



Council Conference Meeting

December 09, 2024

5:30 PM

Fridley City Hall, 7071 University Avenue N.E.

Agenda

Agenda

1. Proposed Commission Onboarding Manual (Revised)

Accessibility Notice:

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- Si necesita ayuda de interpretación o traducción gratis, comuníquese con el personal de la ciudad.
- Yog tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus los sis txhais ntaub ntawv dawb, ces thov tiv tauj rau Lub Nroog cov neeg ua hauj lwm.
- Haddii aad u baahan tahay tarjumaad bilaash ah ama kaalmo tarjumaad, fadlan la xiriir shaqaalaha Magaalada.

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AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: December 9, 2024

Meeting Type: City Council Conference Meeting

Submitted By: Danielle Herrick, City Manager Intern
Melissa Moore, City Clerk

Title

Proposed Commission Onboarding Manual

Background

At the November 25, 2024 City Council Conference Meeting, the Commission Onboarding Manual was presented to the Fridley City Council (Council) for review and feedback. The Council requested the following revisions to the Social Media Use subsection of the manual:

1. Include specific examples of problematic social media posts, recognizing that people have varying levels of social media experience and different interpretations of what constitutes problematic content
2. Include examples of social media policies from other cities regarding personal use

The revised manual will be presented to the Council for review and discussion.

Focus on Fridley Strategic Alignment

☐ Vibrant Neighborhoods & Places	☐ Community Identity & Relationship Building
☐ Financial Stability & Commercial Prosperity	☐ Public Safety & Environmental Stewardship
☒ Organizational Excellence	

Attachments and Other Resources

- Commission Onboarding Manual (Revised)

Vision Statement

We believe Fridley will be a safe, vibrant, friendly and stable home for families and businesses.



Commission Onboarding Manual

Updated 2024





Welcome,

On behalf of the City of Fridley, I would like to extend my gratitude for your willingness to serve our community as a member of one of our commissions. Your dedication to volunteering your time, expertise, and passion is truly commendable and essential to the growth and development of our City.

Our mission remains clear: "We believe Fridley will be a safe, vibrant, friendly and stable home for families and businesses." This vision guides everything we do, and your role as a commission member is crucial in helping us achieve this goal. Whether you're serving on the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Environmental Quality and Energy Commission, Charter Commission, Public Arts Commission or the Housing & Redevelopment Authority, your unique perspectives and experiences will contribute significantly to shaping the future of Fridley.

This handbook is designed to provide you with valuable information about the operation of our local government, the roles and responsibilities of commission members, and the general operating policies that will guide your service. It serves as a resource to support you in your efforts to fulfill the City's mission.

Once again, thank you for stepping forward to serve our great City. I am confident that you will find this experience rewarding, and I look forward to the positive impact your contributions will have on Fridley.

Scott Lund
Mayor, City of Fridley



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Purpose

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide to general policies and procedures that apply to commission members for the City of Fridley (City). As a new Commission member, we recommend you review the City's mission, recent agendas and minutes from your appointed commission to understand ongoing issues.

While not exhaustive, this manual outlines key expectations and practices to guide your service, summarizes how commissions relate to overall City operations, and provides a foundation for your role. It's designed to be a helpful reference, but does not incorporate all material and information necessary to be an effective member of a commission. Remember that your commission liaison is always available for additional support or clarification.

City Government Overview

This section provides an overview of the City's governance structure, outlining the roles and responsibilities of key entities and individuals involved in City operations. Understanding this structure will help you navigate your role as a commission member more effectively.

Form of Government

The City operates under a council-manager form of government, as established by the City Charter. In this system, the Council acts as the policy-making and legislative body, while the City Manager is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the City. Residents of Fridley are represented by the Mayor and four Councilmembers.

Mayor and Council

The Mayor and the Council are elected positions and are collectively referred to as 'the Council'. The Council relies on the six commissions to guide them on decision making as it relates to the special interests of said commission. Generally, the Council appoints members to commissions and can remove members from commissions.

Commissions

Commissions are vital components of Fridley's governance structure, established by the City Charter provision, City Code, and/or Statute. As a Commission Member, you play a crucial role in providing ongoing input on major policy areas and helping shape the future of Fridley.

Responsibilities of Commission Members:

- Attend and actively participate in all commission meetings, ensuring thorough review and discussion of agenda items.

- Provide ongoing recommendations to the Council and staff regarding your commission's specific focus area.
- Identify issues within your commission's purview that should be addressed by the Council or staff.
- Engage with the community to gather input and provide education on policy issues and concerns related to your commission's work.
- Collaborate with other commission members to develop comprehensive and well-considered recommendations.
- Stay informed about current issues, trends, and best practices relevant to your commission's area of focus.
- Represent your commission at community events or meetings when appropriate.

This manual provides more detailed information on each commission in the [Types of Commission](#) section.

City Manager

The City Manager is responsible for the overall management of City operations, including budgeting, planning, personnel, legal issues, economic development, and intergovernmental functions. The City Manager serves as a key liaison between the Council, city staff, and commissions. They can be thought of as the chief executive officer.

Department Directors

City work is divided into six departments with department directors: Community Development, Employee Resources, Finance, Parks and Recreation, Public Safety and Public Works. The Department Directors play an integral role in ensuring the effective and efficient functioning of the City. They provide the specialized knowledge, leadership, and management to translate the Council initiatives and priorities into tangible projects and services that benefit the community. As a commission member, you may interact with Department Directors when the Director also acts as a staff liaison or their expertise is relevant to your commission's work.

City Attorney

The City contracts legal services to external firms. The City Attorney provides legal advice and attends Council meetings as needed. If your commission requires legal guidance, this should be coordinated through your staff liaison and the City Manager.

Staff and Departments

City staff are responsible for carrying out the day-to-day operations of the City. They implement policies set by the Council, provide services to residents, and support the work of commissions through staff liaisons. Each commission is assigned a staff liaison who serves as a primary point of contact between the commission and city administration. Staff liaisons assist with meeting preparation, provide information and resources, coordinate with other departments, and help facilitate the implementation of commission recommendations.

Staff fall into seven departments, each playing a vital role in city governance:

1. **City Manager's Office:** This department oversees city administration, implements Council policies, maintains the City Code and the City Charter and serves as a key liaison between the Council, city departments, and commissions. This department works closely with the Charter Commission.
2. **Community Development:** This department oversees planning, zoning, building inspections, and economic development. It often works closely with the Planning Commission, Environmental Quality and Energy Commission, and Public Arts Commission and may interact with other commissions on development-related matters.
3. **Employee Resources:** Managing human resources, recruitment, and employee benefits, this department ensures the City has the personnel needed to carry out its functions effectively.
4. **Finance:** Handling budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting, the Finance department plays a crucial role in the city's fiscal health. Its work may inform decisions across all commissions.
5. **Parks and Recreation:** This department organizes recreational programs and establishes policies for use of Fridley's park system. It works closely with the Parks and Recreation Commission and may collaborate with others on environmental or community engagement initiatives.
6. **Public Safety:** Encompassing both police and fire services, this department ensures community safety. While it may not frequently interact with most commissions, its work is fundamental to the city's well-being.
7. **Public Works:** Managing city infrastructure, including roads, water, and sewer systems, this department's work often intersects with various commission concerns, from environmental issues to city planning.

Commissions Overview

Commissions play a vital role in Fridley's governance structure, serving as advisory bodies to the Council. As a commission member, you are an essential part of the City's decision-making process, providing expertise and community perspective on important issues.

Legal Authority and Responsibility

This section outlines the legal basis for Fridley's commissions and your responsibilities as a commission member. Understanding this framework is crucial for effective service and ensuring that your actions align with the City's governance structure and legal requirements.

The City of Fridley, as a Home Rule Charter City, has the authority to establish commissions as part of its governance structure. This authority is derived from the Minnesota Constitution and various statutes that allow cities to create their form of government.

Commissions derive their authority and responsibilities from the City Charter, ordinances, or resolutions that establish them. Some commissions are also required or authorized by state

statute. To ensure effective service, each commission member should be well-informed about the matters presented to their commission, understanding their implications and potential consequences.

The specific powers and duties of each commission are outlined in the establishing ordinance or resolution. These may include (but are not limited to):

- Providing recommendations to the Council on specific policy areas
- Conducting research and analysis on specialized topics
- Engaging with the community to gather input on relevant issues
- Reviewing and providing input on proposed city projects or initiatives

Commission members serve in a nonpartisan capacity, and all actions taken should prioritize the public's welfare. When considering actions or recommendations, commission members should be familiar with their responsibilities and powers as outlined in the relevant laws, regulations and bylaws. It's essential to act transparently, honestly, and in good faith, following all legal and procedural requirements. When uncertain about the appropriateness or legality of an action, it's always prudent to consult with the commission's staff liaison.

Roles and Responsibilities

This section outlines the key roles within the commission structure and their responsibilities, helping you understand your position as a commission member and how you interact with other city entities.

Role of Chair and Vice Chairs

Chairs of commissions are appointed by the Council, with the vice chair being elected by the commission members. The Charter Commission and the Housing Redevelopment Authority are exceptions because their Chair and Vice Chair are appointed by the procedure in their by-laws.

Generally, the Chair presides at all official meetings and generally ensures that the Commission reviews and acts upon the items on the agenda. The Chair should ensure that decisions are made in a timely manner, yet be careful not to limit discussion-assuring that commission members have an opportunity to be heard. The vice chair aids the chair in these responsibilities and acts as the Chair when the Chair cannot attend a meeting.

Responsibilities of the Chair:

- Lead all commission meetings
- Work with the staff liaison to set meeting agendas
- Facilitate discussions and ensure all members have a chance to contribute.
- Maintain control of the meeting, including managing public input and interactions
- Act as the primary liaison between the commission and the Council when necessary

Staff Liaison

Each commission is assigned a member of staff called a staff liaison. The staff liaison acts as a crucial link between the commission and city staff. The staff liaison typically has expertise in the commission's area of focus. Their role is to support the commission's work and ensure effective communication between the commission, city staff, and the Council.

Key responsibilities of staff liaisons include:

1. **Meeting Preparation:** Generate meeting agendas, compile necessary background information, and ensure materials are distributed to commission members in a timely manner.
2. **Information and Expertise:** Provide professional knowledge and insights related to the commission's area of focus. This may include updates on city projects, explanations of policies or regulations, and context for issues under consideration.
3. **Administrative Support:** Assist with scheduling meetings, securing meeting locations, and managing commission-related correspondence.
4. **Facilitation:** Help guide discussions during meetings, ensuring that conversations remain productive and aligned with the commission's goals and responsibilities.
5. **Council Communication:** Work with the commission to prepare and present recommendations to the Council. This includes drafting reports and helping commission members understand the Council's decision-making process.
6. **Orientation and Training:** Assist in onboarding new commission members, providing them with necessary background information and explaining commission procedures.
7. **Compliance Oversight:** Ensure that the commission operates in compliance with relevant laws, including open meeting laws and data practices regulations.
8. **Resource Coordination:** Connect the commission with other city departments, external experts, or resources as needed to support their work.
9. **Continuity:** Provide historical context and institutional knowledge to support the commission's ongoing work, especially as membership changes over time.

The staff liaison is a valuable resource for your commission. They can help you navigate city processes, access needed information, and ensure that your commission's work aligns with and supports the city's overall goals and operations. While staff liaisons provide support and guidance, it's important to remember that they do not vote on commission matters or make decisions on behalf of the commission.

Relationship with Council

Commissions play a crucial advisory role to the City Council, serving as a bridge between the community and local government. Here's how this relationship functions:

1. **Analysis:** Commissions often have bandwidth to focus on areas within the expertise of that commissions, conduct research and analysis that the Council may not be able to do given their broad responsibilities.
2. **Communication Channels:**
 - Typically, at least one joint meeting with the Council per year is held for some commissions.
 - For guidance or clarification, commissioners should communicate with their staff liaison.
 - The staff liaison can represent the Council's perspective or facilitate the commission chair to present or speak with Council at City Council Conference Meetings if needed.
3. **Expertise and Community Perspective:** Commissioners bring specialized knowledge and community input to complex issues, helping the Council make more informed decisions.
4. **Guided by Council Needs:** Commissions are guided by the needs of the Council through their staff liaison. This ensures that commission work aligns with Council priorities and objectives.
5. **Long-Term Planning:** Commissions often work on long-term projects and plans, providing continuity and vision that extends beyond election cycles.
6. **Policy Development:** Commission recommendations can form the basis for new city policies or programs or update existing ones.

While commission recommendations carry significant weight, the final decision-making authority typically rests with the Council. The role of commissions is to provide the best possible advice based on expertise, research, and community input, thereby supporting the Council in making well-informed decisions for the city.

Completion of Service and Member Removal

While we hope your service will be long and rewarding, it's important to understand the circumstances under which commission service may end. This section provides information on term completion, resignation, and the rarely-used removal process.

Reasons for Early Completion of Service:

1. **Resignation:** Members may choose to resign from their position at any time by submitting a written notice to the City Clerk or their commission's staff liaison.
2. **Attendance:** Regular attendance is crucial for the effective functioning of commissions. Extended absences or frequent missed meetings may result in a review of membership.
3. **Term Expiration:** Members serve for specified terms. At the end of a term, members may be reappointed or may conclude their service.
4. **Commission Dissolution:** In rare cases, if a commission is dissolved by the Council, all member terms would naturally conclude.

Removal Process:

The Council has the authority to remove commission members, aside from the Charter Commission (Charter Commission members must be removed by the Court). This authority is exercised rarely and with careful consideration. Reasons for removal might include:

- Violation of ethics policies or conflict of interest rules
- Persistent failure to perform duties
- Actions that undermine the commission's effectiveness or the public trust

If concerns arise about a member's conduct or ability to serve, the typical process involves:

1. Discussion with the member and the City Manager, Mayor, and/or staff liaison to address concerns
2. If issues persist, review by the Council
3. The member is given an opportunity to respond to any concerns
4. The Council makes a final decision in an open meeting

Types of Commissions

The City has six total commissions consisting of both ordinance established commissions and statutory established commissions. Ordinance established commissions, sometimes rereferred to as advisory commissions, make recommendations to the Council but do not have independent decision-making authority. Statutory established commissions, sometimes rereferred to as authoritative commissions, have some level of autonomous authority granted by statute or ordinance. The commissions are separated below based on ordinance established commissions and statutory established commissions.

Ordinance Established Commissions:

Ordinance established commissions derive their power and obligations from Chapter 105 of the Fridley City Code. Ordinance established commissions make recommendations to the Council but do not have independent decision-making authority. They provide expert advice and community perspective on various aspects of city life.

- **Environmental Quality and Energy Commission (EQEC)**

Establishment: Advisory commission established by ordinance.

Composition and Leadership: EQEC commission members are appoint by the Council. The chair is appointed by the Council and vice-chair is appointed by the commission. The person who holds these appointments is listed on the first resolution every year.

Meeting: The EQEC typically meets the second Tuesday of every month. The EQEC is not televised, so meeting minutes are recorded by the staff liaison. The staff liaison will communicate if meetings are rescheduled or canceled.

Purpose and Responsibilities: The EQEC serves as a resource to the City in the conservation and management of energy and the environment. The EQEC provides the

Council with accurate information to assist in making and implementing sound environmental policy in areas such as:

- Solid waste abatement programming
- Environmental education
- Waste reduction
- Water resource management
- Energy conservation and management

The EQEC also advises on environmental problems, laws, policies, and regulations at the county, metropolitan, state, and federal levels to the extent of their effect on Fridley. It advises the Council, the City Manager, and other appropriate city commissions on matters pertaining to conservation and management of energy and the environment, including the review and recommendation of programs and policies within the City.

What the purpose of the commissioner? As an EQEC member, you're at the forefront of Fridley's environmental initiatives. Your work directly influences:

- The City's approach to waste reduction and recycling programs
- Strategies for water conservation and quality improvement
- Energy efficiency initiatives in city operations and community-wide
- Public education on environmental issues

- **Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC)**

Establishment: Advisory commission established by ordinance.

Composition and Leadership: PRC commission members are appointed by the Council. The chair is appointed by the Council and vice-chair is appointed by the commission. The person who holds these appointments is listed on the first resolution every year.

Meeting: The PRC typically meets the first Monday of every month. The PRC is televised, so meeting minutes are created by an off-site minutes vendor. The staff liaison will communicate if meetings are rescheduled or canceled.

Purpose and Responsibilities: The PRC was established to provide comprehensive development of park facilities and a recreational activities program for the well-being of the residents of the City. It also guides the development of programs to implement these goals effectively. By June 1 each year, the Commission recommends a capital investment program for park improvements, acquisitions, and recreational activities.

What is the purpose of the commissioner? As a PRC member, you play a key role in:

- Shaping the future of Fridley's parks and green spaces
- Developing inclusive recreational programs for all ages and abilities
- Advising on the maintenance and improvement of park facilities
- Ensuring that Fridley's recreational offerings contribute to community well-being and city attractiveness

- **Planning Commission (PC)**

Establishment: Advisory commission recommended by Statute and established by ordinance.

Composition and Leadership: The PC has a unique structure, the Commission comprises seven members: the Planning Commission chairperson, the chairs of both the Park and Recreation Commission and the Environmental Quality and Energy Commission, and four at-large members. The chair is appointed by the Council and vice-chair is appointed by the commission. The PC commission at-large members are appointed by the Council. Chair and vice-chair appointments are recorded in the first resolution of each year.

Meeting: The Planning Commission typically meets the second Wednesday of every month. The PC is televised, so meeting minutes are created by an off-site minutes vendor. The staff liaison will communicate if meetings are rescheduled or canceled.

Purpose and Responsibilities: The Planning Commission is responsible for continuous community planning and development of comprehensive goals and policies, including but not limited to land use, housing, environment, parks and recreation, and other related community activities. The Commission also serves as the Board of Appeals and Adjustments, exercising all authority and functions of said Board according to M.S. §§ 462.351 to 462.364.

What is the purpose of the commissioner? As a Planning Commission member, your work has a lasting impact on Fridley's future. You contribute to:

- Developing and updating the city's comprehensive plan
- Reviewing and recommending action on zoning changes, land use applications, and development proposals
- Ensuring that Fridley's growth aligns with community values and long-term sustainability
- Addressing housing needs and promoting equitable development

- **Public Arts Commission (PAC)**

Establishment: Advisory Commission established by ordinance.

Leadership and Composition: PAC members are appointed by the Council. The chair is appointed by the Council and vice-chair is appointed by the commission. The individual who holds these appointments is listed on the first resolution every year.

Meeting: The PAC typically meets the first Wednesday of every month. The PAC is not televised, so meeting minutes are recorded by the staff liaison. The staff liaison will communicate if meetings are rescheduled or canceled.

Purpose and Responsibilities: The PAC was established to foster the development of the arts, to advise the Council on arts-related matters, and to stimulate participation in and appreciation of the arts by residents.

What is the purpose of the commissioner? As a PAC member, you have the exciting opportunity to:

- Shape the artistic landscape of Fridley

- Advocate for and support local artists
- Develop public art initiatives that reflect our community's diversity and values
- Integrate art into public spaces and city development projects

Statutory Established Commissions

Statutory established commissions have limited self-governing authority granted by statute, including some internal processes that are regulated by law. Statutory established commissions still require final approval from the Council by resolution to turn any recommendations into action.

- **Charter Commission**

Establishment: Required by Statute as a Home Rule Charter City.

Composition and Leadership: Charter commission members are appointed by a District Court Judge. The chair and vice-chair are elected according to the procedure in the Charter Commission by-laws.

Meeting: The Charter Commission typically meets the second Monday of every month and meets approximately 7 times per year. The Charter Commission is not televised, so meeting minutes are recorded by the staff liaison. The staff liaison will communicate if meetings are rescheduled or canceled.

Purpose and Responsibilities: Has the authority to review the City Charter and make recommendations for amendments to the Council.

What is the purpose of the commissioner? As a Charter Commission member, you play a critical role in Fridley's governance by:

- Reviewing and recommending updates to the City Charter
- Ensuring that Fridley's governance structure remains effective and efficient
- Safeguarding the rights and responsibilities outlined in the City Charter
- Providing a vital check and balance in our local government system

- **Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA)**

Establishment: Authorized by Statute and established by ordinance.

Composition and Leadership: HRA members are appointed by the HRA where the City Manager serves as Executive Director. The chair and vice-chair are appointed by the HRA. The person who holds these appointments is listed on the first resolution every year.

Meeting: The HRA meets the first Thursday of every month. The HRA is televised, so meeting minutes are recorded by the off-site minute taking service. The staff liaison will communicate if meetings are rescheduled or canceled.

Purpose and Responsibilities: Implements housing rehabilitation programs and redevelopment projects that create new housing opportunities to meet local housing needs. Administers programs that are designed to enlarge the tax base, create jobs, and create vital, attractive businesses in blighted or underdeveloped areas of the City.

What is the purpose of the commissioner? As an HRA member, your work has a direct and tangible impact on Fridley's housing landscape and economic development. You contribute to:

- Implementing housing rehabilitation programs that improve living conditions for residents
- Developing new housing opportunities to meet diverse community needs
- Creating and executing redevelopment projects that attract businesses and create jobs
- Administering programs that enlarge the city's tax base and enhance economic stability

The Council may, by ordinance or resolution, establish and regulate any board or commission, to advise the Council with respect to any City function or activity, to investigate any subject of interest to the City, or to perform quasi-judicial functions. The Council relies on the work of City commissions, and members serve an important role in extending the reach of the democratic process into the community.

Be an Effective Commission Member

Attending your first commission meeting is often a blend of excitement and uncertainty. You might find yourself pondering over the right protocols, what to say, and how best to contribute. This section aims to alleviate those initial concerns while setting you on a path to excel in your role for the betterment of the City. It lays out key practices and guidelines that serve dual purposes: enabling you to make informed decisions and ensuring that both you and the City operate within legal boundaries. The essence of being an effective commission member lies in being prepared, listening actively and contributing thoughtfully to discussions.

Participation

Commission members benefit through participation and discussion of all members. A quorum (or majority) of the body is necessary to conduct official business. Members are expected and encouraged to attend all meetings as the regular attendance of commission members is necessary for the most effective performance of the commission. If a commission member must miss a meeting(s) or attend a meeting(s) virtually, the member should advise their staff liaison before the scheduled meeting(s). Additionally, commission members should familiarize themselves with any bylaws of their commissions. Some commissions have a limit on the number of meetings that can be missed before that member is dismissed from the commission.

Quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of members required to conduct official business. It's crucial for decision-making and gives legal validity to the commission's actions. Usually, a quorum is achieved when more than half of the members are present. The City Clerk will post a notice whenever a quorum is expected, even if official business isn't on the agenda, to maintain transparency and avoid potential violations.

To avoid quorum violations, always be mindful of attendance numbers and consult with your staff liaison if you are unsure.

Conflict of Interest

State law, the City Charter and Code prohibit public officials, including commission members, from having a personal financial interest in a sale, lease or contract they are authorized to make in their official capacity. Commission members must avoid actions that might give the appearance of impropriety or a conflict of interest. They must not use their position to gain privileges or special treatment.

If there is a conflict of interest on an issue, that member must abstain from discussion or voting on the issue.

If commission members have any question about a possible conflict of interest, they should contact their staff liaison.

Standards of Appearance

All commission meetings are open public meetings where members of the public are welcome to attend. Some are also televised on Fridley City TV and recorded. Therefore, it is important that a professional appearance be maintained.

Communication

Communication is a critical aspect of your role as a commission member. Your words and actions reflect the City's interests and values, whether in official meetings or in your personal life.

Media Interactions

Although uncommon, there could be occasions where you are approached by the media for an interview or a public comment. When communicating any information, it is essential to ensure that it is accurate, timely, and professional to maintain the City's credibility.

If you ever find yourself contacted for a media interview or statement, it is generally recommended to consult with the staff liaison for guidance, who may then consult with the City's Communication and Engagement Division. You represent the City in every capacity, and your words and actions reflect the City's interests and values.

Social Media Use

Many commissioners use social media in various ways, such as communicating with the community or sharing personal views. However, the 'personal' style of social media can make it difficult to draw the line between public, professional and private use. As a representative of the City, online statements and opinions - even when intended as personal - may be perceived as representing the City's position.

When using social media, always exercise good judgment and remember that you are a commission member even when writing in your personal capacity.

There may be times when personal writings on social media could be perceived as problematic because they could damage the trust and working relationship between the commission, City Council and, the community. Examples could include:

- Using inflammatory or vulgar language that could damage public trust
- Making hostile or alienating statements about segments of the community
- Posting content that undermines the ability to serve all residents impartially
- Cyber-bullying or harassment
- Sharing confidential information
- Unlawful activities
- Inappropriate use of the City's name or your commission title
- Using phrases like 'As a City commissioner, I think...' when expressing personal views, as this can imply you are speaking on behalf of the City or commission

Use of social media in this nature could result in coaching of the commission member and/or Council following the [Removal Process](#). Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

General Communication Tips

- Keep messages concise, focusing on a couple of main points.
- Be mindful of your tone and voice.
- Use clear, straightforward language, avoiding jargon or overly technical terms.
- Stay authentic and true to yourself. Positivity and optimism can go a long way.

Code of Conduct and Ethics

As a commission member, you're held to a high standard of conduct due to the nature of your duties and responsibilities. The following principles will help ensure that your commission operates with maximum efficiency and effectiveness:

- Attend meetings regularly and punctually.
- Respect the decision-making process and any decisions made by the group.
- Notify your staff liaison if you'll miss a meeting, to ensure quorum.
- Openly discuss issues and decisions during meetings.
- Don't seek special consideration or influence based on your position.
- Adhere to gift prohibition rules as outlined in Minn. Stat. § 471.895.
- Maintain confidentiality when required and adhere to data practices regulations.

Ethical Considerations

Commissioners are held to high ethical standards. Here are some key areas to be aware of:

- **Recusal from Voting:**
 - Commissioners should recuse themselves from voting on any matter where they have a personal interest in that matter.

- Examples include: financial interests in a project under review, family members applying for a land use permit, or being employed by an organization seeking approval from the commission.
- If in doubt, consult with your staff liaison.
- **Gifts:**
 - Commissioners are subject to gift prohibition rules as outlined in Minnesota Statutes § 471.895.
 - Generally, gifts should not be accepted from individuals or organizations that have business before the commission.
 - When in doubt, it's best to politely decline or seek guidance from the staff liaison
- **Relationships with Applicants:**
 - If a commission member has a personal or professional relationship with someone applying for approval from the commission, disclose this relationship publicly before any discussion of the matter.
 - If the relationship could be perceived as influencing decisions, consider recusing yourself from the vote.
 - Always err on the side of transparency to maintain public trust.

Maintaining high ethical standards is crucial for the credibility of your commission and the City as a whole. If you're ever unsure about an ethical issue, don't hesitate to seek guidance from your staff liaison.

Data Practices

Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13, known as Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), and Chapter 12 of the City Charter govern all data collected, created, received, maintained, or disseminated by the City. Generally, the MGDPA presumes that all Government Data are public unless a State or Federal law says differently. The City's Data Practices Policy is available online.

Commission members should presume all documents, notes, and messages created or maintained in the course of their work, or stored on their devices, will be subject to release if requested.

The City Clerk has been designated as the City's Responsible Authority and is responsible for administering the MGDPA. No employee, commission member or elected official of the City may release any private or confidential data to any person except for the City Clerk or a designee. All data practices requests should be forwarded to the City Clerk for processing as the Data Practices Act requires understanding to successfully respond to requests.

Compensation and Reimbursement

Acting as a commission member is a volunteer position, meaning there is no compensation. However, commission members may occasionally attend conferences, seminars, or other events that align with their roles. Reimbursement may be available for commission-related travel, meals, lodging, and other necessary expenses, consistent with budget authorization.

Commission members interested in attending a conference that will require reimbursement needs to obtain permission from the City before attendance. Commission members will not be reimbursed for any expenses that do not have prior approval.

Commission Meeting Procedure

Typically, commissions meet once monthly. Meetings can be anywhere to 30 minutes to a couple of hours. Special Meetings may occasionally be called by a commission. If this occurs, the City will issue a public notice and produce an agenda.

The staff liaison is present at every meeting to help answer questions the Commission has on any agenda items.

Parliamentary Procedures

All Commissions follow Rosenberg's Rules of Order at meetings. Parliamentary procedure is simply considered as a set of guidelines used to assure that a meeting goes smoothly and fairly. It is used to facilitate a group coming to a majority decision when there are differing points of view. A detailed list of procedures can be found in Rosenberg's Rules of Order.

Agenda

The agendas for the meetings of the commission are determined by the commission chair and the staff liaison. They are then prepared by City staff and distributed to each commission member at least one business day before the meeting. The commission agenda outlines the topics or items of business that will be introduced, discussed and acted upon at each meeting.

Once the agenda has been sent to the commission along with the accompanying packet material, no item is added or deleted prior to the meeting. The agenda may be amended at the beginning of the commission meeting to include any additional items or to delete any item from the agenda.

The order of business on the meeting agenda varies slightly between commission, but generally is as follows:

Open Forum/Visitors: Open Forum allows the public to address the commission on subjects that are not on the agenda. The commission may take action, reply or give direction to staff.

Proposed Agenda: These items are proposed for the commission's discussion and consideration. All items will be discussed and considered by the commission for approval by vote through separate motions.

Public Hearing(s): Some commission are required to hold public hearings on certain matters. Items under the public hearing section allow members of the public to address the commission

on items that are required to have a public hearing. The commission will call the public hearing, take public comment, then close the public hearing. Once the public hearing is closed, the commission may vote on passing the proposed action.

Informal Status Reports: An opportunity for staff to update the commission on upcoming events and on staff activities as requested by the commission. Typically, these activities are in preliminary stages and not ready for formal action.

Open Meeting Law

All of the meetings of the commission are open to the public and subject to the Open Meeting Law (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13D). A meeting is defined as the convening of members of a governmental body for the purpose of exercising the responsibility, authority, power or duties delegated to that body. A meeting is subject to the open meeting law whenever the governmental body meets for official purposes. A meeting does not include social or chance gatherings not intended to avoid the law. When there are more than half of the commission member present at a meeting, it is considered a quorum and therefore a meeting for official purposes.

The purpose of the law is to:

- Prohibit action from being taken at a secret meeting where the interested public cannot be fully informed of the decision of the public body;
- Ensures the public's right to be informed; and
- Gives the public an opportunity to present its views.

Any communication (including emails or other electronic communication) between some or all of the commission could potentially be considered a public meeting.

If you have information or any type of communication that you would like to share with other members, it is recommended that it be sent to the staff liaison, who may then forward it for review and discussion at a public meeting. The Open Meeting law does not preclude an individual member from contacting the staff liaison regarding questions or concerns, or seeking further information on topics or agenda items.

In any meeting which must be open to the public, the City must make at least one copy of any printed material available in the meeting room for public inspection. This applies to any printed material prepared by the City and distributed or made available to all members of the commission. This requirement does not apply to materials that are classified as other than public under the Government Data Practices Act.

The exception to the Open Meeting Law is "Closed Meetings." Closed Meetings are strictly regulated and rarely used by commissions. If you think a meeting needs to be closed, please consult with the staff liaison.

Public Notice

The Open Meeting Law (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13D) requires public bodies to establish a schedule for regular meetings and keep that schedule on file at its primary offices (i.e., City Hall). If the body changes the time or location from the regular meeting schedule, advance notice must be provided.

Minutes and Records of Commission Meetings

Open Meeting Law (Section 13D.01, subdivision 4) requires public bodies to record and maintain votes of its members. Minutes of each commission meeting should comprise a summary of the proceedings, including who makes and seconds the motions and the results thereof. The minutes serve as a permanent record of the commissions' actions, discussion, and opinions, and are forwarded to the City Manager's office for public distribution and used as input and background for commission decisions.

Minutes can be taken by an off-site minute-taking service or the commission staff liaison and are incorporated into the next meeting agenda packet for approval by the commission. The commission minutes are then placed on the Council meeting agenda to be formally received by the Council. It is important for commission members to closely review minutes and make corrections if needed so the approved minutes accurately reflect the work of the commission. Corrections to minutes should be made at the meeting when the minutes are brought forward for adoption. Corrections require a motion, a second, and a majority vote, and if approved, are noted in the minutes of the current meeting. Any changes to the draft minutes approved by the commission should be reflected in the minutes for the meeting at which the corrections are made.

In addition to the written minutes, some commission meetings are recorded, shown live, and replayed on the City's cable station. While the recordings are not an official record of the commission meeting, they are retained for 20 years, after which time they may be destroyed, pursuant to the City's Public Meetings Minutes Policy. Copies of the recordings are available for the Council, staff, and public viewing upon request.

Acknowledgement

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Commission Member Onboarding Manual (Manual). I confirm that I have read and understand the Manual, particularly the "Be an Effective Commission Member" section, and I agree to fulfill my duties in accordance with these standards.

I understand that failure to comply with the expectations and responsibilities outlined in this Manual, specifically those detailed in the "Be an Effective Commission Member" section, may constitute grounds for removal from the Commission.

Commissioner Name (Print)

Signature

Date

Appendix and Other Resources

[Data Practices](#)

[Open Meeting Law](#)

[City Code and Charter](#)

[Rosenburg's Rule of Order](#)

[Commission Meeting Calendar](#)

[City Organization Chart](#)

[Data vs. Information Sheet](#)

Visual of Relationship between the Commissions, the Council and Staff Liaisons

