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Standard Operating Procedures for the
City of Evert's Boards and Commissions

Council Adopted February 1, 2021

Policy #2021-01

Introduction

Welcome! Because your appointment to a City of Evert board or commission* requires no prior experience in public service, City staff designed this guide to help you navigate your new role. This page will introduce you to some of the key information that you will need to serve on your board or commission.

The City of Evert appoints over 70 people to over 14 boards and commissions that advise and assist in carrying out the functions of local government. These boards and commissions provide a critical reservoir of knowledge and community input that inform City policy decisions and operations.

The City of Evert is a Council-Manager form of government. Under this system, the City Council (including the Mayor) sets policy, while the City Manager is the chief executive who implements the policies and manages the daily operations of the City. This is somewhat analogous to a corporation, which is governed by a board of directors, but managed by a CEO. Over 25 City employees work across over eight departments to deliver exceptional services to the residents of Evert.

Most boards and commissions are created by City resolution or ordinance and serve as advisory bodies to the City Council or City Administrator. They provide information, analysis, and recommendations to inform the City Council's and City Administrator's decisions on matters pertaining to the board or commission's specialized knowledge. A few boards and commissions have specific authority to make binding decisions in certain areas, such as the Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission, and Building Board of Appeals. These bodies generally derive their decision-making authority from state laws.

Regardless of the specific duties, each board and commission play an important part in City government. Appointees to boards or commissions perform a public service to their community and have both an obligation and an opportunity to provide wise input that will help shape their government. This requires a thorough understanding of their board or commission's role as well as a willingness to engage constructively with the public, elected officials, and City staff. Although much of learning how to do this will happen on the job, it is hoped that this handbook will provide useful introductory guidance.

* There are a variety of names for City-created bodies, such as boards, commissions, committees, authorities, etc. This guide uses "boards and/or commissions" to mean any such body.

Process for New Appointments

Interested applicants will be required to fill out an application (see Appendix A). Each applicant will be required to meet and interview with city staff and/or elected officials. City staff will educate and discuss the role of the board or commission. City staff will give the applicant copies of all relevant information including current minutes, by-laws, continuing education requirements, meeting schedules, public acts, excerpts from city charter/ordinance/resolution (see Appendix B).

Appointees who have been confirmed will receive a letter from the City Clerk's Office notifying them of their appointment and including information on the swearing-in process, contact information for the staff liaison to the board or commission, and the term start and end date. Commissioners should contact the staff liaison to determine the first meeting for their appointed term. Prior to participating in any meeting, commissioners are required to sign an oath of office, which staff liaisons provide.

Prior to your first meeting, you should familiarize yourself with the bylaws of your board or commission and review the materials provided to you by city staff. Your staff liaison should also be able to provide you with any other pertinent information.

Beginning in 2021, all board and commission terms should begin with the calendar year (January) and end accordingly. If a member resigns, the replacement term follows the same timeline, rather than beginning on the date they are appointed. (Note: Board of Review and Zoning Board of Appeals must be appointed in January. Using fiscal year would require changing those.)

Duties of Boards and Commissions

General Duties and Responsibilities of Appointees

In the broadest sense, the role of an individual appointee is to bring their experience and wisdom to the body and deliberate with other members to reach decisions that fulfill the purpose of the particular board or commission. Here are some general tips and expectations for appointees:

- Act courteously during meetings and treat other members of the body, the public, and City staff with respect. Disagreements are inevitable, but appointees should remain civil and focus on issues rather than personal differences.
- Observe good parliamentary practice. The chair's role is to run an efficient meeting while allowing all points of view to be heard and a full discussion. Assist the chair by being concise in making your points and not interrupting others.
- Arrive to meetings on time and let your staff liaison and chair know if you will be absent. Unexpected absences can cause a meeting to be cancelled if not enough members are present to establish a quorum. If a quorum is not present the commission will be unable to conduct regular business, so as a courtesy to your fellow commissioners and the public, please provide advanced notice of any absences.
- Come prepared. Review proposed minutes, agenda packets, and other information ahead of time to allow for informed deliberation.
- Represent your board or commission appropriately. As an appointee, people may perceive you to speak on behalf of the City or your board or commission. Do not speak for your board or commission unless appropriately authorized to do so. Make clear that you are speaking in your personal capacity if there is any doubt.

Duties of Specific Members and Information about Member Types

Enabling legislation and bylaws are important documents that delineate member types, below are short descriptions of the various attendees who regularly participate in meetings other than general members.

Officers

Boards and commissions often decide to authorize members elected to offices such as the chair, secretary, or vice-chair to carry out specific functions in order to serve the rest of the board or commission. Major systems of parliamentary procedure define some of these functions, such as the duty of the chair to preside over and keep decorum during meetings.

Bylaws frequently grant other powers and duties. For example, some bylaws allow the chairperson to cancel meetings in the event of dangerous weather without consulting any other members. For more information about the powers of elected officers of boards, commissions, or committees, review the relevant bylaws.

Non-Voting Members

Although non-voting members lack the right to vote on a decision, non-voting members retain all other rights of membership, including the right to make motions and join in deliberation. It is important to read the enabling law that created the board or commission to determine who are the non-voting members. Some common examples of non-voting members include members of the City Council, members of the City staff, or youth members.

Being a non-voting member restricts certain other privileges of membership inherently. However, these restrictions stem from the lack of ability to vote and are consistent for voting members and non-voting members under certain circumstances. For example, a non-voting member can never make a motion to reconsider, as a non-voting member cannot vote on the prevailing side during a motion. However, the lack of authority to make a motion to reconsider is equally restricted from voting members who do not vote with the prevailing side.

Non-Member Council Liaisons

The City Council regularly appoints councilmembers as non-member liaisons to City boards and commissions. Council liaisons will not be enumerated in enacting laws or bylaws, and have no voting rights or ability to make or

second motions, but council liaisons provide a valuable resource to boards and commissions and make insightful contributions to discussions.

Other Non-Member Liaisons

Members of the City staff or liaisons from other organizations may be appointed to work with your board or commission. If these liaisons are not included in the enabling law for your board or commission, they may only join in the discussion when invited pursuant to the rules your board or commission has adopted.

Governing Rules

A few key resources provide structure for operating a healthy board and commission. It is important to be knowledgeable about bylaws and other legislation surrounding boards and commissions.

Bylaws

When you are appointed, your staff liaison should provide you with a copy of the bylaws of your board or commission. The bylaws will contain most of the information you need to perform your duties. The City's bylaws are standardized for most boards and commissions, with some specific provisions applicable to each body. The standard bylaws include sections on duties, ethics and conflicts of interest, and procedural matters, including scheduling, noticing, and conducting meetings and preparation of agendas. If, after reviewing the bylaws, you have questions or want clarification, contact your staff liaison, who will be your conduit to City staff and will get you the information you need. Please note that state law or local nuances regarding the commission you serve can preempt bylaw provisions.

Open Meetings Act

City boards and commissions are expected to conduct themselves according to the procedures contained in the Michigan Open Meetings Act ("OMA"). Essentially, this means that City boards and commissions deliberate and make all their decisions during a public meeting, potentially including a full discussion of the reasons for those decisions. Commissioners should avoid emailing, talking, or otherwise communicating with other members outside of a public meeting about how they will vote, reasons for voting a particular way, or the pros and cons of an issue or petition that may come before the commission.

Sometimes, discussion between commissioners outside of a public meeting may be necessary (for example, when developing draft policy recommendations for presentation to the full commission). In such cases, the discussions should involve as few commissioners as possible and never involve a quorum. If the matter warrants substantial discussion with multiple commissioners outside of the regular meeting schedule, a subcommittee may be appropriate, the meetings of which would be posted and open to the public. Questions about the OMA should be submitted to your staff liaison, who if necessary, may forward it to the City Attorney for legal advice.

Basic Rights of the Public during a meeting governed by the Open Meeting Act:

- The public can attend without a requirement to sign in or identify themselves
- The public can record and/or broadcast the proceedings if they so choose
- The public can address the assembly under the rules prescribed for public comment
- The public can get a full picture of the decision-making process; assemblies avoid exchanging written notes, secret ballots, electronic messages, and telephone calls during meetings

Freedom of Information Act

In general, records of the City are subject to disclosure under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Email communications about board or commission business are generally considered to be public records subject to disclosure under FOIA. For this reason, email correspondence regarding the board or commission's business should generally copy the staff liaison so that the City has a record of the correspondence. Commissioners are otherwise responsible for retaining and producing emails and other records, including text messages related to board or commission business that they have in their possession upon request by the City's FOIA Coordinator or the City Attorney's Office.

Local Rules Relating to Meeting Documents

Meeting Notices

Advanced Public Notice of meetings are provided, at a minimum, by physical posting a notice, listing the meeting on the City Website, and by direct mail to interested parties who have requested notice be sent to them directly. Work with your staff liaison to ensure these notices are provided before any meeting.

There are two types of meetings: regular meetings and special meetings. Boards and commissions schedule regular meetings at the start of each year. When necessary, commissions reschedule regular meeting dates by vote at a meeting throughout the year. Special meetings supplement the regular meeting schedule and often focus on specific topics. The two types of meeting have different deadlines for informing the public but scheduling either type of meeting includes many common key points.

Key Points for Scheduling Meetings:

- Each year City boards and commissions cumulatively hold more than 115 meetings. With several dozen active groups competing for a limited number of meeting venues—it is important to start planning for meetings early and collaborate with staff liaisons to make sure the scheduling process goes smoothly
- Avoid scheduling meetings for dates identified as City holidays and/or other recommended holiday observances
- Advanced notice of meetings is required for all meetings: regular meetings, special meetings, and (sub)committee meetings all require meeting notices. Work with your staff liaison to make sure these are published and distributed appropriately. When planning a special meeting, boards, commissions, and committees must provide at least three full business days' advanced notice to the staff liaison to ensure timely public notification
- All meetings must be held in a public building, with adequate public space for the public to observe the proceedings and must be ADA accessible. Accommodations, including interpreters and sign language interpreters, may be arranged by contacting the City Clerk's Office at least two full business days before the date of the meeting

Agendas & Agenda Packets

Agendas are critical documents for keeping meetings on topic and progressing in an orderly manner. With the exception of subcommittee meetings, agendas are required to be posted online for all meetings at least 2 days ahead of each meeting. Staff liaisons help boards and commissions publish agendas online ahead of meetings and print off enough copies for the public.

Agenda packets are the supporting documents relating to items on the agenda and encompass any materials distributed to members for review and action. Under record retention rules, the City keeps all agendas and agenda packets created as a part of the permanent record of each meeting.

Meeting Minutes

Staff liaisons and/or board members prepare minutes and the proposed minutes will be available for public inspection and for review by members of boards and commissions as well as the general public within 8 business days after the meeting to which the minutes refer. Boards, commissions, and committees review, correct, and approve proposed minutes at the next regular meeting.

Both regular and special meetings are documented by minutes, whenever a meeting is held. Minutes provide a record of the date, time, place and attendance of members at a meeting along with a record of any decisions made or roll call votes conducted at a meeting. Minutes are not a transcription or a set of notes recording discussions leading up to decisions. Members of boards and commissions are encouraged to bring a notebook to document discussions if a more detailed record is desired, but staff liaisons/board members are directed to take action only minutes, including the information above.

Once the board, commission or committee approves a set of minutes, staff liaisons will make approved minutes available for public inspection within five business days after the meeting at which the minutes are approved. Staff liaisons will forward the approved minutes to the next available City Council agenda for filing. For convenience, minutes are typically available on the City Website.

Role of City Staff

Staff Liaisons

Each board and commission have a staff liaison who provides professional and administrative support. Staff liaisons are the primary conduit for members of boards and commissions to communicate with the City. Your staff liaison should be your first contact if you have any questions related to your board or commission. Staff liaisons perform a variety of roles, including:

- Serving as a channel of communication between the board/commission and other City staff
- Creating meeting notices, preparing minutes, and creating agendas
- Scheduling meetings and booking meeting locations
- Maintaining board/commission records
- Coordinating the collection and distribution of information requested by the board/commission
- Providing annual training for appointees

City Clerk's Office

The City Clerk's Office provides a wide range of support and oversight to ensure meetings and records relating to boards and commissions are accurate and meet applicable requirements, including:

- Maintaining rosters by updating as needed with appointments and resignations
- Reviewing, posting, and mailing out meeting notices prepared by staff liaisons
- Arranging accessibility accommodations requested for accessibility at public meetings
- Notifying the City Council of terms set to expire
- Preparing and send oath of office cards to staff liaisons for incoming appointees. Staff liaisons have each new member complete the oath of office card prior to participating in any meetings and return the card to the Clerk's Office for permanent filing
- Mailing all new appointees a letter, including information on the swearing-in process; the staff liaison contact information; the expiration date of the appointee's term; and other information the City Clerk deems appropriate

City Attorney's Office

The City Attorney's Office also provides support for City boards and commissions, including:

- Reviewing and advising on bylaws
- Providing guidance on applicable procedural and legal requirements
- Providing guidance on interpretation of public acts

Mayor's Office

Staff Liaisons assists the Mayor by supporting the application and appointment process and assists the Mayor and City Council in the administrative work surrounding appointments.

Conclusion

Hopefully, the information on in this guide will assist you in preparing to serve on a City board or commission. If you have additional questions, there are many people who can help, including your staff liaison, the City Clerk's Office, and the chair and other members of your board or commission.

City of Evert Online Resources

Additional information is available on the Boards and Commissions Page on www.evert.org

Appendix A

City of Evert's Board/Commissions Application Form

Please circle the committee or board for which you are applying:

Board of Review	Evert Area Fire Department Board
Board of Appeals (credentials required)	Historic District Commission (professional resume required)
City Council	Historic District Study Committee
Cemetery Commission	Housing Commission
Planning Commission	Library Board
Downtown Development Authority	Local Pay Commission
Economic Development Advisory Board	Zoning Board of Appeals
Election Commission	Evert Area Fire Department Board

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Are you at least 18 years of age? _____ How long have you lived in the city? _____

Do you own property in the City of Evert? _____ Are you a registered voter in the city? _____

Identify any potential conflicts (relatives that work for the city or any commission/board, financial agreements with the city or any commission/board etc.

What other Boards/Commissions do you currently serve on?

Are you an elected official or public employee? If yes, please specify?

Why would you like to be the Board(s)/Commission(s) you have selected?

Experiences that are relevant to request:

I hereby certify that all the statements made in this application are true, complete, and correct, to the best of my knowledge and belief and are made in good faith.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Checklist

Document/Task	Initials of Appointee	Initials of City Liaison
Last six months of meeting minutes/agenda/packets		
Meeting Schedule		
City Liaisons/Current Board Members Contact Information		
Bylaws of board or commission (if applicable)		
Schedule professional training/continuing education		
Public Act(s)		
City Ordinance(s)/Resolution(s)		
Current Contracts/Approved Plans/Strategic Plans/Goals		
Current and Past Budget(s)		
Timecard/Payroll Packet (Board of Review Only)		
Open Meetings Act Fact Sheet		
Freedom of Information Act Fact Sheet		
Letter from City Clerk of Appointment and Term		
Oath of Office		
Code of Ethics Agreement		
Other Document(s)		

Appendix C

Boards, Commissions and Committees – Descriptions

Evert Housing Commission– Appointing authority: Mayor and Council.

Five members are appointed for five-year terms and one-member must be a tenant of the housing commission. Manages all public housing facilities and rental voucher (Section 8) programs in the city. Public housing facilities include scattered site rental housing, home purchase programs and senior residential developments. Meets monthly.

Downtown Development Authority – Appointing authority: City Manager, with Council Approval.

To halt a decline of property values, increase property tax valuation, eliminate causes of decline in value, and promote growth in the downtown. There must be between eight and twelve members, city residents, business owners, or designees of the TIFA district; City Manager, or designee. Terms are four years on a rotational basis.

Board of Appeals – Appointing authority: Mayor, with Council approval.

Hears and decides on appeals made regarding the application or interpretation of the Housing Code and Rental Housing Code. The HBA also serves in hearing cases and affirming, modifying or reversing the decisions of the Dangerous Buildings Hearing Officer. Three members must be a building contractor, a registered architect or engineer, and a registered building official or have expertise in the property maintenance. Terms are three years. Meets monthly.

Board of Review (Assessing) – Appointing authority: Mayor and Commission.

Members serve for one-, two-, and three-year terms and must be city electors. Board consists of three members and one alternate. Three voting members who may correct/amend assessment rolls and increase or decrease taxable property assessment or valuation. Meets for a minimum of three days in March; one day in July; and one day in December.

City Council

City Council typically serve staggered four-year terms. City Mayor and City Clerk serve two-year terms. Those elected in 2020 will serve four-year terms. Council is comprised of five council members including the mayor. **All interested City Council candidates must collect signatures and submit nominating petitions. See more information about council candidate requirements at www.evert.org** . In the case of a position vacancy, the Council will follow a special process, about which information will be released separately. More information can be found in Council’s Policy and Procedure Handbook adopted by city council on December 15, 2020.

Cemetery Commission- Appointing authority: Mayor, with Council approval.

The cemetery commission shall consist of a least three (3) members, one of whom shall be member of the council. A plan for perpetual care of all lots, plots, and land therein shall be established.

Economic Development Advisory Committee – Appointing authority: Mayor, with Council approval.

Focuses on development of industrial park, assists in industry retention, and promotes the general welfare of Evert. Composed of City Manager, Assistant City Manager, and City Mayor and one Council Member and other members of the public. Meets as needed.

Election Commission: Appointing authority: Mayor, with Council approval.

Commission consists of the clerk, one other appointive city officer whom the council shall designate, and one qualified registered elector. The clerk shall be the chairman. The commission shall have the charge of all activities and duties required of it by state law and this charter relating to the conduct of elections in the city. Meets as required.

Evert Area Fire Board- Appointing authority: Mayor, with Council approval.

The Board shall consist of one member from each participating municipality. Each member shall participate equally in administering the Evert Area Fire Board. Meets Monthly.

Historic District Commission– Appointing authority: Mayor, with Council approval.

Charged under state law and local ordinance with reviewing plans for exterior modifications or demolition of buildings within the federal, state or local historic districts. It is comprised of five members who live in the city, one of whom is a registered architect. They have three-year terms. Meets monthly.

Historic District Study Committee- Appointing authority: Mayor, with Council approval.

The Historic District Study Committee shall research proposed historic districts for the purpose historic preservation in the City. The Committee shall have at least one member from a local historic preservation organization. Meets as needed.

Library Board- Appointing authority: Mayor, with Council approval.

Board consists of two representatives from each participating municipality. Members must be city electors. Meets monthly.

Local Officers' Pay Compensation Commission– Appointing authority: Mayor, with Council approval.

Determine salaries of elected officials. Comprised of five registered electors of the city who are not members or employees of any branch of government, nor the immediate family of a member or employee of any branch of government. Shall meet for at least one, and not more than 15, session days in each odd-numbered year. "Session day" is a calendar day on which the Council meets and for which a quorum is present. Terms are one, two, three, four and five years.

Planning Commission– Appointing authority: Mayor, with Council approval.

Charged under state law with the adoption of plans for the city. Also considers requests for zoning classifications and special use permits and makes recommendations to the City Council on amendments to the planning and zoning code. Comprised of seven community members, one city council member and the mayor. Terms are three years. Meets monthly.

Zoning Board of Appeals – Considers requests for variances to the requirement of the planning and zoning code. Typical variance requests include yard setback reductions and the size of commercial signage. Comprised of seven members, one of whom must be a Planning Council Member. Council shall act as the ZBA if no ZBA exists. Meets as needed.



Example Committee

Chair: John Smith
Vice Chair: Jane Doe
Secretary: John Q. Smith
Treasurer: Jane Q. Doe
Board Member: John Z. Smith
Board Member: Jane Z. Doe

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EXAMPLE COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA Monday, January 1st, 2021 at 6:00 pm

1. Call to Order: 6:00 pm
2. Roll Call/Attendance
3. Introduction of Guests
4. Citizens' Comments – *limited to 3-4 minutes per individual*
5. Approval of Agenda
6. Approval of Consent Agenda
 - B. Regular Example Committee Minutes – December 1st, 2021
 - C. Vendor's List - \$1,234.56
7. Unfinished Business
 - D. Community Outreach
 - E. Social Media Development
8. New Business
 - F. Depot Presentation
 - G. Request to Revise Manual
9. Department Reports
 - H. Summary of Funds
 - I. Chair Report
10. Citizens' Comments – *limited to 3-4 minutes per individual*
11. Adjournment

**VIRTUAL SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
December 3, 2020 @ 7:30PM**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Mayor Chris Emerick.

Present (via roll call): Sean Duffy, Dan Elliott, Mayor Emerick, Matt Hildebrand, Sandy Szeliga

Present: City Manager Sarah Dvoracek, Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Works Mark Wilson, Finance Director/Meeting Host Pepper Lockhart, Chief of Police John Beam, City Clerk Kathy Fiebig

Guests: none

Citizens' Comments: none

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Matt Hildebrand to approve the agenda as presented. Support by Ms. Szeliga. Motion passed with a roll call vote; all were in favor.

Review of the final draft documents of the recodified City ordinances

Ms. Dvoracek guided council through the major changes and additions in the recodification document. Mr. Duffy pointed out some language issues with the dog ordinance. Mr. Hildebrand voiced concerns with the camping and noise ordinances and asked if those three could be pulled out and addressed later after a public hearing on each issue. He suggested that council could pass the rest of the document, adding the dog, noise, and camping ordinances when satisfied with the language. Ms. Dvoracek believes that is possible but will check with Municode. She stated that at this point, any changes made will bring the process to a halt and she does not know if there are financial implications involved. She will have answers to these questions at the regular council meeting on December 7.

Citizens' Comments: none

Motion by Mayor Emerick to adjourn. Support by Mr. Hildebrand. Motion passed with a roll call vote; all were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:27pm.


Kathy Fiebig
City Clerk

