

## **BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

### **Purpose of Advisory Boards and Committees**

All boards and committees not otherwise empowered by New York State Statute and/or Town Code shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Town Board. The purpose of these boards and committees is to provide the Town Board with background information and analysis to achieve the objectives set by the Town Board. They are not a civilian oversight body or an independent authority but rather a resource for the Town Board to call upon. The Town Board, as the elected representatives of the people may not designate any authority to any board or committee unless specifically authorized by state statute.

Advisory Boards and Committees play an essential role in local government by providing counseling and advice regarding the handling of a proposed application or project to the Town Board. The Town Board can consider whether or not to accept the recommendations given to them by the advisory boards and committees.

### **Scope of Authority**

1. Unless specifically stated otherwise in Federal, State, County or local Law or in the Town Board Resolution creating the board or committee, no board or committee shall have any independent authority.
2. To the extent that a board or committee is given any authority by federal, state, county or local law or by the resolution creating the board or committee such authority shall be strictly limited to that which is explicitly given in statute.
3. The scope of what business may be conducted by any board or committee beyond what is legally required shall be determined by the Town Board.
4. All committees are bound by the Boards and Committees Rules of Procedure which shall be established by resolution of the Town Board unless a local law or Town Board Resolution specific to the board or committee in questions explicitly requires deviation from the standard procedures.
5. Committee members, although volunteers are considered employees of the town and all employment policies apply.
6. Board and committee members are indemnified by the Town and covered by the Town's insurance policy for all legal actions undertaken in their official capacity.

### **Advisory Committees**

The Town Board may from time to time create advisory and/or "ad hoc" committees to aid the Town Board in the performance of its duties to the public. The Town Board is the appointing authority for advisory committees. The Town Board prepares the charge, sets the number of members and their terms, approves the membership and receives the reports and recommendations of an advisory committee. Advisory committees may be temporary for short term assignments or may have ongoing responsibilities. When a committee is appointed on a temporary basis for the purpose of a specific goal (i.e. "ad hoc"), the members will serve until the Town Board determines the committee assignment has been completed.

### **Ethical Standards/Working Relationships**

**As a member of a multi-member Board, Committee or Commission, in relation to the community, a member should:**

- A. Realize that he/she is one member of a team and should abide by, and carry out, all Board/Committee decisions once they are made,
- B. Recognize that the use of any official Board/Committee letterhead for correspondence purposes must originate from within the Board/Committee Office to assure strict compliance to the guidelines pertaining to the use of the Town Seal
- C. Be well-informed concerning the duties of a Board/Committee member on both the local and state level,
- D. Remember that he/she represents the entire community at all times,
- E. Accept that being a Board/Committee member is a means to provide community service and not to benefit personally or politically from his/her Board/Committee activities,
- F. In all appointments, Board/Committee members must avoid political patronage by judging all candidates on merit, experience and qualifications only,

**As a member of a Board, Committee or Commission, in his/her relations with administrative officers and staff of the Town, a Board Member should endeavor to:**

- A.** Establish sound, clearly defined policies that will direct and support administration of affairs for the benefit of the taxpayers of Shelter Island.
- B.** Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and decline to act on complaints as an individual outside of proper administrative channels,
- C.** Provide the Town Board with the time, support, information, and access as necessary to perform the daily functions of the office and to keep personal needs and contacts to a minimum so as to not disrupt the timely execution of his/her duties.

**Conducting a Meeting**

It is advisable for the committee to observe a minimum of generally accepted parliamentary procedures and boards are encouraged to follow Robert's Rules of Order. Guidance by the chair and adherence to customary parliamentary procedures or adopted rules of order can increase efficiency as well as maintain objectivity. Briefly, these procedures include:

- Decisions of the board or committee should be recorded by a member making a "motion" which clearly states what action the Board will be voting on. In order for a "motion" to be acted upon, it must be "seconded" by another member.
- In most instances, a decision is made by a simple majority vote of those board or committee members present and voting at the meeting.
- Votes taken in open session by a governmental body may **not** be made by secret ballot.

Members of the public should be allowed to speak at a board or committee meeting only with permission of the chair. Any person may record a meeting with a tape recorder or any other means of audio reproduction and/or videotape equipment provided they announce their intention to do so and there is no interference with the conduct of the meeting. It is encouraged, whenever possible, that Town boards and committees broadcast their meetings live and/or record the meeting for future broadcast.

**Virtual Meeting Etiquette**

1. Set your profile up with your full name, and if desired, the position or entity you represent. This will ensure meeting participants and viewers watching the meeting know who you are and meeting minutes are accurate.
2. Mute yourself when you're not speaking or actively involved in the conversation.
3. Notify the meeting organizer if you'll be late or unable to attend, so the meeting can proceed accordingly.
4. Please arrive (or logon) to a meeting several minutes prior to the start to ensure a prompt start of the meeting.
5. Prepare for meetings by reviewing the agenda, prior meeting minutes, and meeting materials in advance to be able to ask questions and participate fully and knowledgeably in a meeting.
6. Review your background to ensure optimal video quality for viewers and to avoid distractions. Be aware of your background as you are an official representative of the Town.
7. Please dress for the virtual meeting as you would at an in person meeting and bear in mind that you may need to get up or stand at some point and the other participants will view whatever is in the scope of your camera.
8. Consider the potential for outside noise, traffic, etc. and choose a quiet area if possible. If you can hear it, others can too. Arrange for care for children and pets to avoid distractions.
9. Refrain from all activity that you would not partake in when in a conference or meeting room. No smoking, vaping or consuming alcoholic beverages. Conduct yourself as if you were all sitting in a room together.
10. Close out of all other programs on your computer to avoid anything inappropriate from accidentally being viewed by other participants. An inappropriate incident could cause liability to you, your board, or the Town.
11. Be an active meeting participant. When interrupted or unable to be active please turn off camera and microphone and return visibly to the meeting when able. Remote participants may not actively participate in the meeting while driving a motor vehicle or anything else that would compromise the safety of the participant or be a distraction during the meeting.
12. If you are an active listener during a meeting, be sure to turn off your microphone and video until you are called upon to participate or want to provide information or comment during discussion.
13. It is recommended to turn off your device's notifications so you're not getting pop-ups during the meeting.
14. Say your name before you begin speaking the first time and/or if you are off camera. The speaker isn't obvious during virtual meetings, especially if there are a large number of participants.

## **Quorum**

Except as otherwise specified by law, a majority of the regular members of the board constitutes a quorum. A quorum must be present to call a meeting to order and a decision ordinarily requires the supporting vote of a majority of the members present and voting.

In the absence of a quorum, the meeting must disband and no deliberation or votes can be taken.

## **Board and Committee Membership Qualifications**

1. Members are to be selected for expertise and skills that they bring to the board or committee as determined by the Town Board.
2. Each Board and Committee requires diverse skills and selections should be made in a manner that takes advantage of this diversity or abilities.
3. Any person, including an elected official, officer of the town or town employee is eligible to serve upon or chair on any advisory committee.
4. There is no residency requirement for service on a town committee. Members of the planning and zoning boards must be electors of the Town of Shelter Island.
5. There is no prohibition to any one person serving on multiple committees so long as the Town Board is aware of this issue at the time of appointment and there is no finding that a conflict of interest exists.

## **Procedures for Appointment of Committee Members**

1. Term ends or Board or committee member sends resignation to Town Clerk. (Vacancies for any reason other than the expiration of term are to be filled by the Town board for the remainder of the unexpired term of the departing committee member.)
2. Town Clerk notifies Town Board.
3. Board Determines any special Skills of Qualifications desired.
4. Town Clerk arranges for and advertises the position.
5. All applications and resumes are sent (or redirected) to the Town Clerk.
6. The Town Clerk sends a confirming letter to each applicant acknowledging the application and requesting more information if necessary.
7. The Town Clerk distributes the application packets to the Town Board, Town Attorney and board or committee chair.
8. After at least seven (7) days have passed since the advertisement posted the supervisor's office shall schedule interviews.
9. The Town Board shall conduct the interviews including the board or committee chair in the process (as a non-voting member).
10. After all interviews are conducted the Town Board shall deliberate and decide upon a candidate.
11. The Supervisor shall notify all applicants of the results.

## **Reappointment of Board or Committee Members**

At the end of the term of any serving member, the Town Clerk shall advise the Town Board of the expiration of the term. At the discretion of the Town Board, the member may be asked to remain for a subsequent term. There shall be no right to reappointment. If the Town Board chooses not to reappoint the member it shall follow items 3 through 11 of **Procedures for Appointment** above.

## **Selection of Board and Committee Chairs**

1. When the position of board or committee chair is created or vacated, the board and committee shall submit to the Town Board its recommendation to fill the position or, if no consensus can be reached defer to the Town Board.
2. All board and committee chairs including the Planning Board (New York Town Law § 271) and the Zoning Board (New York Town Law § 267) are to be ultimately selected by the Town Board and serve at the pleasure of the Town Board
3. If a chair steps down the board or committee may appoint an interim or acting chair until the Town Board acts.

## **Discipline of Board or Committee Members**

### **Suspension & Removal**

With the exception of members of the planning and zoning boards whose terms of service are governed by state law, all members of all boards and committees serve at the pleasure of the Town Board and may be suspended or removed for any reason from the board or committee and/or from any office thereof by resolution of the Town Board. In addition to misconduct, the Town Board may remove a member of a board or committee if, in the estimation of the Town Board, such person's continued service on the committee is detrimental to the function of the committee as a whole or frustrates the purpose for which the committee was established.

### **Interim Suspension**

The Town Supervisor may suspend any member from any board or committee or from any office thereof for the reasons stated above, where in the Supervisor's estimation the member's continued service inhibits the member's on the board or committee is not in the best interest of the Town. Such suspension should be in writing and will continue until the Town Board has an opportunity to consider the matter.

## **Town Board Liaisons**

1. The Town Board liaison(s) shall be an ex-officio member of the board or committee. As such the liaison(s) shall sit with the board or committee and have a voice in its proceedings but no vote.
2. The liaison(s) shall communicate to the board or committee any directions or priorities for the board or committee established by the Town Board.
3. It is the responsibility of the liaison to ensure that the board or committee follows the direction intended by the Town Board
4. The liaison(s) shall informally report back to the Town Board after each meeting. This is not a substitute for the formal written report that the board or committee must provide to the Town Board after an action has been taken.
5. On matters of the jurisdiction and scope of the board or committee, the Town Board Liaison shall speak for and with the authority of the Town board and shall have the power to interpret any ambiguity in the Town Code regarding the role or function of the board or committee until such time as the full Town Board can decide the matter.
6. If the committee chair is absent for any meeting, the Town Board Liaison shall open and chair the meeting until a temporary or replacement chair is selected.