Boards and Commissions Basics

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Roles and Responsibilities
An Overview

Authority

- Authority for the creation of Boards and Commissions can be derived from various sources:
  - ☞ State statutes, e.g. Planning Commissions
  - ☞ Home rule charter, e.g. Planning Commission, Financial Advisory Board
  - ☞ Ordinances or Resolutions

Authority

- Boards and Commissions can be permanent or ad hoc

- May be **advisory** or **decision-making**

- Enabling authority will determine whether Board is advisory or decision-making

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Powers and Duties

- Check the enabling legislation to determine the extent or limits of your policymaking and decision-making authority.

- Clarify the expectations from your City/Town Council or Board of Trustees.

Powers and Duties

- What is the Board's/Council's philosophy? What do they expect from you?

- If unclear, schedule a joint meeting to clarify expectations.

Examples of Boards/Commissions

- Planning Commission

- Economic Development Council

- Transportation Commission

- Financial Advisory Board

- Arts Advisory Board

Examples of Boards/Commissions

- Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Trails Advisory Board
- Liquor Licensing Authority
- Board of Appeals – building codes/zoning
- Zoning Board of Adjustment

Understanding the policy process and your role in it

- What is policy?
  - A policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes, implemented by a course of action.
  - A statement of intent.

Role Clarification

The Trustee's Role

- City/Town Council or Board of Trustees establish policy
- Represent the people (the "trust" in trustee)
- Lay the future course for the municipality

The Trustee's Role

- Know the difference between policy and administrative issues (what vs. how)
- Work in the best interest of the community

The Trustee's Role

- Stay focused on the policy issues
- Appoint members to Boards and Commissions

Board/Commission's Role

- Advisory Boards and Commissions gather information and make recommendations (provide advice) to the policymaking body

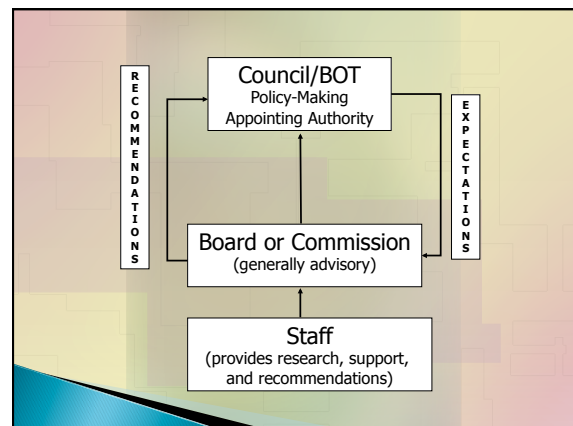- Advisory Boards and Staff <u>can positively influence the formation of policy</u>

Board/Commission's Role

- Advisory Boards and Commissions roles are just that – generally *advisory*

- Some Boards have decision-making authority, e.g. Liquor Licensing, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Board of Appeals

- Which type do you serve?

Staff's Role

- Staff performs the research, provides information, and support to Advisory Boards and Commissions and Council/Trustees

- Staff members stay objective

- Staff implements/enforces policy decisions of the Council / Trustees

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Council/BOT
Policy-Making
Appointing Authority

EXPECTATIONS

Board or Commission
(generally advisory)

Staff
(provides research, support, and recommendations)

Responsibilities

The Individual Board Member...

- Works in the best interest of the community (vs. agenda for personal gain)

- Does their homework

- Stands for their core beliefs

The Individual Board Member...

‣ Demonstrates respect to other Board/Commission members, staff, the public, etc.

‣ Is willing to engage in meaningful debate and can "agree to disagree"

The Individual Board Member...

‣ Follows meeting protocol and ground rules

‣ Stays focused on the discussion

‣ Supports the Chair and helps him/her with their job

Board and Commission Structure

‣ Check your enabling legislation for guidance on how you are structured, for example:
  ➢ number of members
  ➢ frequency of meetings
  ➢ officers
  ➢ eligibility requirements

Board and Commission Structure

‣ Structure and meeting protocol are often left up to the Board or Commission.

‣ Check your enabling legislation – charter/ordinance/resolution.

Meeting Protocol, Working Agreements, Voting Arrangements

If unclear on legislative process or meeting protocol, then have them placed on your next agenda for discussion and agreement.

And Remember...

‣ Know your purpose/authority
‣ Be clear on your role(s)
‣ Have a defined board structure
‣ Establish meeting protocol and working agreements
‣ Respect the process and the people

Questions, Answers & Examples

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