



ADVISORY BOARD PARTICIPATION HANDBOOK

**City of Gainesville's Guide to
Informed Citizen Participation**



City Commissioners

Lauren Poe, Mayor
Gigi Simmons
Harvey Ward
David Arreola, Mayor-Pro Tem
Adrian Hayes-Santos
Gail Johnson
Reina Saco

Administration
Omichele D. Gainey, City Clerk

Dear Neighbor;

This handbook contains the information you will need to better understand your responsibilities as an advisory board/committee member. It also includes some of the rules which govern all board and committee members, such as parliamentary procedures and Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine Law.

The City of Gainesville has an exciting future and we want *you* to be a part of it. Your valuable knowledge and expertise are essential as we prepare for the many challenges ahead.

Again, thank you for serving as an advisory board/committee member. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Lauren Poe, Mayor
City of Gainesville

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City Commission Contact List

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Commissioner Reina Saco, At-Large

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What is an advisory board?

Quasi-judicial, Administrative or Advisory boards and Committees advise the City Commission on a wide range of policy issues and can take certain actions depending on the authority they are granted by legislation. They are created by motions, ordinances, resolutions or Florida Statutes.

Requirements for board/committee members

Board/Committee members should have:

- The expertise necessary to accomplish the board's objectives.
- A reputation for integrity and community service.
- An interest or experience in the board's area of service.
- Sufficient time available to prepare for and attend meetings.

Financial Disclosure

Members of the boards listed below must file financial disclosure forms. A Form 1, Statement of Financial Interest, must be filed with the Alachua County Supervisor of Elections within 30 days of appointment.

Members exiting one of these boards must file a financial disclosure statement within 60 days of leaving. More information and the required forms can be found at: www.ethics.state.fl.us.

Boards which require financial disclosure include:

- **Board of Trustees of the Consolidated Police Officers' and Firefighters' Retirement Plan**
- **City Plan Board**
- **Code Enforcement Special Magistrate**
- **Development Review Board**
- **Gainesville Housing Authority**

Electing Officers

Advisory Board members elect a Chair, Vice-Chair, and any other officers required by their founding legislation or bylaws yearly. Members should not accept a nomination if there is less than a year left in their term. Reappointment is not a guarantee.

Correspondence & Communication

Any use of City government logos or letterhead must be coordinated with the board or staff liaison to prevent misrepresentation of board or City policies. Formal correspondence which states the board's position on an issue should always be coordinated with your staff liaison and approved by the respective Charter Officer.

Staff and board liaisons:

- Create the meeting agenda, with help from the board chair.
- Supply background information on agenda items 1 week in advance of the meeting.
- Attend board meetings in a non-voting capacity.
- Record attendance.
- Take and distribute meeting minutes.
- When requested, staff may make recommendations on agenda items.
- Inform board members of City Commission actions concerning recommendations and appeals.
- Provide technical and administrative assistance to the board.
- Provide initial orientation and continuing education for board members.
- Monitor attendance of members and notify members whose attendance record is in jeopardy.

Board members and staff share these responsibilities:

- Be on time for meetings.
- Know and practice parliamentary procedure, as utilized by the board.
- Be familiar with the issues: review backup information, the agenda and prior minutes before the meeting.
- Be courteous to each other and to members of the public.
- Be open and responsive to questions and concerns.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How often does my board meet?

A. The number of times a board meets depends on its area of service, goals and mission. Please check with your staff liaison regarding meeting times, dates and locations.

Q. What is the attendance policy?

A. Advisory Boards & Committees – 2 excused absences; may be removed for failure to attend less than 50% of preceding 6 meetings where voting took place.

Quasi-judicial and Administrative Boards – 1 excused absence; may be removed for failure to attend 4 or more consecutive meetings or attend less than 66% of preceding 6 meetings where voting took place. (City Code of Ordinances, Art. V, Div. I, Sec. 2-247)

Q. How long will I serve?

A. Board members must only serve two (2) consecutive terms, except for the City Plan Board, Development Review Board, Historic Preservation Board and the Police Advisory Council. SHIP – Affordable Housing Advisory Committee members may serve up to three (3) consecutive terms.

Q. What if I can't finish my term?

A. Submit a letter of resignation to your City staff liaison and Board Chair.

Q. May I serve another term?

A. Yes, but you will need to reapply at the end of your term.

Q. May I serve on more than one board at the same time?

A. Yes, you may serve on two advisory boards or one quasi-judicial and one advisory board.

Q. Who do I call if I have a question about advisory board procedures or need more information on some aspect of City operations?

A. A staff or board's liaison or designee will be in attendance at all meetings and are available by phone/email.

Florida Sunshine Law & Public Records

Florida's Sunshine Law was enacted in 1967. It establishes a basic right of access to most meetings of boards, commissions and other governing bodies of state and local governmental agencies or authorities. The Sunshine Law requires:

- 1) Meetings of public boards or commissions must be open to the public;
- 2) Reasonable notice of such meetings must be given;
- 3) Minutes of the meetings must be taken and promptly recorded.

The Sunshine Law applies to elected and appointed boards and committees at the state and local level and to any gathering of two or more members of the same board to discuss some matter that will foreseeably come before that board for action.

Florida's Public Records Law provides a right of access to the records of state and local governments. Public Records include all materials (e.g. e-mails, sound recordings, software, etc.) made or received by a public entity or representative used to perpetuate, communicate, or formalize knowledge in connection with the transaction of official business. Every person who has custody of a public record shall permit the record to be inspected and copied at a reasonable time by any person desiring to do so.

- Most of what members say or do at a board meeting is public record.
- If you receive requests from citizens or members of the news media for public records in your custody, you must (with certain limited exceptions) provide access.
- Members and/or City staff may not manipulate the timing of the release of public records.

Meeting Guidelines

- Review background material before the meeting.
- A quorum of the board must be present to take action.
- The Chair is in charge of the meeting.
- The board may establish and publicize general guidelines governing the length of presentations and public participation.
- After any presentations and public participation, the board members may ask questions.
- A voting board member should make a motion to the issue at hand. After the motion is seconded, the Chair can open the floor to board discussion.
- The vote then takes place.

Voting conflicts

Members must not vote on an issue that may result in a special private gain or loss to them or their relatives, business associate, or employer/client. (ie. The member owns something that would be affected by the vote)

If the conflict is known prior to the meeting:

- File a memorandum of voting conflict with the board/staff liaison prior to the meeting.
- Member may participate in the discussion, but must abstain from voting.

If the conflict is unknown prior to the meeting:

- Disclose orally at meeting on the record.
- Within 15 days of the meeting, file a memorandum of voting conflict with the board/staff liaison.
- Member may participate in the discussion, but must abstain from voting.

Members should contact their board/staff liaison and the City Attorney's Office (352-334-5011) if they have a voting conflict question.

Parliamentary Procedure

These common sense rules allow for the orderly flow of ideas and discussion and are widely used to govern meetings.

Please reference this online guide to parliamentary procedure and Robert's Rules

<http://www.msulocalgov.org/technicalassistance/Parliamentary%20Procedure%20and%20Roberts%20Rules.pdf>

OTHER INFORMATION

The City Clerks' Office Advisory Board and Committee webpage has information on all of the boards and committees that the City Commission makes appointments to.

On this website you can find:

- Advisory board and committee descriptions
- Staff and board liaison contact information
- Member rosters for each advisory board and committee

Additional information, as well as a copy of this handbook, is available online at
<http://www.cityofgainesville.org/ClerkOfTheCommission/AdvisoryBoardsCommittees.aspx>

For assistance please call the Office of the City Clerk at (352) 334-5015.
