

Hiring a Sustainability Director Would Be Good for Cleveland Heights

I've wondered why a city with residents as progressive and forward-thinking as Cleveland Heights has doesn't have a sustainability director in place. With pending changes in refuse and recycling practices, perhaps now is the time to hire someone with the right experience and vision to improve the city's overall sustainability practices.

For now, our city could look to Shaker Heights for how to implement sustainability practices. The neighboring city's Sustainability Committee meets monthly to discuss solar energy, recycling, storm water management and more. The committee was created to *expand and implement best sustainability practices for the City, our residents and businesses.*

How would a sustainability director benefit Cleveland Heights?

Reduce Waste and Save Money

A significant benefit of hiring a sustainability director is the potential difference it could make to the city's bottom line. By reducing waste and encouraging more positive environmental practices, money can be saved.

Maintain Focus

A single individual responsible for leading the city's sustainability efforts would assure that programs weren't duplicated. Someone experienced and connected with and knowledgeable about sustainability programs all over the U.S. could develop programs different from what we've developed to date.

Improve Public Perception of Our City

The existence of a sustainability director could result in positively improving the city's image. The message? That the city is taking steps to improve its environmental responsibility. An improved public image would ultimately lead to increased home sales and resulting property tax revenues.

As public pressure came to bear on increased ecological performance, the director's role would expand. Ultimately, the individual's positive impact on the city would be long-term and impressive.

Within Wikipedia's profile of Cleveland Heights, under the category of *Environment*, it simply says, "In 1987, the city of Cleveland Heights was declared a nuclear-free zone." Imagine if it also said, "In 2020, the city embarked on a mission to develop sustainability practices under the direction of a sustainability director that resulted in the city being known as [_____]."

Proposed Position Description of a Cleveland Heights Sustainability Director

Summary

The Sustainability Director shall develop or execute strategies to address issues such as energy use, resource conservation, recycling, pollution reduction, waste elimination, transportation, education and building design. The Sustainability Director shall implement organizational process or policy changes and develop sustainable policies or practices based on the vision of community leaders. The Sustainability Director shall communicate and coordinate with city management, employees and the public about sustainability issues.

Duties

- Identifying key performance indicators (KPIs) to establish how the city and its residents will know whether important sustainability targets have been met
- Measuring the performance of the city's current sustainability practices to have a benchmark from which to improve
- Planning and developing a strategy to improve environmental sustainability
- Communicating this strategy to colleagues, customers, stakeholders and vendors in a way that is easy to understand. This can include hosting training events or producing materials to distribute or using material already available
- Initiating a course of action so that sustainability metrics are gathered and recorded over time, to measure and chart improvements
- Working with other city departments, such as Community Services, Economic Development, Housing, Forestry and Refuse and Recycling, to open lines of communication about changes that will be implemented and the impact they will have on the environment.

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