECTION I: GENERAL**

#### **A. PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of the Sustainability Committee is related to that of its predecessor, the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Committee on Sustainable Practices, which was born from the City's Master Plan in 2005. The overarching goals of the Sustainability Committee are to support and advise on the implementation of the City's climate action plan (Portsmouth's Climate Future) and Renewable Energy Policy, and to increase awareness of sustainable practices as an Eco-Municipality. Further, its purpose is to stand for environmental justice while protecting local eco-systems.

#### **B. ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT**

1. The following Rules and Procedures have been adopted by the Sustainability Committee.
2. These Rules and Procedures may be amended by a majority vote of the Committee.

### **SECTION II: DEFINITION**

The Sustainability Committee is established by Portsmouth City Ordinance, Chapter 1, Article IV, Section 1.414 (Added 10-16-2023). Sustainability can be defined as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987). The UN Sustainable Development Goals form the framework for improving the lives of populations around the world through many lenses, one being the mitigation of climate change.

### **SECTION III: ADMINISTRATION**

#### **A. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP, OFFICERS, ROTATING ROLE, AND QUORUM**

1. Membership: The Sustainability Committee shall consist of members as outlined in the City ordinance.
2. Officers: The Committee shall have two Chairs, to be elected and voted in at the beginning of each calendar year.
3. Acting Chair: In the absence of the Chairs at a regular or special meeting, an Acting Chair shall act as Chair in all matters before the Committee. Members present and constituting a quorum shall appoint a member as Acting Chair for purposes of conducting business at that meeting. The Acting Chair shall have all the powers and duties of the Chair.

4. Rotating Role of Facilitator: In addition to elected officers, the Committee shall have a rotating schedule for a facilitator for each regular meeting. The facilitator schedule for this rotation shall be set at the beginning of each calendar year.

5. Facilitator Vacancy: If a scheduled facilitator is unable to attend a regular or special meeting, a member will volunteer to fill that role, preferably in advance of the meeting.

6. Quorum: A quorum is the minimum number of committee members that must be present for official business to be carried out. A majority of current Committee members defines a quorum for the Committee. To count towards a quorum, members must be physically present.

## B. MEETINGS

1. Notice of Regular Meetings: Regular meetings shall be held the fourth Thursday of the month unless otherwise scheduled. A full year's schedule of regular meetings will be set at the beginning of each calendar year<sup>1</sup>. Meetings shall begin at 6:30 p.m.

2. Special Meetings: These may be called by either of the Chairs or three or more members of the Committee. At least twenty-four hours written notice of special meetings shall be given.

3. Agenda: The Chairs shall provide a meeting agenda with input from the members of the Committee and City staff<sup>2</sup>. This agenda will then be distributed by a City staff member.

4. The meeting agenda shall be publicly posted at least twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting.

## C. ATTENDANCE

Members are subject for removal for unexcused absences pursuant to City Ordinance, Chapter 1, Article III, Section 1.302.

## D. MINUTES

All publicly noticed meetings, including Special Meetings, shall be documented with minutes of the meeting.

## E. VOTING

1. With a quorum present, if a motion is made and seconded by Committee members, a majority vote is needed to pass or deny the motion.

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<sup>1</sup> Available online at <https://www.portsmouthnh.gov>

<sup>2</sup> Agenda items should be submitted to the Planning Department at least five days before the meeting.

A majority vote is defined by the number of votes that is greater than half of the total votes available. The total votes available are based on the number of Committee members present for a vote, including those members not physically present if there is a quorum of members.

#### F. COMPLIANCE WITH NEW HAMPSHIRE’S RIGHT TO KNOW LAW (RSA Chapter 91-A)

1. Meeting Quorum: A meeting is constituted by a quorum. Without a quorum present, there can be no official Committee action taken, although the meeting may take place.
2. Remote Participation in Meetings: When a quorum of members is physically present, one or more members of the Committee may participate in a meeting by electronic or other means of communication when in-person attendance is not reasonably practical. Any reason that such attendance is not reasonably practical shall be stated in the minutes of the meeting. If members are participating electronically and there is a vote, a roll call vote must be taken and recorded in the minutes.

#### SECTION IV: GUIDELINES FOR DECISION MAKING

1. The Committee members may use *Guidelines for Developing Strategies to Advance Sustainability*<sup>3</sup> (adopted by the Committee on 8/22/2024).
2. These Guidelines will be amended by the Committee as needed.

These Rules and Procedures adopted by the Committee on 3/27/2025.

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<sup>3</sup> Available online at <https://www.portsmouthnh.gov/sustainability/sustainability-committee>.