

Better Board & Commission Meetings



TMCA Capital Chapter Luncheon
West Lake Hills
May 8, 2019



Boards & Commissions

- Often useful
- Often required
- Can be vital.
- Can serve a crucial function.
- Are key to participatory democracy.



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.



Clarification of Rules

- Who is eligible?
- How Appointed / Removed?
- Resources (Staff / Budget)?
- Open Meetings / Open Records?
- Terms (Perpetual / Finite)?



What Is Your Function?

- **Tasks:** anticipate outcomes, deliverables.
- **Problem Identification:** goal-setting.
- **Problem-Solving:** visioning.
- **Listening:** intake.
- **Legislative:** policy.
- **Adjudicatory:** quasi-judicial.
- **Administrative:** implementation.
- **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 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 & actions are clear.

Traits of Successful Members

- 1. Show up** routinely, on time.
- 2. Are prepared.**
- 3. Ask staff questions** in advance.
- 4. Are respectful.**
- 5. Are fair.**
- 6. Are consistent.**
- 7. Are brave & speak up.**
- 8. Don't act** if not ready.



Traits of Successful Members

1. **Avoid *ex parte*** (if *quasi* judicial eg ZBA).
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 & let staff find a path.

Traits of Successful Members

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



Bless our Boards & Commissions!

