Sustainability Board

Town of Erie Sustainability Advisory Board Application

All advisory board and commission members will be expected to support the priorities and work plan set forth by the Town Council.

This board meets the **first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM**. You are required to notify your chair if you are going to be absent from a meeting. Failure to attend three consecutive regularly scheduled meetings without a leave of absence approved by majority of the Sustainability Advisory Board could be grounds for dismissal.

Full Name	William Thomas
Are you an Erie resident?	Yes
Are you under the age of eighteen?	No
Home Address	[redacted]
Email	[redacted]
Primary Phone Number	[redacted]
Alternate Phone Number	[redacted]
Employer	United Power
Job Title/Occupation	Distributed Energy Resources Engineer
Have you ever been employed by the Town of Erie?	No
Do you work for or own a company that does business with the Town of Erie?	Yes
If so, please explain	I work for United Power coop electric utility that serves part of Erie.
What is your highest level of education completed?	Masters Degree or Higher

Are you currently serving on an advisory board or commission?	No
Are you currently serving on a board?	No
Are you applying for more than one board?	No

This board meets the **first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM**. You are required to notify your chair if you are going to be absent from a meeting. Only three excused absences are allowed per year.

Why are you interested in serving on a board or commission and what specific talents or expertise do you bring if appointed?	I am interested in serving on the Sustainability Advisory Board because I care deeply about the long-term resilience, affordability, and quality of life in the Town of Erie. As both an energy professional and a parent raising a family here, I believe sustainability is not just an environmental concept—it is about responsible planning, reliable infrastructure, and thoughtful growth that benefits future generations. Professionally, I work in the electric utility sector supporting distributed energy resources, microgrids, battery storage, and electrification programs. My experience includes reviewing energy infrastructure projects, evaluating cost-benefit and performance impacts, supporting grant-funded initiatives, and working across engineering, regulatory, and public-sector stakeholders. This gives me a practical understanding of how sustainability goals intersect with infrastructure realities, budgets, reliability requirements, and long-term system planning. In addition to technical expertise, I bring experience facilitating collaboration among diverse groups. My background in both the military and public utility environments has taught me to approach complex issues with discipline, respect for differing perspectives, and a focus on mission outcomes rather than ideology. I believe effective sustainability work requires balancing ambition with feasibility, and I would aim to contribute thoughtful, data-driven insight to support the Town's goals. Ultimately, I am motivated by service. I see this board as an opportunity to apply my professional knowledge in a way that directly benefits the community where my family lives, works, and grows.
Have you served on another board/commission in an advisory capacity? If so, please describe the board and what made serving in that capacity a good experience? What were the major concerns or issues?	I have not previously served on a formal municipal board or commission. However, I have extensive experience working in advisory and collaborative settings within the utility sector, where I regularly contribute to discussions involving energy strategy, infrastructure planning, and program development. These efforts require balancing technical feasibility, cost considerations, regulatory requirements, and long-term community impact. My professional and military leadership experience has taught me the importance of listening carefully, evaluating issues objectively, and working toward practical, consensus-driven solutions. I believe those skills would translate well to serving effectively on this board.
Please describe a situation where you were working with a small group and disagreed with the direction of the project, what did you do? What was the result?	In a previous role, I was part of a small team designing a positive-pressure respirator for wildland firefighters. I had developed a highly effective rechargeable lithium-ion battery system that offered strong performance and long runtime. When the design went through review, it was returned with a request to redesign it to use AA batteries instead. I initially disagreed, as the lithium-ion system was technically superior in efficiency and space utilization.

	Rather than pushing back defensively, I reached out to the review team to better understand their reasoning. They explained that while the rechargeable system performed better on paper, firefighters in remote field environments often lack reliable access to charging infrastructure. However, they already have established resupply systems for AA batteries. The decision prioritized operational practicality over technical optimization. That experience reinforced for me that disagreements are often rooted in gaps in shared information rather than conflicting goals. By seeking clarification instead of assuming error, we arrived at a design that better supported the end user's real-world conditions. It strengthened the final product and improved collaboration across the team.
If you were appointed, what goals would you like to see accomplished on this board or commission?	If appointed, I would like to see the board focus on practical, measurable sustainability initiatives that align with Erie's continued growth and long-term resilience. As the Town expands, thoughtful planning around energy use, infrastructure, water conservation, and transportation will be increasingly important. One goal I would support is helping the Town identify sustainability actions that are both impactful and financially responsible. That includes exploring grant opportunities, leveraging partnerships, and ensuring that proposed initiatives are grounded in data and long-term cost-benefit considerations. I would also like to see the board serve as a bridge between technical strategy and community understanding. Sustainability efforts are most successful when residents understand both the benefits and the tradeoffs. Clear communication and transparent evaluation of options can help build community trust and support. Ultimately, I would hope to contribute to initiatives that improve resilience, maintain affordability, and preserve the quality of life that makes Erie such a desirable place to live.
Are you aware of the time commitment, and do you have the personal time to devote to this board or commission?	Yes
Upload resume and additional documents (optional)	2025 resume pdf.pdf

Please read and agree with the following statement:

I certify that the facts and statements contained in this Board and Commission Application are true and correct.
I further understand that false statements shall be sufficient cause for rejection of this application.
I further certify that I have not been convicted of a felony under the laws of the State of Colorado or in another jurisdiction.
I understand that falsification, omission or misrepresentation will result in a rejection of this application. Any falsification, omission is representation is evidence of perjury in the second degree.
If I become a board or commission member with the Town, this form is valid for the period of my term with the Town and the crime records may be updated periodically at the discretion of the Town.
I understand that this application is considered a public record and subject to the Colorado Open Records Act.

I Agree	Yes
All board and commission members must follow the rules and regulations in the Erie Municipal Code as well as the Town's policies related to harassment, anti-violence, and technology use.	Yes

Acknowledgement Signature

WILLIAM THOMAS
Erie, CO [redacted]

Professional Summary

Mechanical Engineer and Energy Project Manager with extensive experience supporting energy efficiency, distributed energy, and infrastructure modernization initiatives. Background includes technical design review, performance evaluation, cost and funding justification, and coordination of project documentation across utilities, vendors, and public-sector partners. Has supported energy and resilience projects through early evaluation, design coordination, implementation support, and performance monitoring. Veteran with prior Secret clearance, experienced working in regulated, mission-critical environments.

Professional Experience

United Power Cooperative | Brighton, CO
Distributed Energy Resources Engineer II / Energy Systems Specialist
August 2021 – Present

- Lead for United Power's distributed energy resource initiatives.
- Managed the DERMS platform RFP development and vendor collaboration, enabling control and visibility across EV, battery, thermostats and solar systems.
- Wrote and administered the EV Home Charge Grant, funded through the Colorado Energy Office, expanding residential electrification access for cooperative members.
- Oversaw deployment of EV chargers across the cooperative's service area and EV managed demand response through DERMS system.
- Supported design, procurement, and compliance management for major funded projects including the Fort Lupton Water Treatment Microgrid (DOE-funded) and Microgrid Batteries for Rural Emergency Services Project (DOLA-funded).
- Partnered with internal teams across engineering, IT, member services, and power supply to advance distributed energy integration and prepare for virtual power plant participation.
- Participated in the Cooperative Roadmap Development Process, aligning DER integration and grid strategy with long-term business and community goals.
- Utilized CIS and AMI data for energy use analysis, enhancing program efficiency and member engagement.
- Developed and hosted the United Power EV Showcase, a community car show-style event designed to connect members with cooperative programs, vendors, and staff while promoting awareness of United Power's clean energy goals.
- Represented United Power as a public speaker at multiple energy and utility industry events, sharing insights on DER strategy, electrification programs, and microgrid development.
- Recognized by senior leadership as a High Performer and nominated for the RE Magazine Rising Star 2025 feature.

Mechanical Design Engineer | TDA Research | Golden, CO
September 2020 – August 2021

- Supported R&D initiatives in prototype design and system testing for mechanical and chemical energy systems.
- Created SolidWorks drawings and 3D-printed prototypes; oversaw mechanical design for injection-molded components.
- Conducted performance and reliability testing for clean technology components and developed technical reports for funded projects.

Project Engineer (Part-Time) | Westover Corporation | Denver, CO
December 2019 – March 2020

- Designed and commissioned HVAC control systems and building automation projects.
- Submitted RFIs, adapted schematic drawings, and tested control panel assemblies for commercial buildings.

Project Manager Intern | Denver International Airport | Denver, CO
July 2019 – October 2019

- Assisted with facility management projects, including the Glycol System Modernization and Cooling Tower Liner Replacement at the Central Utility Plant.
- Project lifecycle training
- Six Sigma training focused on efficiency and asset reliability.

Solar PV Technician | NextEra Energy Resources | Blythe, CA
2015 – 2016

- Performed inspection, commissioning, and troubleshooting for the McCoy (250 MW) and Blythe (250 MW) solar projects.
- Conducted high-voltage switching (700V+) and inverter diagnostics (Siemens 2 MW, GE 4 MW systems).
- Monitored and reported energy production for regulatory compliance (FERC).

Wind Turbine Technician | NextEra Energy Resources | Peetz, CO
2014 – 2015

- Troubleshot electrical and mechanical issues on GE 1.5 MW and Siemens 2.3 MW turbines.
- Conducted system diagnostics using SCADA monitoring and root-cause analysis.
- Mentored new technicians in safety, isolation procedures, and field troubleshooting.

Staff Sergeant | U.S. Army Infantry | 10th Mountain Division / 1st Infantry Division
January 2001 – April 2011

- Led teams through multiple combat deployments, including Kosovo (2002) and Iraq (2003–2007).
- Trained over 1,500 personnel in demolition, field safety, and combat leadership procedures.

- Trained and certified: Army Airborne, Warrior Leadership Course, Secret Clearance, Combat Lifesaver, Field Sanitation, Squad Designated Marksman, Dynamic Breaching (explosives), Army/Standard Vehicle Operator.
- Incorporated and trained foreign soldiers in tactics and operational procedures.
- Established operating procedures to optimize efficiency and safety in hazardous environment

Education

Bachelor of Science, Mechanical Engineering
Colorado School of Mines | Golden, CO | 2020

Associate of Applied Science, Renewable Energy Technology (Wind Energy Focus)
Ecotech Institute | Denver, CO | 2014

Certifications, Awards & Recognition

- **Project Management Professional (PMP)** – Project Management Institute
- **OSHA 30-Hour Construction Safety Certification**
- **High Voltage Switching**
- **CPR Certified**
- **Valid Driver's License**
- **RE Magazine Rising Star Nominee (2025)** – Selected by leadership for exceptional performance.
- **Army Commendation Medal (2x)** – For outstanding leadership and service.

Community & Leadership Involvement

- **Erie High School NASA HERC Mentor (2025–Present)** – Mentoring students in mechanical design and prototyping for NASA's Human Exploration Rover Challenge.
- **Youth and High School Football Coach (2014–Present)** – Coach and mentor for Erie Youth Football and Prospect Ridge Academy High School.
- **STEM and Energy Outreach Advocate** – Support youth programs promoting engineering and renewable energy careers.

Key Skills

- Distributed Energy Resource Management Systems (DERMS)
- EV Charging and Residential Battery Program Management
- Microgrid and Energy Storage Development
- RFP and Grant Administration (DOE, DOLA, CEO, CCAE)
- Research and Development Collaboration
- Renewable Energy Integration (Solar, Wind, Storage)
- Cross-functional Team Leadership
- Technical Writing & Communication
- Data Analysis & System Monitoring (AMI, SCADA, CIS)
- Public Outreach and Education