



How to Inspire Participation for Sustainable Community Engagement

Nancy Ohle, Michigan Mayor's Conference, August, 2023

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Why People Serve?

What drives people to community engagement is a ***sense of possibility***. If you haven't sensed that possibility you don't get started in the same way, you don't feel you can have an impact. ***We need to make an impact.***



Creating a Welcoming Community. Ask yourself...

- What implicit messages are you giving that welcome citizen involvement?
- What implicit messages are you giving that distance your citizens from involvement?
- How informed are citizens?
 - How and how often does information leave City Hall?
 - Variety of media connections?
- Are there “places” to gather?
 - Intentional place-making
- Do citizens cross boundaries?
 - Chamber of Commerce, businesses, education, non-profits, healthcare....



Invite Service to your Community

- With every interaction, do you invite citizens to serve?
 - “You” means not only elected, but City employees and volunteers
- What words do you use?
- How genuine do you appear?

- *Don't assume that when you present possibilities, that others will intuit that you'd like their help or support*



Restorative Communities...

- Focus on “What can we create together?”
- From a focus on leaders to a focus on citizens



Elected Officials Mindset

- Need to shift the focus from meetings where citizens are critics and consumers to small gatherings where citizens are engaged in building their community
 - Ex: World Café Approach
- **Thought for the Day:** *Roberts Rules of Order is for efficiency and containing conflict. Dampens energy, doesn't create energy.*



MEDC Redevelopment Ready Communities Help Guide Community Engagement



Intentional Recruiting

- Make it easy...
- Make it hard...



CITY OF Midland

*Guide to
City of Midland*

Boards and Commissions

Wanted...

Looking for energetic, enthusiastic individuals who have a desire to work as part of a team on projects and issues to enhance the quality of life in the Midland community. We're seeking motivated individuals to advise Midland City Council on decisions in specific areas of interest.

Qualifications...

City residents with a few hours to spare, who possess: interpersonal skills, the ability to make decisions, an interest in the community and a dedication to the continued growth and prosperity of Midland.

Interested?

Have we got an opportunity for you? Read about the various boards and commissions to find out which might be a good fit for you.

Aviation Advisory Commission

Are you an avid flier or just have an interest in aviation? We're looking for people who are committed to achieving goals and reaching new heights. This commission advises City Council on user charges and other aviation costs relating to the Jack Harstow Municipal Airport.

Board of Review

We need people who are resourceful at analyzing a situation and making a fair evaluation. The Board of Review meets three times a year to hear appeals on property assessments in Midland.

Cable Access Advisory Commission

Are you commander of the remote? Do you tune in to MCTV? If you're a fan of the City's public access channel, show your support! The Cable Access Advisory Commission advises City Council on general policy matters, encourages the use of MCTV channels and gathers public input.

No More “Wanted. Any warm body will do.”

EXPECTATIONS

- The community outlines expectations and desired skill sets for open seats.
- The community has clearly documented the process for board and commission appointments.
- Board and commission applications are available online.

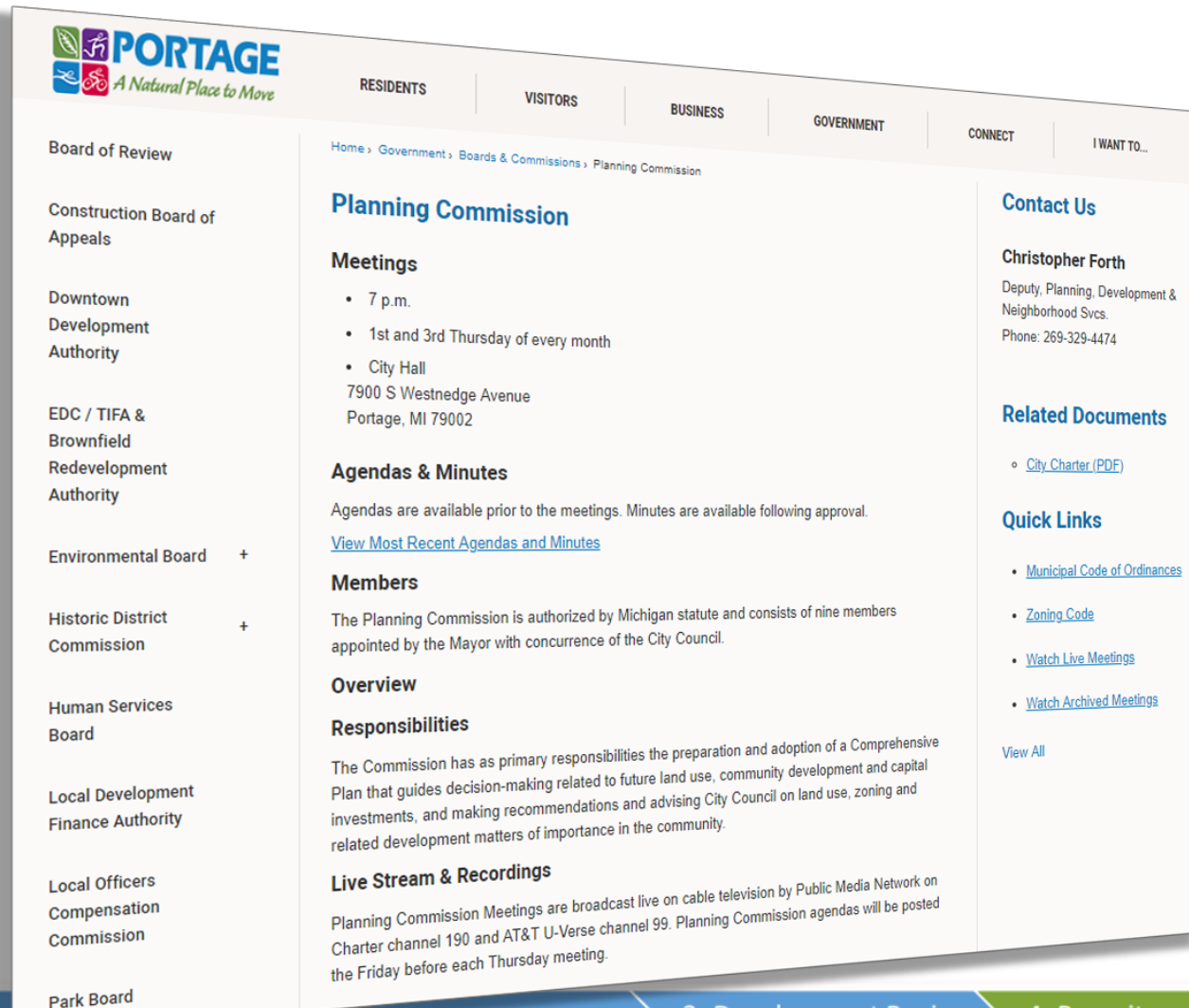
EXPECTATIONS



Why Set Expectations?

- Recruit more qualified members
- Gives people the ability to understand and then meet expectations of their role
- Helps citizens self-select themselves OUT of roles they are not well suited for
- Having a system in place to get new members up to speed ensures predictability and accountability in the development process

Evaluation Criteria 4.1.1 – The community sets expectations for board and commission positions | Example - Portage



Portage does a good job of setting expectations by providing the following information:

- Meeting schedules
- Archive of agendas, minutes and recordings
- List of members and board structure
- Overview of roles/duties/responsibilities
- Relevant links

4.1.1 – Expectation 1 – The community outlines expectations and desired skill sets for open seats

Why are listing desired skillsets important?

- Seeing desired skillsets will help applicants understand where they could be the best fit
- Assist the community in recruiting officials who are the most suited to a given position
- Clearly listing skillsets can provide support for appointment decisions

Work with existing board and commission members to identify skillsets that would be the most useful to each respective board



Tip; Keep it general, don't scare people off! Maybe explain the position could be a good fit for people with certain interests...or for people looking to learn more!

Post Skillsets on Applications and Websites

What are examples of desired skillsets?

Board of Zoning Appeals

Please check below if you have experience in:

- Architecture
- Building Construction/Engineering
- GIS/AutoCAD
- Land Use Planning
- Real Estate/Development/Law
- Zoning

Brownfield Redevelopment Authority

Please check below if you have experience in:

- Chemical Engineering
- Commercial Banking
- Commercial Real Estate/Development/Law
- Economic Development
- Environmental Engineering/Consulting/Law
- Property Appraisal/Assessing

Housing Commission

Please check below if you have experience in:

- Banking/Finance
- Building Construction/Engineering
- Housing Development/Law
- Property Appraisal/Assessing

Arts and Cultural Commission

Please check below if you have experience in:

- Advertising/Marketing/Public Relations
- Art
- Culture
- Education
- Event Planning
- Music

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Please check below if you have experience in:

- Advertising/Marketing/Public Relations
- Banking/Finance
- Fitness/Recreation
- Forestry
- Land Use Planning
- Landscape Architecture
- Physical Education
- Public Administration

Planning Commission

Please check below if you have experience in:

- Architecture
- Building Construction
- Civil Engineering
- Facilities Management
- GIS/AutoCAD
- Historic Preservation
- Land Use Planning
- Landscape Architecture
- Property Maintenance/Management
- Real Estate/Development/Law

Desired skillsets belong on websites...


CITY OF WARREN
OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF WARREN, MICHIGAN

Search...

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

- Animal Welfare Commission >
- Beautification Commission >
- Board of Review >
- Brownfield Redevelopment Authority >
- Building Authority >
- Civil Service Commission
- Construction Board of Appeals >
- Crime Commission >
- Cultural Commission >
- Disabilities Commission >

Planning Commission



City of Warren
Planning Commission
One City Square Suite 315
Warren, MI 48093-5283
Phone: (586) 574-4687 Fax: (586) 574-4645

The Commission consists of nine members, appointed by the Mayor, subject to the approval of the Council. The term of office is for three years and the terms of the members first appointed shall be such that, thereafter, the terms of three members will expire in each year.

The membership of the Commission shall represent different professions and occupations having an interest in the growth and development of the city. The membership is to include a representation of important segments of the community, such as the economic, governmental, educational, and social development of the local unit of government, in accordance with the major interests as they exist in the local unit of government, such as agriculture, natural resources, recreation, education, public health, government, transportation, industry, and commerce. The membership shall also be representative of the entire territory of the local unit of government to the extent practicable.

PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDAS AND MINUTES

PLANNING COMMISSION BY-LAWS

City of Warren Planning Commission Officers

...and on applications.

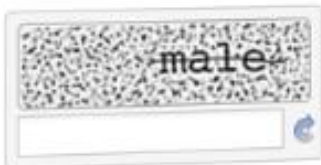
CITY OF MOUNT PLEASANT

Application for Board or Commission Appointment

In accordance with the City Charter, Michigan Constitution, and U.S. Constitution, an individual must be a registered voter in the City of Mt. Pleasant. By submitting this application you affirm that you meet this requirement. Limited exceptions for certain boards exist as indicated on the attached listing. For a complete description of each board and commission please see attached listing. **Applications will be kept on file for three calendar years.**

Based on the board you are applying for, please check the appropriate box or boxes to indicate whether you have the stated experience or professional expertise that may be needed to fill a specific skillset. Please note these are desired qualifications. Some boards and commissions are a mix of citizens with certain qualifications and others are citizens representing the general public. Even if you do not have the desired experience or expertise, you are urged to apply for consideration as the community is well served by citizens with diverse backgrounds.

Enter the message as it's shown *



BOARD AND COMMISSION APPLICATION ATTACHMENT

Arts Commission

Members of the Arts Commission must be city residents and should be persons who are interested, knowledgeable and reflect the diversity of the community. In addition, members should have some background in the arts. Please check below if you have experience in:

- Public Art
- Culture
- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts
- Arts Education and/or Marketing

Arts Selection Panel

Members of the Arts Selection Panel should be persons who are interested, knowledgeable and reflect the diversity of the community. In addition, members should have some background in the arts. Please check below if you have experience in:

- Acquisition, placement, and maintenance of Public Art
- Culture
- Visual Arts
- Arts Education and/or Marketing



City Council

Quality

CITY OF EAST LANSING

Board of Review

Members must be electors of the city. Experience and/or training in matters related to real estate is preferred but not required. Please check below if you have experience in:

- Banking/Finance
- Property Appraisal/Assessing
- Real Estate/Development/Law

Building Authority

Members must be city residents qualified by experience and/or training in matters related to real estate. Please check below if you have experience in:

- Banking/Finance
- Property Appraisal/Assessing
- Real Estate/Development/Law (no agents or brokers)

Building Board of Appeals

Members must be city residents and qualified by experience and/or training in matters relating to construction. Please check below if you have experience in:

- Architecture
- Building Construction
- Engineering

Commission on the Environment

Members must be city residents and qualified by experience and/or training in matters relating to the environment. Please check below if you have experience in:

- Environmental Protection
- Conservation
- Waste
- Climate Change
- Energy

Downtown Development Authority

A minimum of 50% of the members must consist of commissioners that own or manage commercial property in the downtown and one member who lives within the DDA district. Please check below if you have experience in:

- New Business Development
- Business Recruitment and Retention
- Marketing and Promotion
- Real Estate Development
- Banking/Finance

Downtown Management Board

Members must consist of commissioners that own or manage commercial property in the downtown. Please check below if you have experience in:

- New Business Development
- Business Recruitment and Retention
- Marketing and Promotion

Historic District Commission

Members include one registered architect, four residents of the City's designated historic districts, and each member should have a clearly demonstrated interest or knowledge in historic preservation. Please check below if you have experience in:

- Architecture
- Building Construction/Engineering
- Historic Preservation

Housing Commission

Members must be city residents qualified by experience and/or training in matters related to the housing industry, property management and/or neighborhood preservation. Please check below if you have experience in:

- Residential Real Estate
- Building Construction
- Housing Development/Law
- Property Appraisal/Assessing
- Property Management/Leasing
- Policymaking

Human Relations Commission

Members must be city residents qualified to protect and promote human dignity and respect for the rights of all individuals and groups. Please check below if you have experience in:

- Disability Issues
- Mediation Experience
- Employment/Labor Law
- Human Resources/Personnel
- Diversity Issues



City Council

Quality Services for a Quality Community

1: Community Plans/ Public Outreach

2: Zoning Regulations

3: Development Review Process

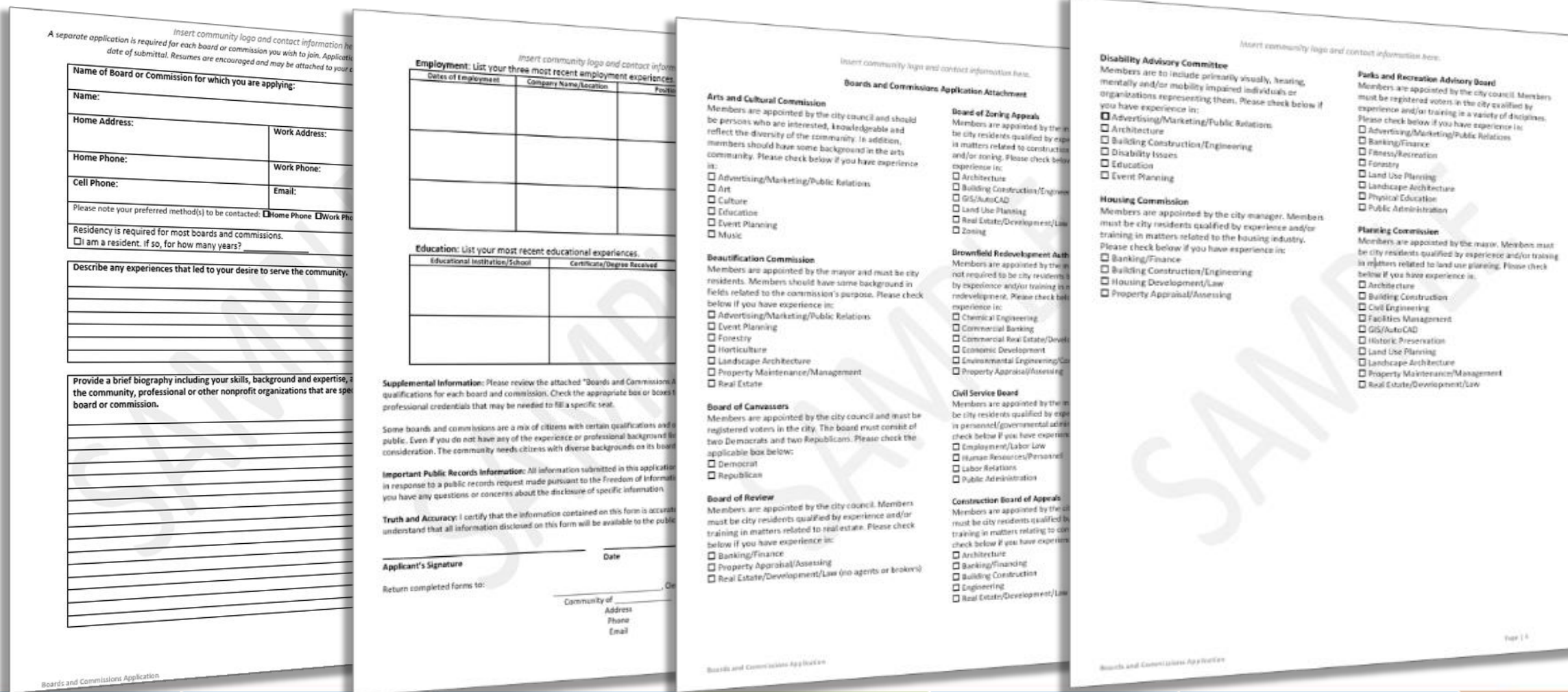
4: Recruitment and Education

5: Redevelopment Ready Sites*

6: Community Prosperity

MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

A sample application with desired skillsets can be found on RRC Online Library of Resources



Michigan Main Street Lists Types of Candidates Who Might be Qualified for Roles

Organization	Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merchants • Property owners • Residents • Civic Groups Volunteers • Accountants • Media representatives • Volunteer specialists • Organizational pioneers • Writers • Seniors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architects • History buffs • Real estate agents • Interior designers • Contractors • Graphic Designers and artists • Downtown property owners • Architecture students • City planners • Gardeners & Landscapers
Promotions	Economic Restructuring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown merchants • Chamber of commerce members • Civic groups involved in the arts • Marketing/advertising professionals • Teachers of marketing or design • Staff in advertising or tourism offices • Reporters and editors • Graphic Designers and artists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merchants • Property owners • Realtors • Mortgage bankers • Consumers • Marketing professionals • Developers • Stock brokers • Bankers • Business Students • Representatives of Small Business Development Centers

4.1.1 – Expectation 2 - The community has clearly documented the process for board and commission appointments

Process for Being Appointed to the Planning Commission or Zoning Board of Appeals

Interested residents are encouraged to apply online at the City of Sterling Heights website. Indicate your preference for serving on the Planning Commission and/or Zoning Board of Appeals.

When a vacancy occurs, the Office of Planning will review all applications, with a focus on those that show a preference for serving on the Planning Commission and/or Zoning Board of Appeals.

The Office of Planning will conduct interviews with preferred applicants to discuss level of interest, knowledge of planning and zoning background.

The Office of Planning will draft a letter recommending the preferred applicant as determined by the City Planner and submit to the City Clerk. This must occur within 30 days of vacancy.

The City Clerk will review the application, letter of recommendation, residency, etc. and submit the candidate to the Mayor and Council for review.

The Mayor nominates and the Mayor and Council vote on the nomination for Planning Commission candidates. The Mayor and City Council jointly vote on the nomination for Zoning Board of Appeals candidates.

Once nominated, City Council will vote to appoint the nominee at a subsequent meeting (typically the next regular City Council meeting).

Appointed member must be sworn in (take oath of office) within two (2) weeks of appointment.

- Help applicants understand when/how they can become appointed.
- How will they find out if they are selected?
- Who will be considering their application?


4.1.1 – Expectation 3 – Board and commission applications are available online | Example – Harrison

Once a prospective applicant decides they would like to serve on a board/commission, they will look to apply

Make it easy for prospective applicants to apply

How are applications turned in?

- Email?
- Can somebody apply for more than one board/commission at a time? i.e. universal application or specific applications?



Expectations: If appointed, members are expected to make every effort to be an active member of the board, committee or commission. This includes:

1. Attending meetings on a regular basis
2. Reviewing meeting materials prior to the meeting
3. Adhering to the city's ethics policy
4. Representing the interests of the Harrison community as a whole
5. Learning and utilizing key tools such as plans, policies and input from public engagement

Important Public Records Information: All information submitted in this application is public information and subject to disclosure in response to a public records request made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. Please contact the Clerk at 989-539-7145 if you have any questions or concerns about the disclosure of specific information.

Truth and Accuracy: I certify that the information contained on this form is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that all information disclosed on this form will be available to the public as part of a Freedom of Information Act request.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Return to:
City Manager and Clerk
2105 Sullivan Drive, Harrison, MI 48625
Phone: (989) 539-7145
Fax: (989) 539-2292
Email: theadle@cityofharrison-mi.gov

_____ { 4 } _____

Harrison's application provides an email address where completed applications can be turned in

4.1.1 – Expectation 3 – Board and commission applications are available online | Example - Ferndale

Make it easy for prospective applicants to apply

Document Signers
○ Signer1

Employment: List your three most recent employment experiences.

Dates	Company Name / Location	Position	Job Description

Education: List your three most recent educational experiences.

Educational Institution / School	Degree Received	Area(s) of Study

Some boards and commissions are a mix of citizens with certain qualifications and other citizens representing the general public. Even if you do not have any of the experience or professional background listed below, City Council urges you to apply for consideration. Ferndale needs citizens with diverse backgrounds on its boards and commissions.

Important Public Records Information: All information submitted in this application is public information and subject to disclosure in response to a public records request made pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. Please contact the City Clerk at 248-546-2384 if you have any questions or concerns about the disclosure of specific information.

Truth and Accuracy: I certify that the information contained on this form is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that all information disclosed on this form will be available to the public as part of a Freedom of Information Act request.

Signature Here _____ Date _____
Applicant's Signature

Submit & Sign

Ferndale has a submit and sign feature.

Make It
Easy to
Apply

Downloadable application

Fillable forms

Paper available too

Simple directions

Evaluation Criteria 4.1.2 – The community provides orientation packets to all appointed and elected members of development related boards and commissions | Example - Mt. Clemens

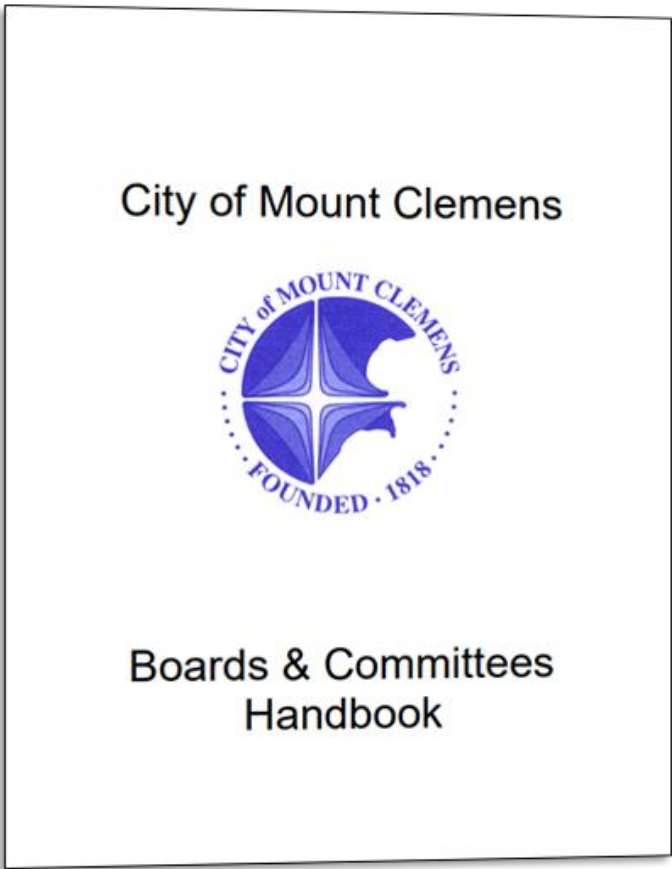


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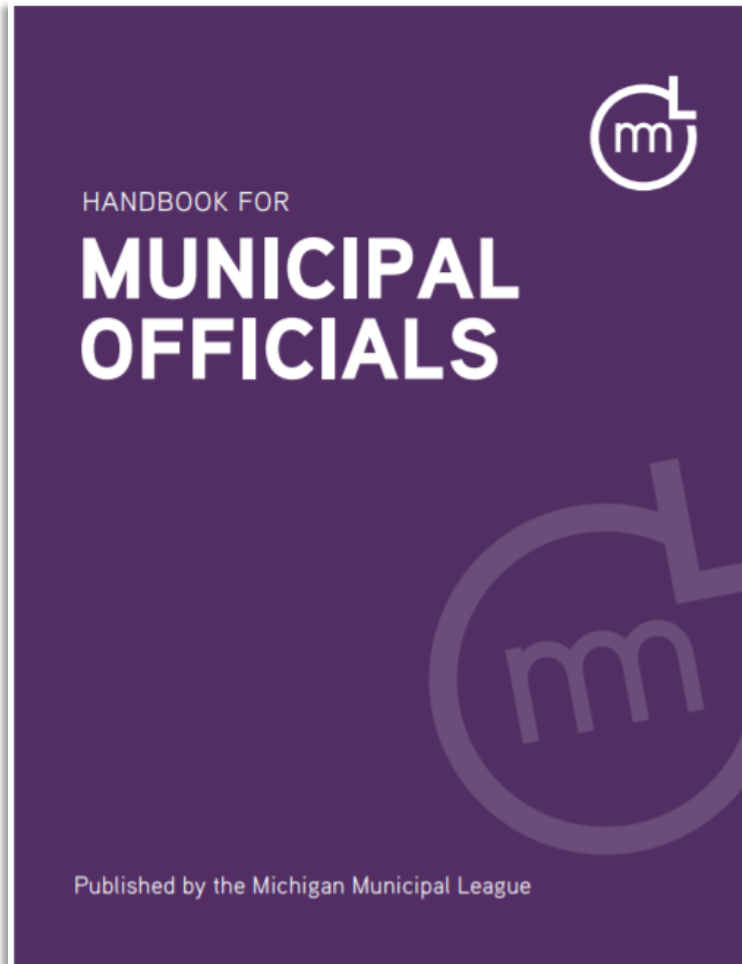
- ❖ Boards & committees handbooks organize orientation materials which allow for quick reference
- ❖ If handbooks are made available online, they can assist in recruitment as well as orientation

Setting Board/Commission Members Up for Success

EXPECTATIONS

- The **orientation packet** includes all relevant planning, zoning and development information.

Evaluation Criteria 4.1.2 – The community provides orientation packets to all appointed and elected members of development related boards and commissions | Example MML



- The Michigan Municipal League (MML) has published a handbook for municipal officials
- Outlines basic local government information for local officials
- Familiarizes officials with the responsibilities they face as policymakers

Orientation Should Include:



- Policy process
- Board duties vs staff duties
- Expectations
- Do's and Don'ts
- Board history
- Ethics
- Key stakeholders
- City/county history
- Organizational chart
- Finances
- Communication protocol
- Mission/Vision/Strategic plan

Create Opportunities to Meet Collaboratively Across the Community

- Training sessions
- Listening sessions
- Strategic Planning/Visioning
- Focus groups on niche issues
- Townhall meetings
- Opportunity identification
- Problem solving



Joint Training/Visioning/Problem- Solving Aids Recruitment

- Introduces community members not likely to know each other
- Provides insight into joint opportunities/interests
- Creates interest in municipal government
- No pressure
- “Getting to know you” provides vetting



SERV. Not just another four-letter word....

S ervice in all you do

- Nothing self-serving but always “other” serving
- Eyes and ears of the community to determine needs
- Dedicated listening sessions
- Actively engaging and listening

E ducate

- Yourself, educate the community, educate individuals
- What tools are you using to educate the public?

R espect others

- How are you being inclusive across your community?
- How are you demonstrating your respect when there are expressed differences?

V alued input

- Not right and wrong, but “almost” right and “probably” wrong
- Persuasion comes from narratives, not pros and cons
- Who said, “There are lies. Damned lies. And statistics?”

Words Matter: Cooperider's Premise

*What we ask determines what we find. **ASK
the RIGHT QUESTIONS.***

*What we find determines how we talk.
LOOK FURTHER.*

*How we talk determines how we imagine
together. **MORE THAN ONE RIGHT ANSWER.***

*How we imagine together determines what
we achieve. **ANYTHING NEW?***



We listen to you. Your speech telegraphs whether to contribute or not.



Reactive Service

- There's nothing we can do
- That's just the way it is
- They make me so angry

- They won't go along with this
- You mean we have to do THAT?
- We have to...
- If only...

Proactive Service

- Let's look at the alternatives
- How do we work with this?
- I will not descend to that level

- What gives them heartburn so I can help relieve it?
- We will deal with it
- We will
- Let's look at this carefully

Don't be a Stuck Community

Don't:

- **Broadcast** all the reasons we have to be afraid; economic woes, population declining...
- **Exploit fears** of violence, economic disaster, crime, hate
- **Play the blame** game on who is at fault
- **Continue to tell stories about the past.**
 - They are our limitation; instead focus on the future.

If You Do These Things, the Results are:

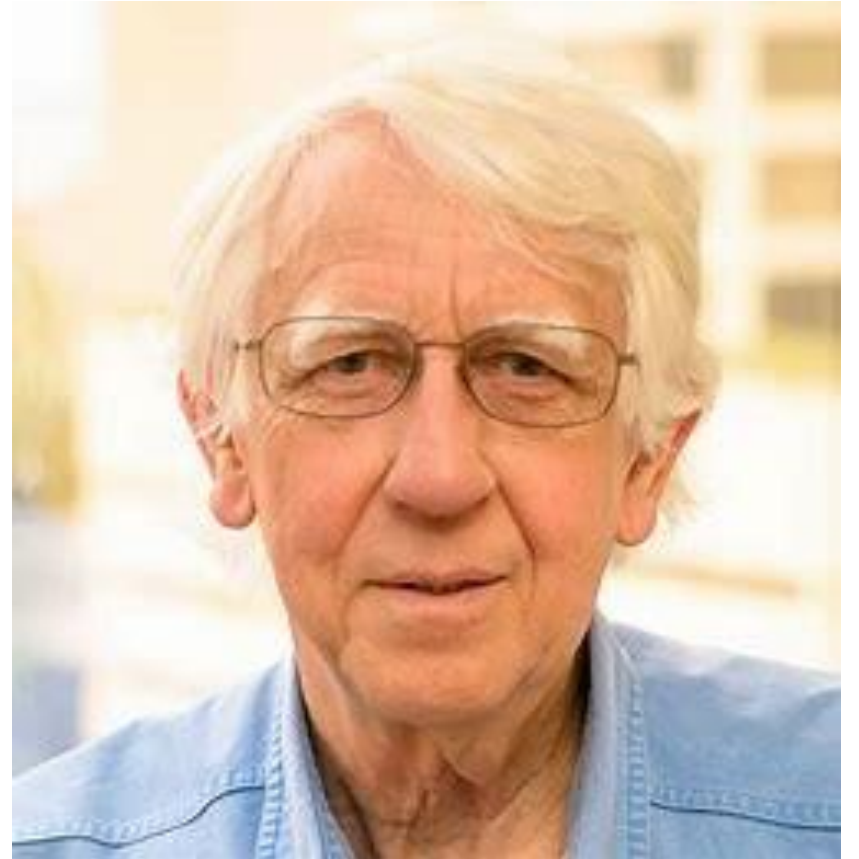
- Ramping up laws and oversight
- Patriarchal government breeding citizen dependency instead of empowerment
- Cynicism becoming the norm and the conversation

Result? We are STUCK.



Kemmis: Politician's Roles in Building Community

- Good politicians have more in common with entrepreneurs than with mediators
 - They risk political capital in pursuit of their city's self-realization
 - Shift from command and control to stewardship.
- Good politicians are useless unless their constituents take on the challenge of being good enough citizens
 - Acting and speaking as if they care more about their city than they do about the pursuit of their own narrow interests.
- Encouraging the Office of Citizen. "Perhaps no skill is more important to the *office of citizen* than the ability to teach or encourage one another to speak and actually be heard by others who do not already share your views."



How to Build the Chemistry of Community

- Small groups can lead transformation
- Questions are more transforming than answers
- Respect peoples' contributions by welcoming these discussions:
 - How do we help people feel welcome, how do we envision possibilities instead of problems, how can you feel ownership in our community, where and how can we respectfully disagree, what is your commitment, and what gifts do you have to share?
- Hospitality is central to people contributing.
- Physical and social space are welcoming.



welcome



Do Not Wait for
Them to Come to
You

Issue the Invites

- Utilize key stakeholders to plant seeds in advance
- Educate through gathering places
- Utilize focus groups, listening sessions, townhalls, surveys, blogs
- Speakers' bureau, senior complexes, schools, Chambers of Commerce
- Respect quorum
- Educate up front with the media

Most Everything Important Happens in a Small Group

- Design ways to bring citizens together
- Large-group methodologies used in small groups help us focus on *collective wisdom* and against expensive studies and consultants.
- Conversation is the vehicle of change
- Bias toward the future with little time devoted to negotiating the past or talking about things where we'll never agree anyway.
 - “What do we want to create together?”
- Accountability and commitment to what we have a hand in creating.





Key to Building Community

Old Chinese Verse

Go in search of your people:
Love Them;
Learn from Them;
Plan with Them;
Serve Them;
Begin with what They have;
Build on what They know.

But of the best leaders
when their task is accomplished,
their work is done,
The people all remark:
"We have done it ourselves."

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY STATEMENT ON CIVILITY

St. Joseph County is committed to encouraging, creating and sustaining an environment that honors the inherent dignity of every member of our community. Respectful behavior should always be the norm in all forms of communications and in all situations.

As a community...

- We welcome a diverse range of perspectives and opinions and uphold the importance of civil debate.
- We fully support the free exchange of ideas and beliefs, as well as the expression of provocative or less popular ideas.
- We believe that only through the process of open and honest dialogue can we generate knowledge and deepen our mutual understanding.
- We believe all members of the community have a responsibility to behave in a manner that does not harm others and shows respect for those with different opinions.
- Behavior that attacks, humiliates, belittles, or conveys personal hatred towards others diminishes our thriving and safe community environment.
- Words and actions matter.
- Everyone is asked to do their part in creating a healthy and positive community and a culture that truly values each person's uniqueness, experiences, and perspectives.

It's alright to disagree but not to be disagreeable.
(paraphrased) Attributed to Father Herburgh, Norm
Dane

21 April 2017



Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce

306 W Chicago Rd
Sturgis, MI
49091

Phone (202) 431-3734
E-mail info@sturgis chamber.com

Three Rivers Area Chamber of Commerce

37 N. Main
Three Rivers, MI
49093

Phone (202) 278-4155
E-mail info@trchamber.com

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY STATEMENT ON CIVILITY

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE



AND THE



Ex: Civility in Public Office from St. Joseph County

St. Joseph County is committed to encouraging, creating and sustaining an environment that honors the inherent dignity of every member of our community. Respectful behavior should always be the norm in all forms of communications and in all situations.

As a community. . .

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• (paraphrased) Attributed to Father Hesburgh, Notre Dame 21 April 2017