

Being a Good Board Member



Board & Commission Orientation
January 24, 2019



City Hall
ESSENTIALS

Boards & Commissions:

- Can be vital.
- Are key to participatory democratic governance.
- Can serve a crucial function.

Or...

Boards & Commissions:

- Can be a significant drain on staff time.
- Can be distracting and disruptive.
- Can create liability for the city.
- Might become political nightmares.

What Is Your Function?

- **Tasks:** anticipate outcomes, deliverables.
- **Problem Identification:** goal-setting.
- **Problem-Solving:** visioning.
- **Listening:** intake.
- **Legislative:** policy formation.
- **Administrative:** implementation.
- **Adjudicatory:** quasi-judicial.
- **Appellant:** appeals, exceptions.

Who Are The Players?

- **City Officials** (elected, staff, volunteers, contractors).
- **Citizens** (residents, owners, tourists, businesses).
- **Applicants / Vendors** (seeking approvals, contracts).
- **Special Interest Groups.**
- **Regulators** (state, federal, local).
- **Media** (traditional and citizen journalists).
- **Utilities / Political Subdivisions / Districts.**
- **Neighboring Communities** (region).
- **Judiciary** (municipal, state, federal).

What's Your Official Position?

- Chair
- Member
- Staff
- Applicant
- Audience
- Media
- Expert / Consultant



Role Clarification:

- Legislator
- Representative
- Executive
- Administrator
- Advisor / Counselor / Consultant
- Advocate
- Commentator
- Subject Expert
- Information Gather
- Observer

Tribal
Council
Circle



Chairperson: Best Practices

1. **Focuses** on process (not *outcome*).
2. **Remembers** meetings are for board members.
3. **Maintains** a civil & respectful atmosphere.
4. **Proceeds** in an orderly fashion.
5. **Strives** to get necessary people to attend.
6. **Fosters** board member participation.
7. **Promotes** audience engagement.
8. **Ensures** motions and actions are clear.

Traits of Successful Members:

- 1. Show up.**
- 2. Are prepared.**
- 3. Ask staff questions in advance.**
- 4. Are respectful.**
- 5. Are fair.**
- 6. Are consistent.**
- 7. Are brave and speak up.**
- 8. If not ready, don't act.**

Traits of Successful Members:

1. **Avoid** *ex parte* communications (if *quasi* judicial).
2. **Don't** disclose Executive Session data.
3. **Don't** have discriminatory motives.
4. **Anticipate** and address Conflicts of Interest.
5. **Know** the law & rules that apply.
6. **Good stewards** of administrative resources.
7. **Put** community interests above personal.
8. **Focus** on big picture and let staff find a path.

Traits of Successful Members:

1. **Lead** with a positive agenda (+).
2. **Embrace** all matters before the Board.
3. **Are open** to possibilities (open to discovery).
4. **Are supportive** of others.
5. **Share Data** (don't hoard info or ambush).
6. **Seek & Build *Consensus***.

Thank you for serving!

