



2026 SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

CITY ORGANIZATION

- Incorporated in 1921 as a Home Rule Charter City
- Weak Mayor- Council Organization
- City Manager



MAYOR & CITY COUNCIL



Rachel James, Council President
2026 Planning Commission Liaison



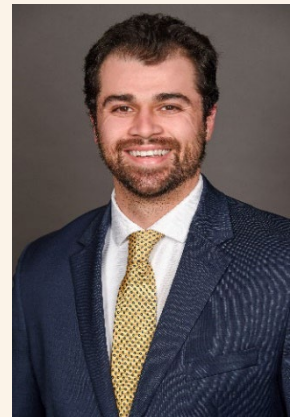
Amáda Márquez Simula, Mayor
2026 Sustainability Commission Liaison



Laurel Deneen, Councilmember
2026 Library Board Liaison



Connie Buesgens, Councilmember
2026 Park and Recreation Commission Liaison



Justice Spriggs, Councilmember
2026 Charter Commission Liaison



CITY DEPARTMENTS & SERVICES

- Administration
 - Public Information and Records
 - Council Support
 - Human Resources
 - Communication
 - Elections
- Finance
 - Disbursements, receipts and billing
 - Payroll
 - Financial Reporting
 - Budgeting
 - Liquor Operations
- Community Development
 - Planning and Zoning
 - Economic Development
 - Building Inspections
- Public Works and Engineering
 - Streets and Parks
 - Utilities
 - Public Improvement
- IT (Information and Technology)
 - Computer Networks, Telephone System, etc.
- Police
 - Public Safety and Policing
 - Community Oriented Policing
 - Crime Prevention
- Fire
 - Fire and Emergency Response
 - Emergency Management
 - Commercial Inspections
 - Rental Licensing
 - Property Maintenance
- Library
 - Public Library Services
 - Adult Enrichment Programming
 - Children Enrichment Programming
 - Public Computer Use
- Recreation
 - Murzyn Hall Management
 - Youth Sports and Enrichment Programming
 - Senior Fitness and Enrichment Programming
 - Adult and Family Sports and Enrichment Programming



CITY MISSION

Columbia Heights is a vibrant, healthy and connected City. We are here to actively support the community, deliver equitable services, build and strengthen connections, improve upon our past, and uphold our successes. We strive to be better and ensure Columbia Heights is a great place for everyone, today and in the future.



SHORT TERM GOALS

1. Develop architectural and financial plan for replacement of the Public Works building, especially as it relates to other priorities (before structural failure)
2. Update Parks Master Plan, develop financing plan, and establish interactive communications about the plans with the community
3. Develop Murzyn Hall renovation plan or identify an alternative new community center plan
4. Prepare long-term, comprehensive plans for single family homes transitioning to rental, including increased tenant/renter protections and new rental licensing program (following moratorium)
5. Update the five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) focusing on long term maintenance and replacement of existing facilities
6. Finalize plans for Central Avenue improvements
7. Establish/Re-Establish the City Art Commission and invest in Public Art
8. Find external grants and evaluate establishing a city grant program for Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) properties
9. Develop a formal process to review goals, develop a system of accountability, and communicate with the public regarding the City Council's goals and strategic plan
10. Build End-to-End communications infrastructure for City buildings and sites
11. Educate staff and elected officials on National Incident Management System (NIMS)
12. Develop and implement integrated online services
13. Complete 43rd and Central PUD approval and initiate construction
14. Improve and expand code enforcement, evaluate point-of-sale program
15. Continue working towards creating a City workforce that accurately represents the community
16. Establish centralized translation services for all departments and provide language support services at all public meetings
17. Strengthen brand awareness across projects, activities, goals, and at the liquor store



PURPOSE OF BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

- Advise and make recommendations to City Council to inform its decisions.

Duties include:

- Gather citizen input;
- Promote and inform;
- Explore alternatives; and
- Weigh in on proposed policy and provide input.



SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

- Meetings: Second Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm.
- Agendas and related materials distributed 3 days in advance.
- All items for consideration must be submitted in writing 10 days in advance with contact info of submitter.
- 9 members plus non-voting Council Liaison. Members are appointed to three-year terms by Council.
- The City Engineer, and City Planner shall serve as ex officio members of the Commission.
- Quorum is 6 members.
- Officers: Chair, Vice-Chair elected annually.



CITY CODE: SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

The Sustainability Commission shall have the following authority and duties per City Code:

(A) Except as otherwise provided with respect to a board or commission, the provisions of this section shall apply to all boards and commissions except the Economic Development Authority, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and the Youth Commission.

(B) *Membership.* Members shall be appointed by the City Council and shall serve at the pleasure of the Council. Members shall be residents of the city. No member of the Council shall serve as a member of a board or commission.

(C) *Terms of appointment.* The following are the terms of appointment:

(1) The terms of members of boards and commissions shall be for a period of three years each. Terms of membership shall be staggered so that no more than one-half of the terms on a board or commission expire in any particular year.

(2) The time period for each three year term will be April 1 to March 31. Upon the expiration of their terms of office members shall continue to serve until their successor has been appointed.



CITY CODE: SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

(3) Members are only eligible to serve two consecutive full terms on a board or commission in addition to any partial term served to complete an unexpired term resulting from a vacancy or an initial term upon creation of a board or commission, except by unanimous vote of the City Council. Upon completion of service on one board or commission, residents can be eligible for appointment to another board or commission, or after a period of at least one year, for appointment to the same board or commission on which they have previously served.

(D) *Vacancies.*

(1) The Council may, but need not, appoint a person for the unexpired portion of the term of a member whose membership has become vacant.

(2) Membership shall become vacant upon the occurrence of any of the following:

- (a) The death of a member.
- (b) The member's resignation in writing.
- (c) Termination of a member's residence in the city.



CITY CODE: SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

(E) *Attendance.* If a member is absent from two or more regular meetings during the board and commission calendar year (April through March), the Staff Liaison or board or commission Chairperson will forward the information to the City Council for consideration of removal. For members whose term begins during a board and commission calendar year, the number of meetings missed will only include those following the beginning of the member's term.

(1) If considered for removal due to absenteeism, a member may submit a letter of explanation to the City Council.

(2) A member may apply for a leave of absence because a serious illness, accident, or family emergency is preventing them from attending meetings. A member who has applied for and obtained a leave of absence granted by the City Council shall be exempt from the attendance requirements during the leave of absence that shall not exceed six months.

(F) *Removal from office.* The Council shall have the authority, in its discretion, to remove any member. A member's removal shall be by majority vote of the City Council.

(G) *Officers.* Each board or commission annually at its first meeting of the board and commission calendar year (April through March) shall elect from its members a Chairperson and Vice-chairperson. The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-chairperson shall preside. In the absence of a Chairperson and Vice-chairperson, members of a board or commission shall appoint an Acting Chairperson to preside during the absence.

(H) *Oath of office.* Every member shall take an oath that they will faithfully discharge the duties of the board or commission to which they were appointed.

(I) *Compensation.* Board and commission members shall serve without compensation.

(J) *Meetings.* All boards and commissions shall hold public meetings regularly as determined by the membership. The public shall be notified of all meetings in accordance with state laws governing open meetings. Members shall be notified of any special meeting or meeting cancellation at least three calendar days in advance, by any means including via telephone, e-mail, home delivery, in person or U.S. Mail.



CITY CODE: SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

§ 3.308 SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION.

(A) Establishment. A Sustainability Commission is hereby established.

(B) Membership. The Sustainability Commission shall be composed of nine members appointed by the City Council. The City Engineer, or a person designated by the City Engineer, shall serve as an ex officio member of the Commission.

(C) Authority and Duties. The Sustainability Commission shall serve as an advisory body to the Council and the administrative service of the city. The Commission shall advise and make recommendations to the City Council on how to operate in an environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable manner within the city on its own initiative, or as referred to the Commission by the Council or the administrative service of the city. The Commission shall conduct public hearings as are necessary to give full consideration to such matters. Written recommendations shall be forwarded to the Council and the City Manager.

(D) Following Council action, the City Manager shall direct the administrative service to act on said recommendation(s).

(E) The Sustainability Commission shall recommend improvements or initiatives related to sustainability as may be necessary and desirable, but shall at all times be subject to the direction and authority of the Council, and the right of the Council to direct that the Commission recommendations be modified or not pursued.

(F) Where required by the laws of the State of Minnesota, consent of any applicable agency officials for recommendations and findings that have impacts to right of way not within the exclusive jurisdiction of the City shall be obtained prior to formal Council action on the Commission's recommendations.



MEMBER DUTIES

Attendance Requirements:

- Attend meetings. Whenever possible, please notify your staff liaison if you will be absent so a quorum can be assured.
- Notification to City Council will occur if you miss three or more meetings during a year.
- Review meeting agenda and packet.
- Must vote on all actions (unless conflict of interest).

Effective Members:

- Recognize that serving the community as a whole is the priority.
- Advocate and inform.
- Are proactive.
- Compromise and work as a team.
- Do not let personal feelings impact judgment.



STAFF SUPPORT

- Develops and posts agendas, minutes, and support materials to the website.
- Resource on City policies and procedures.
- Helps the commission stay within scope.
- Provides technical assistance and prepares background memos.
- Keeps attendance and takes minutes.
- Meeting setup and coordination.
- Notifies interested parties of meeting changes.
- Does not work “for” or at the direction of the board.



ROLE OF COUNCIL LIAISON

- Link between Commission and City Council
 - Helps increase Council familiarity of Board
 - Communicates topics that City Council would like discussed
- Non-voting and generally do not actively participate



ROLE OF COMMISSION CHAIR

- Preside over all meetings.
- Maintain control and order at the meeting.
- Find ways to engage members.
- Encourage a positive tone.



HOW A MEETING IS RUN

1. Commission Chair states the item.
2. Staff member provides overview and background information.
3. Members ask questions and make comments.
4. Item is opened for comment to the public if it is a public hearing.
5. If a public hearing, public hearing is closed after those who wish to speak have and there is another opportunity for member comments and questions.
6. Once discussion has concluded, the board chair will ask for a motion based on the general consensus during the discussion.
7. One member will make a motion and if another agrees they will second.
8. If a motion is made and seconded a vote is made.
9. Motion passes or fails. Additional motions may be proposed.



OPEN MEETING LAW

- Gathering of a quorum or more of a public body where the public body discusses, decides, or receives information on issues relating to official business
- Chance or social gatherings are okay
- Proper notice
 - At least 3 days in advance
 - Date, Time, Place, Purpose (Agenda)
- Open to the public
- Be careful of serial meetings
 - $A \rightarrow B$ and $A \rightarrow C$
 - $A \rightarrow B$ and $B \rightarrow C$



WEBSITE

The screenshot shows the Columbia Heights website homepage. At the top, the navigation bar includes the city logo, the name "COLUMBIA HEIGHTS", the tagline "REDISCOVER THE HEIGHTS", and a menu with "GOVERNMENT SERVICES COMMUNITY PROPERTY & BUSINESS I WANT TO". A search bar and a "Translate" dropdown are also present. A large dark blue overlay menu is open, listing various services such as "Apply", "Obtain A Library Card", "Submit A Signboard Request", "Contact City Staff", and "Make A Payment". To the right of this menu is a vertical sidebar with icons and labels for "Refuse Support", "Payments", "Agendas & Minutes", "Report a Concern", and "Subscribe to Updates". Below the navigation is a "Latest News" section with the subtext "Stay up to date with Columbia Heights" and a "See All News" button. The news section features three images: a police officer, a tree, and the city seal. A notification box on the right side of the news section reads "Award Nominations Due March 31" and includes a link to a "Nomination Form".

Columbia Heights, MN | columbiaheightsmn.gov/index.php

Meetings: Columbia... | MHAPO | Modus Elections Sof... | Candidate Filings | ChatGPT | Revise Online Forms

COLUMBIA HEIGHTS
REDISCOVER THE HEIGHTS

GOVERNMENT SERVICES COMMUNITY PROPERTY & BUSINESS I WANT TO

Translate | Search

Apply
Jobs
Licenses
Permits
Time Of Sale
Contact City Staff
Make A Payment

Obtain A Library Card
Register
E-Notifications
Library Programming
Recreation Programming
Report A Concern

Submit A Signboard Request
View
Agendas & Minutes
City Budget
City Meetings
Rates
Refuse Collection Schedule

Refuse Support
Payments
Agendas & Minutes
Report a Concern
Subscribe to Updates

Latest News
Stay up to date with Columbia Heights

See All News

Award Nominations Due March 31
[Nomination Form](#)
Nominations for the City's Business of the Year and Outstanding Citizen of the Year are due March 31.

