



# Town of Upper Marlboro

Town Hall, 14211 School Lane Tel: (301) 627-6905  
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## MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Town Commissioners  
From: Sarah Franklin, President  
Date: Thursday, July 7, 2022  
Re: Sustainable Communities Working Group

The Sustainable Communities Working Group (SCWG) is a volunteer group for the Town that is responsible for distributing \$50,000 of State grant funds to downtown businesses each year. The group has the potential to access additional resources for the Town but to date has had limited membership, which has hindered its ability to take on larger projects. We believe that the limited membership is due to two main factors:

1. Meetings take place during regular working hours
2. The Committee's name is confusing and does not clearly communicate its purpose.

We will need to begin the search for more members of this committee, particularly after the resignation of long-time chair, Evelyn Stephens on June 28<sup>th</sup>. This leaves the current membership to one Town resident and one resident of a neighboring Town.

One of the Town's interns, Ethan Holley, has been assisting to re-brand the SCWG to better reflect its role as an Economic Development driver for the Town. He has provided the following memo of recommendations for guidance and review. The hope is that we will be able to provide him feedback and direction for us to begin outreach for the expansion of the committee.



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## MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Town Commissioners  
From: Ethan Holley, Intern  
Date: Thursday, July 7, 2022  
Re: Sustainable Communities Working Group

Rebranding the Sustainable Communities Work Group is vital to the longevity of the Town of Upper Marlboro's existing businesses, the introduction of new businesses, and the opportunity to redefine its core mission. The Sustainable Communities Work Group should have a recognizable name that gives the committee clear goals that are immediately understood by the public. A name that eliminates explaining what the committee does would be ideal to attract new members and solidify the committee's focus. I recommend the committee be renamed the **Development and Infrastructure Committee** and be made up of two sub-committees that focus on economic development: the newer initiative, and infrastructure: its older initiative. The sub-committees can be expanded to meet specific needs of development and infrastructure in the town. For example, a residential development or parks and recreation sub-committee.

The Development and Infrastructure committee can present all new projects regarding development and infrastructure from resident suggestions, member suggestions, and previous M-NCPPC Planning Board visions through formal staff recommendations to commissioners. Members can give reports at town meetings of needed or suggested changes regarding development and or infrastructure of the town.

Members of the economic development sub-committee can oversee new and existing businesses and assist the needs of both business owners and workers to provide the best services for town residents. They can also seek economic development opportunities by new incentives, programs, and resources that draw businesses to the town, recognizing and redefining open spaces within town limits that new businesses can call home, and providing training and transparency of worker rights.

Results would be:

- maintaining good relationships with existing business owners,
- a program with funding that attracts specific restaurants the town does not have,
- converting open parking lot spaces and wooded areas to buildings for new businesses,
- holding a job fair,
- or posting agencies that assist with a wide range of worker needs on the town's website. Just to name a few.
- The economic development sub-committee could also explore alternative ways to gather funds excluded from local government.
- A non-profit group able to apply for and obtain grants that the Town only could not receive.

Sustainable Communities Work Group should also advise the Town on issues such as improving town signage, developing town branding, improving sidewalks, improving pedestrian trails, and improving



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roads throughout the town. This introduces the infrastructure sub-committee whose members can: (1) continue distribution of the \$50,000 building improvement program to downtown businesses; (2) review needed roadway, wayfinding, and placemaking improvements; and (3) three, address needed enhancements to climate resilience efforts, the electric grid, and plumbing in the town. This would look like identifying roadways that need to be repaved, need traffic safety enhancements, and needed bike lane additions. As well as identifying pedestrian trails that need extensions and connections, needed signage on roads and intersections, space that can become of public use, and tree limbs that need trimming away from power lines.

The committee's main mission would be the development and infrastructure of the Town of Upper Marlboro while its goal would be Maryland Sustainable Communities and the town Vision Plan. My idea for the Development and Infrastructure Committee is to prepare this committee to easily transition to official government staff in the future.