



Policy

Unless its enabling legislation specifies otherwise, an advisory group chooses its own chairperson. The term of the chairperson is usually one year.

The chairperson is responsible for setting the proposed meeting agenda, unless the group decides on another procedure. A city staff liaison is assigned to each group and will assist in drafting the agenda, scheduling meetings, and in the preparation and distribution of meeting materials.

Many of the boards and committees have adopted their own rules of procedure. Unless otherwise specified therein, Robert's Rules of Order would generally be followed.

All board and committee meetings are open to the public in accordance with the State of Maryland's Open Meetings Law. A group may convene in closed session only for those reasons set forth in State Government Article 10-508(a) of the Annotated Code of Maryland and should consult with the city clerk prior to a consideration of so doing.

Some advisory groups have standing meeting times; others meet on an "as needed" basis. Each board or committee may meet as frequently as necessary to carry out its responsibilities. A group may also skip a meeting from time to time if there are no agenda items or if a quorum cannot attend. A quorum for conducting business is a simple majority of the membership of the board or committee.

With the exception of meetings where transcripts are required, the minutes should be brief and reflect decisions and recommendations of the group. A copy of the minutes should be sent to the city clerk, who will forward them to the council.

Terms

Terms of appointment are generally three years, but the terms are always staggered. Therefore, when new groups are formed, or new appointments are made to replace resigning members, the initial appointments may be for shorter periods. Thereafter, the terms would be for three years, with the exception of the Board of Elections, which has four-year terms. Task forces formed for specific purposes do not have terms and exist only until their purpose is accomplished.

Prior to the expiration of a member's term, the city clerk will send a letter to the individual with a survey form, notifying the member of the impending term expiration and asking if the member would like to serve another term. The City Council will be provided with the member's response. Members who are interested in being reappointed will be considered along with other applicants.

Members are free to resign at any time, should their personal circumstances prevent continued effective service. A letter of resignation should be submitted to the City Council in care of the city clerk.

Each board and committee member will be given a Certificate of Appreciation upon completion of service. Members who have served five or more years will receive a special gift.

Liaison

Council Liaison

The City Council may assign one of its own members to serve as council liaison to some of the boards and committees. The council liaison will advise the group on issues or on the procedure for bringing matters to council and will attend meetings of the group on occasion, if needed and when scheduling allows. Because it is important that the boards and committees advise council with an independent voice, the council liaison should not participate directly in the group's deliberations nor vote on any matter.

Staff Liaison

A staff liaison is assigned to each advisory group by the city manager. These individuals provide staff support to their respective boards and committees, but they are directly responsible to their department head or the city manager. Their primary role is to facilitate the flow of information between the group and the council.

The staff liaison may participate in the deliberations of the board or committee and offer information, advice and counsel, but is not a voting member of the group.

The staff liaison may assist by initiating the draft agenda, scheduling meetings, reserving a meeting space, preparing and distributing meeting materials, and drafting minutes of meetings. When minutes have been approved by the group, the liaison should forward a copy to the city clerk, who will convey them to the City Council. The liaison should make sure that any formal communications or reports from the advisory groups to council are received at the City Clerk's Office the Tuesday before a regular council meeting.

Each week, the city information ad in the Greenbelt News Review includes public notice of the advisory group meetings to be held the next week. The staff liaison is responsible for giving this information to the Public Information and Communications coordinator no later than the Monday of the week preceding the meeting.