

C. RELATIONS WITH OTHER COMMISSIONS, OUTSIDE AGENCIES AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC

1. Other Boards/Committees

There are enormous benefits when boards, commissions, and committees work together on projects or investigations. Besides the advantages of time and energy savings, a board's work can reflect a more accurate blend of community sentiment when efforts are made to coordinate in order to deal with overlapping subject matter.

When one board recommends an action to the City Commission relating to a sphere of interest of another board/committee, the other involved boards shall be notified and given an opportunity to comment before any reports are forwarded to the City Commission. Referrals for information or review of proposals from one board/committee to another are transmitted through the respective staff contact for each board/committee.

In order to develop a useful liaison between boards, each board should determine which other bodies regularly deal with overlapping subject matter. Boards which regularly overlap on each other's activities should request agendas, minutes and relevant reports from each other. Boards which do not ordinarily relate need not routinely communicate with each other, but where an issue arises which is of concern to both, the two should review the issue with each other before submitting a report to the City Commission.

2. Outside Agencies

From time to time, boards and committees may desire to communicate with outside agencies. Unless specifically authorized by the City Commission, boards, commissions, and committees may not represent policy to outside agencies either on their own behalf or on behalf of the City. Boards function in an advisory capacity and in the absence of an explicit delegation of the role to act on the City's behalf by the City Commission on a particular issue, may not directly communicate with outside agencies. If a board wishes to support or object to a particular policy or program it should frame its action as a motion and a recommendation to the City Commission on whose behalf the letter would be sent. Supporting or opposing legislation need not take the form of a resolution. Action by the City Commission on such a board request would be in the form of a letter. However, should a resolution be requested of the City Commission, such resolution would be attached to the Commission report (in the proper format), ready for City Commission action. If a request for an official policy statement is received from an outside jurisdiction, the board should analyze and study the request. It could then make a recommendation to the City Commission. Furthermore, boards other than Enhancement Grant Program Committee may not endorse grant applications or receive donations and gifts. Boards may not take any action such as approving use of City property, facilities or other resources, which commits or indicates an intention to commit the City without authorization by the City Commission and coordination with the City Manager.

All communications to and from outside agencies shall be transmitted through a City staff person.

3. General Public

The purpose of board, commission and committee meetings is to permit open discussion on specific topics in a setting that is more informal than a City Commission meeting, to hear public expression on issues and to inform the public of what the board is doing. Committee members have the obligation to consider the welfare of the entire City, to be fair, objective and courteous, and to afford due process to all who come before them.

Public opinion must be sought but no member should permit his/her judgment to become subservient to the criticism of those citizens attending the meetings. In order to conduct its business, the board has the authority to limit discussion and public participation on any subject.

All communications from the board to members of the public are transmitted through the staff person. Similarly, arriving communications are received by staff and relayed to the board through the agenda. The staff person is responsible for acknowledging all communications received.

4. Analytical Problem Solving Approach

It is important that those who recommend policy, operational, and other improvements in city government use an analytical problem solving approach. This pertains not only to boards, committees, and commission, but to staff people, executives and others who wish to improve municipal services. As resources dwindle, systems become more complex, and the public becomes more and more accustomed to the world's highly competitive consumer oriented economy; therefore, all municipalities and city governments must adapt. In order to determine priorities, to select the best forms of service and the best methods of providing those services, an analytical approach needs to be taken prior to advocacy and mobilization of support. A shorthand approach includes:

- What is the problem we are trying to solve and if we probe deeper, is the problem a symptom or is there really a deeper problem?
- What general approaches could be used to solve the problem? Avoid single solution answers.
- Of the possible approaches to take, which one is the best and why?
- How will the selected approach or solution work? What personnel, financial, and other resources are necessary to make it work? Where will these come from: if there are insufficient resources, what other equally valued programs or activities should be reduced or eliminated to free up the resources needed?
- Have all the people involved in implementing the project had input and do they agree?
- Does the project meet legal requirements and has the City's budget indicated that the financial part of the proposal is, in fact, feasible and manageable?
- Can the project be proven to work by putting it on a standard schedule for implementation?

If each project or recommendation brought to the City Commission were thoroughly tested against these criteria, or something like them, much wasted time and effort would be avoided and the City Commission would be much more likely to approve recommendations rather than sending them back for laborious staff analysis.

5. Individual Members

Unless authorized by the board as a whole, an individual member may not represent the board before any other board, outside agency, to the press, or the general public. When an individual member is appearing in a private capacity before other boards, outside agencies, or the general public, the member must clearly indicate that he/she is speaking as a private individual, not as an official representative of the City. Official City stationery may be used only for official communications authorized by the City Commission or City Manager.

Each member also has the obligation to work cooperatively with other members on that board. Members should exercise self-discipline and always strive to be objective, fair and courteous with each other as well as with staff and the public. A healthy respect for the time of other commissioners, staff and the public is of critical importance.

6. Press and Other Media

In order to inform the public as much as possible of board activities, the designated City staff person, with the approval of the board, should provide the media with pertinent information as noted below. Press releases should be sent to local media. From time to time, it may be appropriate to provide press releases to other newspapers, radio and television stations.

- Notices of Meetings and Agenda - The staff person should routinely send meeting notices and agenda to the media, City Hall, Pioneer Center, City Library, and post the agenda on the City's Web site. Copies should be sent to the City Recorder and City Manager.
- Items of Public Interest and Policy Statements - Information concerning items of particular interest to be discussed at future meetings as well as recent newsworthy actions of the board should be regularly provided to the media. Press releases which state the City's policy should be cleared through the City Manager's Office prior to release to the press. Copies of all press releases and other notices that are provided to the media should also be sent to the City Manager's Office.