

Commission Policy Guidelines

Recruitment Policy

City of Davis will advertise in the local newspaper, cable and city web page. Applications will be kept on file for a period of two years. Applicants will be contacted to ensure their continued interest before submittal to the City Council for appointments.

Application deadlines are established to allow City Council time to review the applications. Applications will be accepted up to 5 p.m. one week prior to appointment by City Council.

Appointments

All commissions/boards/task forces and committees are appointed by City Council. Exceptions: youth members to commissions are appointed by the commission and ratified by Council. Inter-commission liaisons are appointed by the commission and ratified by Council. Inter-commission liaisons must be regular members of the appointing commission.

Role of Commissions

The primary role of city of Davis commissions is to review and make recommendations to the City Council on matters within the commission's scope of responsibility as set forth in the enabling resolution/ordinance, and to promote increased public awareness, public input and citizen participation into the determination of city policies. The specific role of a city of Davis commission is that of citizen's advisory "arm" of the City Council, focusing attention on specific planning and program activities of the city. On specific matters referred to them by the City Council, commissions serve as the reviewing body of the city. All recommendations, however, are subject to approval and revision of the City Council.

Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Commissions/boards will appoint chair and vice chair at the first regular meeting in December to take over the first meeting in January.

Responsibilities of Commission Members

To be selected as a city of Davis commission member is an honor and provides an unusual opportunity for genuine public service. Although the specific duties of each commission vary widely with the purpose of which it was formed, there are certain responsibilities that are common to all commission members. The following is a summary of those responsibilities:

- (1) Abide by the Ralph M. Brown Act on open meetings. All members have received the full text of the Brown Act. Once a commission member has been appointed to a commission, they must comply with the requirements of the Brown Act.
- (2) Understand the role and scope of responsibility of the commission on which you serve. Be informed of the individual scope of responsibility and operation procedures.

- (3) Represent fairly and fully the majority views of your individual commission. Expression of individual opinions to the public and press after a commission decision has been made should be identified as such.
- (4) Members should represent the public interest, not that of special interest groups.
- (5) Good communications – members are in a unique position of serving as a liaison between the city and its citizens and can help to reconcile contradictory viewpoints and in building a consensus around common goals and objectives.
- (6) Carefully review your commission meeting agenda prior to each meeting in order to be fully prepared to discuss, evaluate and act on all matters scheduled for consideration. Conclusions based on thorough investigation will strengthen the value of the commission's recommendation.
- (7) Supportive relationships with the City Council and city staff are basic for successful operation of any commission. In contacting city personnel on items of consideration, the proper channel is through the designated staff liaison providing support for your commission.
- (8) Establish a good working relationship with fellow commission members – respect individual viewpoints, allow other members time to present their views fully before making comments, be open and honest, welcome new members, strive to minimize political action on issues.
- (9) Members should not use or involve their commission membership in the conduct of personal political activities.
- (10) When a commission member appears in a non-official, non-representative capacity before any public or private body, the member shall not identify or disclose his/her membership on a commission. If a question of membership arises, the member shall indicate that he/she is speaking only as an individual.

Inter-Commission Liaisons

Inter-commission liaisons must be regular members of the appointing commission. The inter-commission liaison shall reflect the views of the commission for which he/she serves as a regular member. When an inter-commission liaison is appointed to serve on a commission wherein a Conflict of Interest Statement is required, the liaison must file the statement within thirty-days from appointment. If the statement is not received within the thirty-day timeframe, the liaison may not participate on the commission until the statement is filed with the City Clerk's office.

Attendance

Continued absences may be the basis of replacement of any member. Excused absences may be obtained by arrangement with the staff liaison prior to the meeting. General rule is three excused absences per year. (Definition of an excused absence would be for medical purposes, job related

conflict, family conflict – naturally if there are circumstances involved resulting in need for extended absences, this should be discussed with the staff liaison)

Quorum

Business may only take place at special or regular meetings if a quorum of the commission members is present. A quorum constitutes a majority of the voting membership. A meeting shall be cancelled after 15 minutes if a quorum is not obtained.

Oath of Office

Section 3 of Article 20 of the State Constitution requires that the oath of office be subscribed by each member of any commission to have voting status.

Qualifications

- (a) A commission member must be knowledgeable of and experienced in the areas of interest of the commission on which he/she wishes to serve.
- (b) Unless otherwise stated by Council, terms of office on most commissions are four (4) years for regular members. If a regular position becomes available and the alternate would like to fill the vacancy, they would need to apply.
- (c) All must be residents of the city of Davis proper; however, exceptions can be made for exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis.
- (d) No person should serve on more than one commission at a time. However, individuals with special qualifications may be asked to serve on an additional commission.
- (e) Commission/board member having served two consecutive terms may be re-appointed under exceptional circumstances.
- (f) A member who has fulfilled two terms or resigned may be appointed to the same commission after one year.
- (g) City commissions should reflect the community's diversity.

Decorum And Order

Members should accord the utmost courtesy to each other, to city employees, and to the public appearing before the commission, and should refrain at all times from (1) rude and derogatory remarks, (2) questioning the integrity of the speaker, (3) abusive comments, (4) statements about the member's personal feelings about the speaker's motives, and (5) personality attacks.

Any member may move to require the chairperson to enforce the commission rules; the affirmative vote of a majority of the commission will require the chairperson to so act.

Members of the public attending commission meetings are expected to observe the same rules of order and decorum applicable to members. Any person making impertinent and slanderous remarks, or who becomes boisterous while addressing, or while attending the meeting, may be requested to leave the room by the chairperson or staff liaison.

Public Hearings

Commissions should consult City Council prior to holding a non-obligatory public hearing especially for controversial issues. Exception: Planning Commission and Historical Resources Management Commission are required to hold public hearings on planning issues.

Special Meetings

Commissions should not schedule special meetings except under extraordinary circumstances. The exception would be to expedite planning/zoning, review of applications or public art projects which are requirements of the commission or staff liaison.

Communication with the City Council

Most communication with the City Council will occur through the Council liaison and staff liaison for each commission. Any questions regarding the City Council agenda can be directed to the staff liaison.

When a member who is present at a City Council meeting is asked to address the City Council on a matter, the member should represent the viewpoint of the particular commission as a whole (not a personal opinion); any representations made to the City Council, which are not those of the majority of the commission, must be identified as such.

City Council relationship with City Commissions/Boards; Communication with other agencies and groups

Individual Council members may attend meetings and may participate in the commission's discussion, but are not in a position to direct the commission's discussions or recommendations.

If a member of the commission is authorized by the City Council to represent the city before another governmental agency or organization, the commission member should represent fully and fairly the majority position of the City Council. Personal opinions and comments may be expressed only if the commission member clarifies that these statements do not represent the position of the City Council.

Role of the Staff Liaison

Demand on staff time should be limited to official meetings. The staff liaison role includes orienting and helping train new members, facilitating meetings and hearings, providing necessary documents, providing information regarding rules and regulations, preparing and presenting reports to the commission, and answering any questions that may arise at meetings. The staff liaison will track the number of unexcused (or "excused" when it applies) absences for each commissioner. The staff liaison is responsible for keeping the commission in compliance with the Brown Act during meetings.

Minutes, after approved by the commission, are forwarded to the City Clerk, and scheduled as an informational item on the City Council's agenda. The minutes should be a clear and concise statement of the commission actions and resolutions made.

There are always exceptions to the policy guidelines and should be considered on individual commission or member basis.