



BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT, ETHICS, AND EXPECTATIONS POLICY

Adopted By:
City Council

Revision History:
March 4, 2026 – Initial Adoption

A. PURPOSE

This policy outlines basic expectations for citizen members serving on City boards, commissions, and committees. Its purpose is to protect public trust, support respectful and fair meetings, clarify member and staff roles, and reduce avoidable legal and reputational risk.

B. SCOPE

This policy applies to all appointed citizen members, including alternates and ex officio non-staff members, serving on any City board, commission, committee, or task force. This policy sets baseline expectations and works alongside body bylaws, ordinances, and applicable law.

Each body may recommend bylaws to the City Council for approval, and may adopt rules of procedure or meeting practices to support its work, provided they are consistent with this policy. If a conflict exists, this policy and applicable City rules or law control.

C. CORE EXPECTATION

Members serve the public interest. Members are expected to act with integrity, fairness, respect, and professionalism, and help create meetings where members can participate and the body can complete its work.

D. ROLES AND BOUNDARIES

1. Primary advisory role
 - a. Boards and commissions are primarily advisory. Members provide input, advice, and recommendations within the scope of the body's purpose and authority. Although function is primarily advisory, boards and commissions which are standing boards and commissions of the City must comply with the open meeting law.
 - b. Members focus on community perspective and policy considerations, not day-to-day operations.
2. Planning Commission and Committee of Adjustments
The Planning Commission and Committee of Adjustments sometimes act in roles with legal ramifications, including quasi-judicial matters. When acting in that capacity, additional expectations apply as set forth in this policy.

E. STAFF ROLE

1. Staff support the body by preparing materials, providing professional analysis, and implementing direction from City leadership. Members of the Commission and Board do not oversee staff but rather work collaboratively with staff.
2. Staff manage City operations and the City Manager supervises employees.

F. HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

1. Members should route questions and requests through the staff liaison or the established process for the body.
2. Members should avoid asking individual staff for work outside that process.

G. PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND MEDIA

1. Members may speak as private residents, but should clarify that, in doing so, they do not represent the City or the body. When commenting on matters that are, or may be perceived to be under the purview of a Committee or Commission they are on, members must clearly state that they are speaking in their individual capacity.
2. Members do not make public statements on behalf of the City or the body unless authorized in advance through the City's communications process.

3. Media requests related to the body's work should be directed to the staff liaison or City communications.

H. CONDUCT AND PROFESSIONALISM

Members are expected to:

1. Be respectful toward the public, fellow members, applicants, elected officials, and staff.
2. Focus on issues and standards, not personal attacks or assumptions about motives.
3. Follow meeting procedures and help keep meetings orderly so everyone has a fair chance to be heard.
4. Avoid disruptive behavior, harassment, intimidation, retaliation, or threats in any City-related setting, including meetings and communications.
5. Minimize use of cell phones when at the dais. Use of cell phones is limited to essential communication only, such as receiving urgent messages related to the ongoing proceedings or operational matters. Non-essential use, including personal calls, texting, browsing, or social media activity, should be avoided or, at a minimum, limited. Cell phones must be kept on silent or vibrate mode at all times while seated on the dais.

I. MEETINGS, OPEN GOVERNMENT, AND RECORDS

1. City business should be discussed in properly noticed meetings.
2. Members should avoid serial discussions outside meetings, including "reply all" emails, group texts, and back-and-forth messaging about City business.
3. Members should assume notes, emails, and texts about City business may be public records, including when using a personal device.
4. Members should not share nonpublic information. When unsure, members should ask the staff liaison before sharing information or continuing a messaging thread.

J. ETHICS STANDARDS

1. Conflicts of interest
 - a. Members should disclose potential conflicts as soon as they become aware.

- b. If a conflict exists, the member should step back from discussion and voting on that matter.
- c. When unsure, disclose and ask the staff liaison.

2. Gifts

- a. Except for trinkets of insignificant value defined as \$5 or less, members should not accept gifts, special favors, or hospitality from anyone who has business before the City or could be affected by the body's work.
- b. When unsure, decline or ask the staff liaison before accepting.

3. Use of position

- a. Members should not use their role for personal gain or to benefit family, friends, or business associates.
- b. Members should not use nonpublic information gained through service for personal benefit.

K. ATTENDANCE AND RELIABILITY

- 1. Members are expected to attend meetings regularly when possible and communicate conflicts in advance.
- 2. If attendance becomes an issue, the Chair and staff liaison should start with a conversation to clarify expectations and identify barriers.
- 3. If attendance issues persist, the matter may be referred to the appointing authority consistent with bylaws and appointment terms.

L. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- 1. Members may share general information and encourage civic engagement, but should not imply they represent the City or the body unless authorized through City communications.
- 2. Members should be cautious about making premature public statements on pending or sensitive matters, including on social media.
- 3. Additional restrictions apply to pending quasi-judicial matters under Appendix B.

M. CONCERNS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Concerns may be raised with the Chair, staff liaison, City Clerk, or City Manager's Office.
2. The City will generally start with coaching and clarification of expectations.
3. If concerns are serious or repeated, they may be referred to the appointing authority for action consistent with bylaws and appointment terms, up to and including removal.

N. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND TRAINING

1. Members will receive basic orientation and periodic refreshers focused on practical responsibilities, including open meeting practices, records, and ethics.
2. Members must sign an acknowledgement upon appointment and as requested thereafter.

O. MEETING DECORUM

These rules support orderly meetings and fair participation for everyone.

1. The Chair runs the meeting, recognizes speakers, and maintains order.
2. Members should take turns, stay on topic, and keep discussion respectful.
3. Members should not argue with the public.
4. The City may set reasonable time limits and procedures for public comment.
5. If conduct becomes disruptive, the Chair may give a warning, call a recess, or take other reasonable steps to restore order and complete the meeting.

P. BOARD AND COMMISSION PROCEDURES

1. Each Board and Commission may adopt bylaws, rules and procedures to govern the business of that Board or Commission provided those bylaws, rules or procedures do not conflict with this policy. Formally adopted bylaws, rules and procedures must be forwarded to the City Council for ratification.
2. Each Board and Commission shall be responsible for electing its own officers including Chair, Vice-Chair and other positions as the Board or Commission may define in its bylaws.

3. No member may serve as Chair of a Board or Commission for more than two consecutive years unless there is no other member of the Board or Commission who is willing and/or able to serve as Chair of that Board or Commission.

Q. PLANNING COMMISSION AND COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENTS ADDENDUM

1. Applicability

This Addendum applies whenever the Planning Commission and Committee of Adjustments is acting in a quasi-judicial capacity, meaning it is applying specific standards to the facts of an individual case and making findings based on the public record.

2. Staff Designation

- a. Staff will identify quasi-judicial items in the staff report.
- b. If unclear or omitted, staff will clarify on the record before the public hearing begins.
- c. When in doubt, members should presume that the item is quasi-judicial in nature and the item will be handled using this Addendum.

3. Fair Process and Impartiality

- a. Members must approach the matter with an open mind and avoid statements that suggest the outcome is decided in advance.
- b. Members will treat all parties fairly and apply the same standards to all.

4. Record-Based Decisions

- a. Decisions must be based on information presented at the noticed meeting and included in the record.
- b. At the meeting, members should connect discussion and findings to the applicable standards to create a records of why the body made the decision. Members recognize that findings need to be reflected in writing at the same meeting at which the matter was decided or at the next, subsequent meeting.

5. Off-Record Contacts

- a. Members should avoid off-record discussions about the merits of a pending quasi-judicial matter.

- b. If an off-record contact occurs, the member must disclose it on the record before deliberation and summarize the substance. Any written materials must be provided to staff for the record.

6. Site Visits

- a. Site visits are permitted, but members should not gather new evidence or conduct off-record interviews. Unless properly noticed, members should not attend a site visit with other members if the number of members attending the visit together equals a quorum or more of the committee or commission.
- b. Material observations should be disclosed on the record.

7. Conflicts and Recusal

- a. Members must disclose conflicts or bias concerns as soon as known.
- b. If recused, the member will not participate in discussion or voting on the matter. Depending on the nature of the conflict, the member may or may not be able to establish quorum for purposes of the decision. When able to do so, member should make staff aware of potential conflict prior to the meeting so a conflict analysis can be done if necessary.

8. Public Statements on Pending Cases

Members should not publicly advocate for or against a pending case in a way that could undermine fairness or the appearance of fairness.