Policies and Procedures for the Sustainability Committee

1.0 General

1.1 Scope and Purpose

The Sustainability Committee is made up of volunteers that serve in an advisory capacity to the government of the Town of Washington Grove, Maryland. The purpose of the Sustainability Committee is to advise the Town Council on matters pertaining to stewardship of resources, mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change. This includes recommendations to the Council and Town residents and other actions as they may pertain to other governmental and non-governmental organizations and any other issues that are referred to the committee.

1.2 Conduct

Meeting attendees and participants shall demonstrate respect and courtesy toward each other and shall allow each participant a fair and equal opportunity to contribute to the meeting discussion. While participating in Washington Grove committee activities, all participants shall act in accordance with all applicable laws, the Washington Grove Town Charter, and the Washington Grove Code of Ordinances.

Membership privileges can be lost through persistent violation of the fundamental principles of operation or disregard of standards of conduct.

1.3 Modifications to These Procedures

The Committee may amend these procedures by two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Committee.

1.4 Conduct of Meetings

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (RONR) will be the guide on questions of parliamentary procedure not addressed in these procedures.

1.5 Fundamental Principles of Operation

For the conduct of Committee business, openness and due process are mandatory.

Openness requires that any person who has, or could be reasonably expected to have an interest, and who meets the requirements of these procedures, has a right to participate by:

a) Attending Committee meetings (in person or electronically)

b) Becoming a member of the Committee

c) Becoming an officer of the Committee

d) Expressing a position and its basis,

e) Having that position considered, and

f) Appealing if adversely affected.

Due process requires that decisions be reached on the basis of at least a majority agreement, but not necessarily unanimity.

2.0 Committee Membership

2.1 Obtaining Membership in the Committee

a. Committee participation is open to any individual and membership is open to town residents.

b. A member becomes eligible to vote at any scheduled meeting of the Committee after he/she has attended at least two of the previous four meetings for at least 50% of the duration of those meetings. Attendance at a meeting via teleconferencing or electronic means, e.g., Internet conferencing, shall count towards the attendance requirements.

c. The member's voting status will be effective at the start of the next meeting.

d. Initial membership is granted to those individuals who were members of the predecessor Sustainability Group on February 14, 2022.

2.2 Committee Membership Roster

The Secretary shall maintain a current Committee roster.

2.3 Subcommittees of the Committee

The Committee may, from time to time, form subcommittees for the conduct of its business. At the time of formation, the Committee shall determine the scope and duties delegated to the subcommittee. Any resolution of a subcommittee shall be subject to confirmation by the Committee.

The Chair of the Committee shall appoint, and may dismiss, the Chair of the subcommittee.

3.0 Officers

There shall be a Chair, Vice-Chair, and a Secretary. A person may simultaneously hold the positions of Vice-Chair and Secretary.

3.1 Election of Officers

The officers shall be elected by a simple majority of voting members and shall serve until they resign or are replaced.

3.2 Temporary Appointments to Vacancies

If an office other than the Chair is vacant for any reason, a temporary appointment shall be made by the Chair. In the case of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall assume the duties of the Chair until a replacement can be elected.

3.3 Removal of Officers

An officer may be removed by approval of two-thirds of the voting members of the Committee meeting in a closed meeting. . The officer suggested for removal shall be given an opportunity to speak prior to the vote on the motion for removal.

3.4 Responsibilities of Committee Officers

When carrying out the activities of the Committee, officers of the Committee:

a) shall not act to the detriment of Washington Grove or to further the interest of any party outside Washington Grove over the interest of Washington Grove.

b) shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that participants of the Committee conduct themselves in accordance with all applicable policies and procedures.

The officers of the Committee shall manage the day-to-day operations of the Committee. The officers are responsible for implementing the decisions of the Committee and managing the activities that result from those decisions.

3.4.1 Chair

The responsibilities of the Chair or his or her designee shall include.

a) Leading the activity according to all of the relevant policies and procedures.

b) Delegating necessary functions.

c) Ensuring that all parties have the opportunity to express their views.

d) Setting goals and deadlines and adhering to them.

e) Being knowledgeable in Washington Grove processes and parliamentary procedures and ensuring that the processes and procedures are followed.

f) Fulfilling any financial reporting requirements of the Committee.

g) Representing the Committee in meetings of the Town government.

3.4.2 Vice-Chair

The responsibilities of the Vice-Chair shall include:

a) Carrying out the Chair's duties if the Chair is temporarily unable to do so.

b) Being knowledgeable in Washington Grove processes and parliamentary procedures and assisting the Chair in ensuring that the processes and procedures are followed.

3.4.3 Secretary

The responsibilities of the Secretary include:

a) Scheduling meetings in coordination with the Chair and distributing meeting notices and agendas.

b) Recording minutes of each meeting.

c) Creating and maintaining the membership roster.

d) Maintaining a current list of the names of the voting members and distributing it to the members upon request.

e) Some of these duties can be delegated by the chair.

4.0 Meetings

Committee meetings may be conducted either exclusively in-person or in-person with one or more participants contributing via electronic means, or exclusively via electronic means. A meeting agenda (including participation information) shall be distributed to all members at least 24 hours in advance of a meeting and publically posted consistent with the Maryland Open Meetings Act. Notification of the potential for action on particular items shall be included in the agenda.

All Committee meetings are open to anyone who wishes to attend. However, portions of meetings may be closed. (See Sec. 4.2).

4.1 Quorum

A quorum shall be identified before the initiation of a vote at a meeting, but if a quorum is not present, actions may be taken subject to confirmation at the next Committee meeting. A quorum shall be defined as a simple majority of the current voting membership. Should there be no quorum, any votes will be deferred until there is a quorum at a subsequent meeting, or by consensus by the members present.

4.2 Closed Session

Meetings to discuss personnel or sensitive business matters (e.g., the negotiation of contracts), or for other appropriate non-public matters (e.g., the receipt of legal advice), may be conducted in Closed Session following the procedures required by the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

4.3 Minutes

The minutes shall concisely record the essential business conducted at the meeting including the following items at a minimum:

a) Date and location of meeting

b) Officer presiding

c) Meeting participants

d) Approval of minutes of previous meeting

e) Approval of agenda

f) Substantive topics

   1) Brief summary of discussion and conclusions

   2) Motions when needed exactly as they are stated, including the names of mover and seconder and the outcome of each motion

g) Action items

h) Next meeting - date, time, and location

All submissions, presentations, and reports considered during the meeting by the Committee shall be referenced in the minutes, identifying the source of the submission. URLs should be provided where possible.

5.0 Voting

5.1 Approval of an Action

Approval of an action requires approval by a majority vote.

6.0 Appeals

Any person dissatisfied with a decision shall present the concern to the Committee which shall either affirm or revise its decision.

Procedural concerns within the Committee shall first be presented to the Chair for resolution. If the procedural concern is not resolved after presentation to the Chair, the concern can be brought to the town government for resolution.