Achieve Effective Planning Through Leader Recruitment and Development

Improving Practice for Planning Commissions & Zoning Hearing Boards

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ICE BREAKER

- Name
- Day Job
- Role with Planning Commissions & Zoning Hearing Boards
- This session will be successful if we… (what?)

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- 30 years' nonprofit and community leadership experience
- Consultant, trainer and peer reviewer for PA and National ***Standards for Excellence®: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector***
- Member, National Standards Council
- Community development experience, including supporting public engagement for comprehensive plans and transportation planning

Meet The Presenter
Debra Thompson, President & CEO

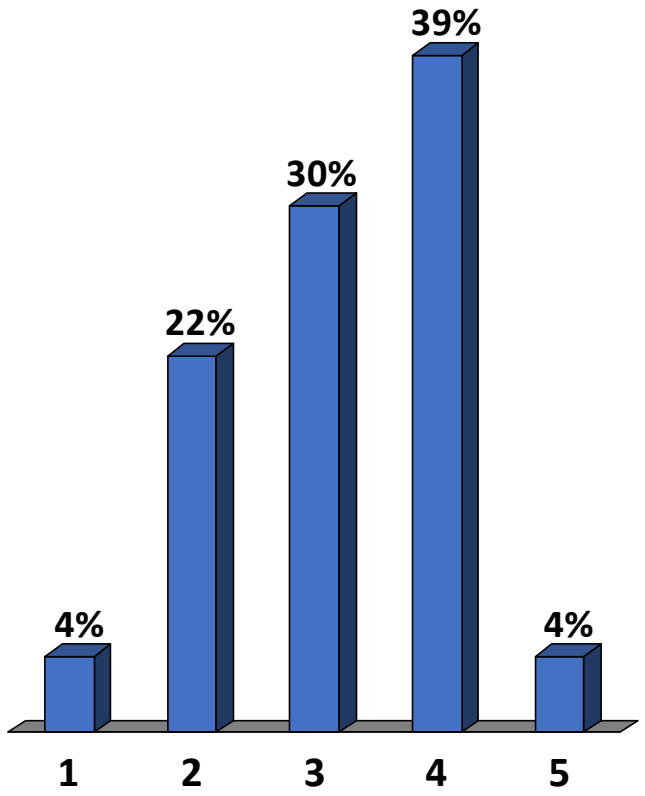
Effective leader recruitment and development

Today's Objectives

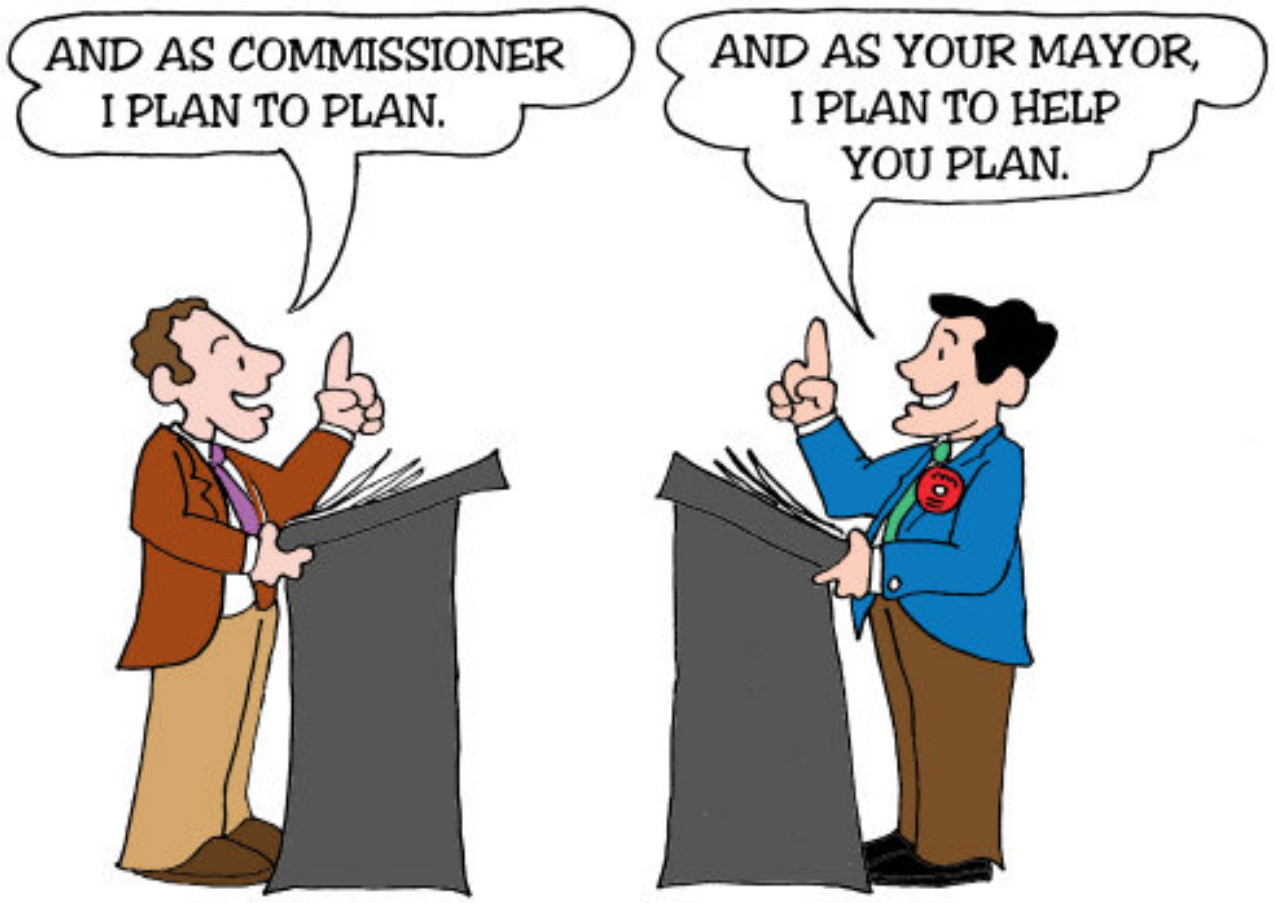
- Identify methods to strategically assess the composition of your planning commissions and zoning hearing boards
- Outline strategies to effectively recruit, appoint, train and develop member to lead in their roles
- Review take - home tools to assess the effectiveness of your planning commissions and zoning hearing boards

How “strategic” is the composition of the Planning Commissions and Zoning Hearing Boards that you work with/are familiar with?

1. Don’t know
2. Not so much
3. Somewhat strategic
4. Mixed; some are strategic and some are not
5. Very strategic



What makes a “strategic” Planning Commission or Zoning Hearing Board?



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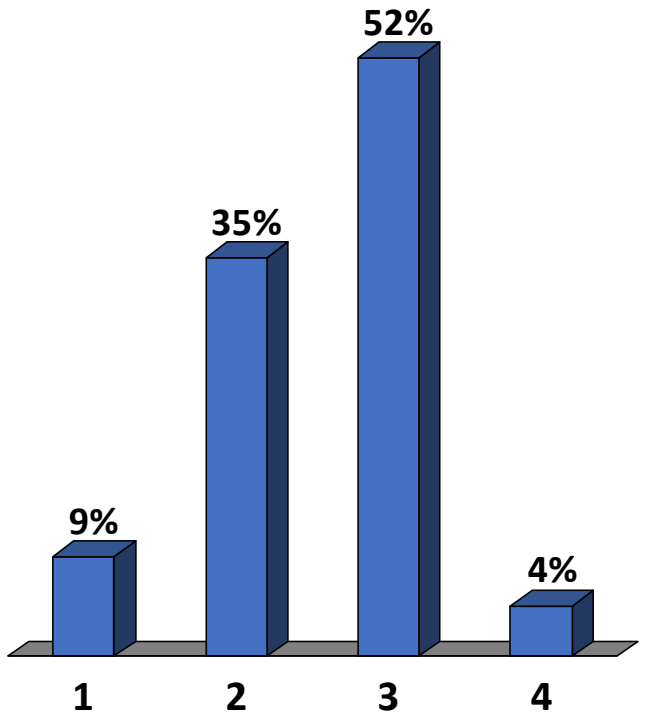
How active are members in commission and board recruitment efforts?

1. don’t know
2. not at all – they leave recruitment up to the elected officials
3. somewhat
4. very active



What skills should a planning commission or board member have?

- Active listening
- Fair and open-minded
- Knowledge of community issues (strengths, needs, and potential of the region) and ordinances
- Analytic ability
- See the big picture without missing the details
- Understand obligations (come prepared and balance commitments)
- Visit sites being discussed
- Team-oriented
- Personal integrity & courage

Source: ***www.plannersweb.com and Central Texas Council of Governments***

Improve Your Recruitment Process

- Involve commission and board members in the recruitment process
- Connect with Economic Development and Community Development agencies & organizations as well as health systems and public health entities to identify diverse skill sets
- Educate leaders/ residents regarding the mission/ responsibilities of your commission(s) & board(s) and the importance of the role(s)
- Identify possible candidates and share with municipal officials

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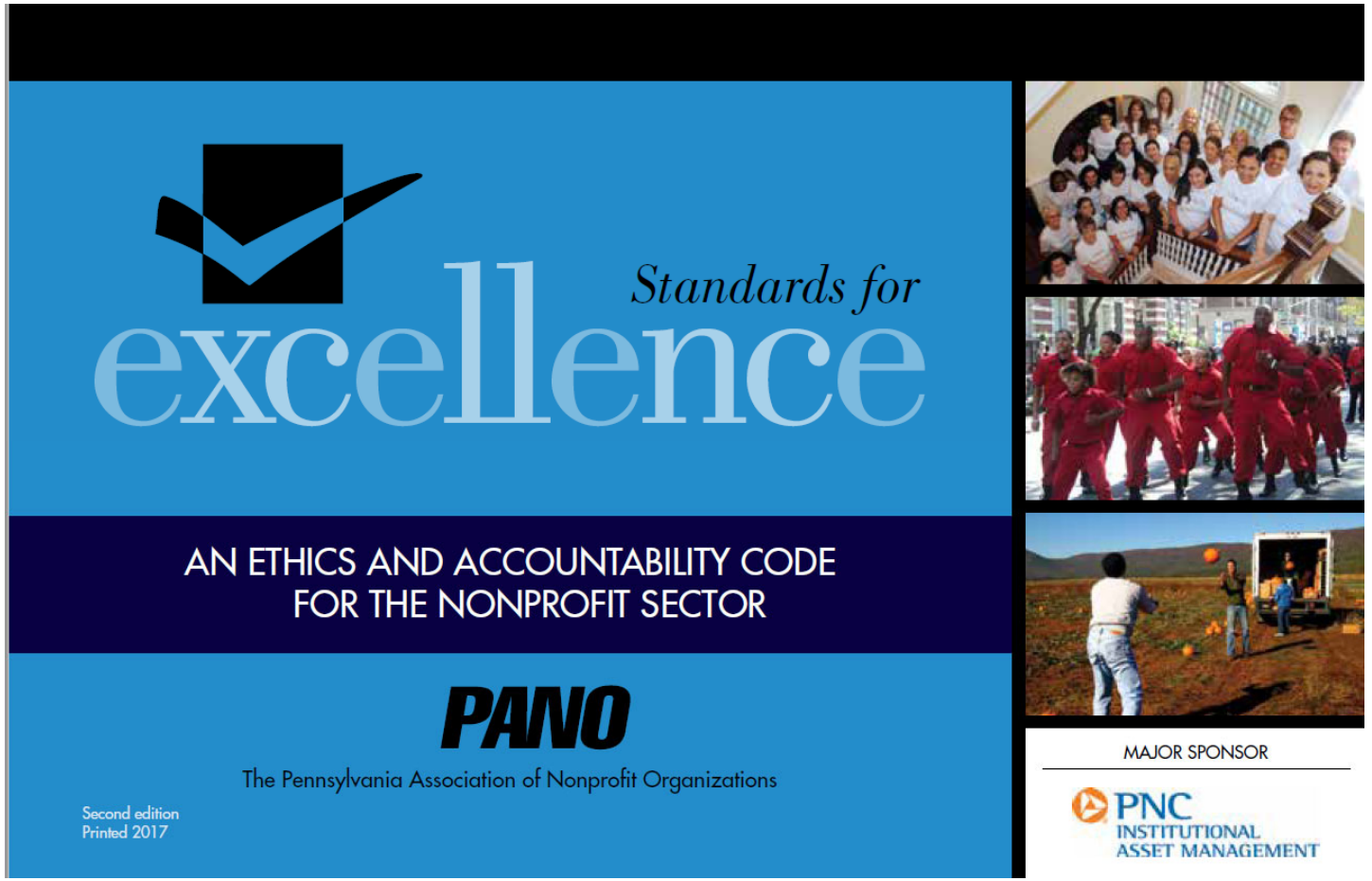
Board Demographic Matrix

	Board Member 1	Board Member 2	Board Member 3	Board Member 4
Name:				
Area or Trait				
DEMOGRAPHICS				
AGE				
Under 30				
30 - 44				
45 - 59				
60 - 70				
Over 70				
GENDER:				
Male				
Female				
ETHNICITY				
African America/Black				
Asian/Pacific Islander				
Caucasian				
Hispanic/Latino				
Native American/Indian				
Other:				
GEOGRAPHY				
Central				
East				
West				
North				
South				
Rural				
BACKGROUND/ SKILLS				
Real Estate				
Construction				
Finance				
Government				
Law/Legal				
Marketing/PR				
Community Health				
Public Health				
Technology				

Borrow some best practices from the nonprofits:



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Standards for Excellence: What are they?

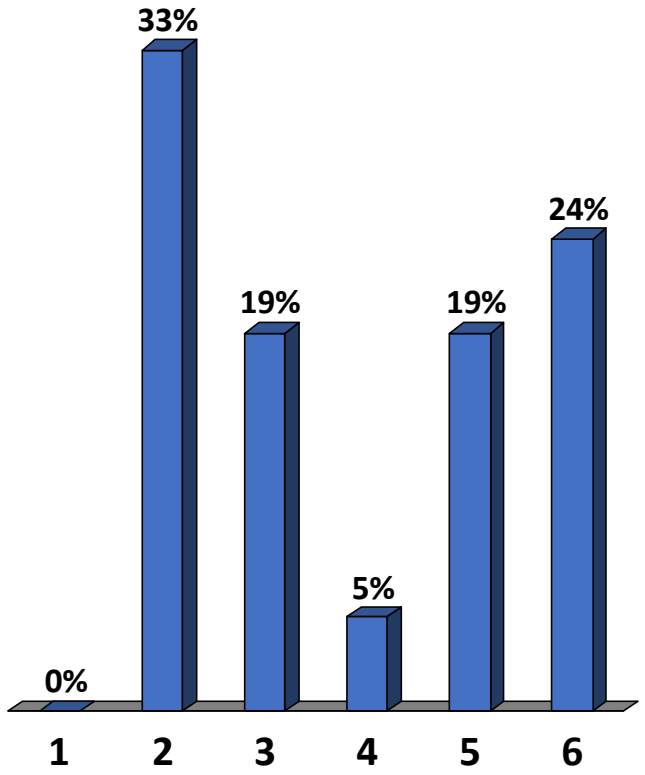
- **6 Guiding Principles, 27 areas of focus and 67 Benchmarks:**
  - Preamble
  - Mission, Strategy and Evaluation
  - Leadership: Board, Staff and Volunteers
  - Legal Compliance and Ethics
  - Finance and Operations
  - Resource Development
  - Public Awareness, Engagement and Advocacy

The Standards for Excellence Code

- **The code provides a framework and step-by-step guidelines to achieve a well-managed and responsibly governed organization.**

What is your current conflict of interest policy?

1. What's a conflict of interest policy?
2. We don't have one
3. We have one but I couldn't tell you what's in it
4. We have one and board members sign it annually
5. We have one, board members sign it annually and we actively identify conflicts as they arise
6. Something else



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LEADERSHIP: BOARD, STAFF, AND VOLUNTEERS

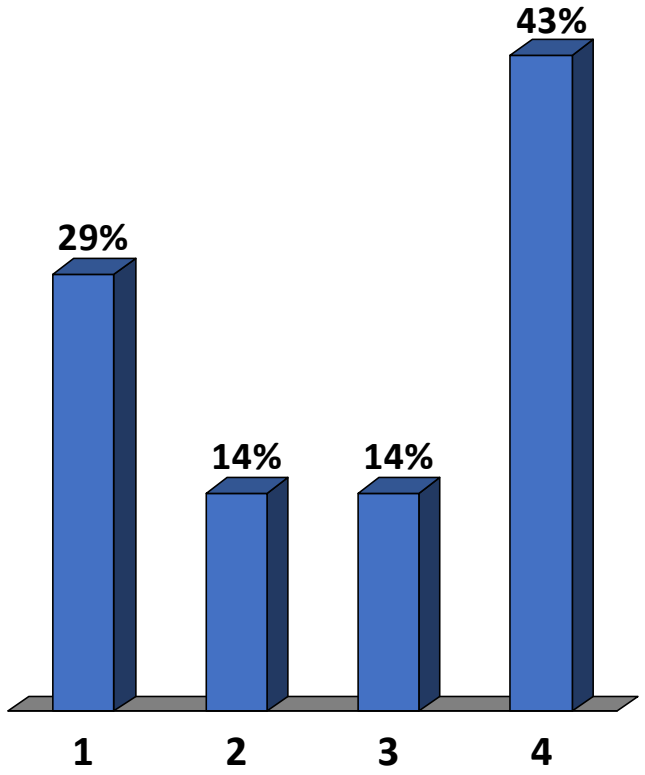
Standard: Leadership and Governance

- Governance and Fiduciary Responsibility
- Members committed to the mission
- Members understand fiduciary role
- Periodic review of bylaws and policies

STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Do the commissions and boards that you work with have bylaws in place?

1. don’t know
2. no
3. yes, but
4. yes



Standard: Leadership and Governance

Act in Accordance with Legal Standards:

- **DUTY OF CARE:**
  Stay informed and ask questions.

- **DUTY OF LOYALTY:**
  Show undivided allegiance to organization's welfare.

Quasi-Judicial

Quasi-judicial Boards and Commissions are bodies that perform their duties like judges. That means that they decide individual cases or controversies according to a legislatively established set of laws or other standards, without being a part of the judicial branch of government. This role generally involves hearing appeals from actions of municipal officers or employees, determining what the facts are and applying a set of laws or other legislatively established standards to these facts.

Like a regular judge, a quasi-judicial body has a duty to decide specific cases based upon legislatively established standards and not to establish the standards or to perform the initial investigation (although on-site visits or inspections are permitted as a part of the appeal process). These bodies have a responsibility to remain neutral and not to become an advocate or supporter of one side or the other in cases or on issues that come before them.

Hallmarks of an Effective Board

1. Clarity about roles & responsibilities
2. Focused time & attention on important issues
3. Restructures board work to get important things done
4. Views board composition as strategic
5. Uses evaluation to learn rather than criticize
6. Has the confidence to take risks
7. Has a constructive relationship with staff
8. Open and honest communication
9. Board works together as effective corporate unit

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STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Standard: Leadership and Governance

- **Board Effectiveness:**
  - Position description for members
  - Periodic board evaluation.
  - Recruiting, selection board members
  - Terms of service
  - Orientation
  - Education
  - Removal
  - Orient to ethics codes that apply

Conduct Board Self-Assessment Survey at least every two years

STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Standard: Bylaws

- All board members are responsible for following.
- Definition of roles and how the board operates.

✓ **Avoid:**

- Aspirational language.
- Inconsistencies.
- Passive tense.
- Ambiguities.

✓ **Ensure:**

- Clear enough to reduce likelihood of litigation.

Standard: Policy Oversight

Establishing and Reviewing Policies:

- Review policies at least once every three years

STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Standard: Leadership and Governance

- **Executive Supervision, Performance, and Compensation and Support:**
  - Board reviews executive compensation and performance
  - Executive has management authority to enforce policies
  - Executive has job description
  - Partnership Board and Executive

How does this work for a Planning Commission or Zoning Hearing Board?

Standard: Leadership and Operational Management

- **Supporting the Board:**
  - **Support** board's policy and oversight function.
  - **Provide** accurate and timely info to the board.
  - **Prepare** value of volunteer investments.

STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

The Governance-Management Model

Truly effective partnerships require a clear definition of the distinctive roles of the partners and the boundaries between them. In the board/staff partnership, a proper division of labor is essential. The violation of the boundaries will, over time, erode the trust, mutual support and good communications that are essential for any partnership to succeed.

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10 Commandments
For An Effective Board Member

1. ***Be prepared*** for ***and attend*** all committee and board meetings. If you are too busy to do your homework, you are too busy to serve.
2. ***Actively listen*** to staff, guests, and fellow board members. You may find comments and questions that make sense.
3. ***Maintain courtesy,*** civility and decorum at all times particularly when an irate guest, board or committee member decides to get on their soap box. Remember, you are expected to act like a mature adult even if those around you do not.
4. ***Carefully choose your words*** when participating in a board meeting. No matter how much you might regret it, someone is going to remember exactly what you said.
5. ***Avoid conflicts of interest.*** It is not just a good idea; it is the law and the policy of this board. Also do not invent a conflict in order to avoid voting on a vital issue that may offend someone. ***Recognize that the Board operates in the sunshine.***
6. ***Avoid even the appearance of impropriety.*** Perception is often as important as reality. You should not use your office/position to gain any advantage over any other member.
7. ***Avoid back room/parking lot deals*** when it comes to board issues. It is bad practice and depending on the issue, may border on unethical conduct.
8. ***Never commit your vote*** until you have heard all sides of an issue. Frank discussion and collaboration are not just buzzwords.
9. ***Govern the programs don't manage them.*** Keep your eye on the vision the board has set out. Staff exists to carry out your vision and decisions.
10. ***Exercise stewardship not ownership.*** The money you will be spending belongs to the taxpayers/public. Any official position you hold is only temporary, hand it over in better shape than you received it.

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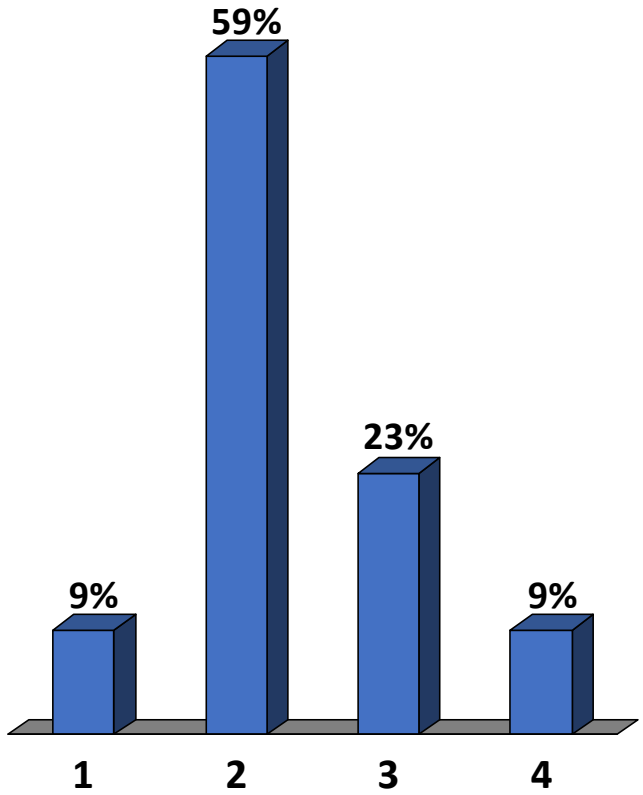
Building Leadership

Creating an Effective Commission or Board Orientation Program

Do your commission(s)/board(s) conduct a formal orientation program?

1. don’t know
2. no
3. yes, but
4. yes



Why have a "Governance" function or committee?

Be more strategic in evaluating the board or committee's structure and performance

Designate a member or members to think about board composition and skills needed

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Responsibilities of a Governance Committee

1. Help create board roles and responsibilities
2. Pay attention to board composition
3. Encourage board development
4. Assess board effectiveness
5. Prepare board leadership
6. Review and revise bylaws as necessary

Effective Board Orientation

1

Board Manual

2

Board "mentors"

3

Board Engagement

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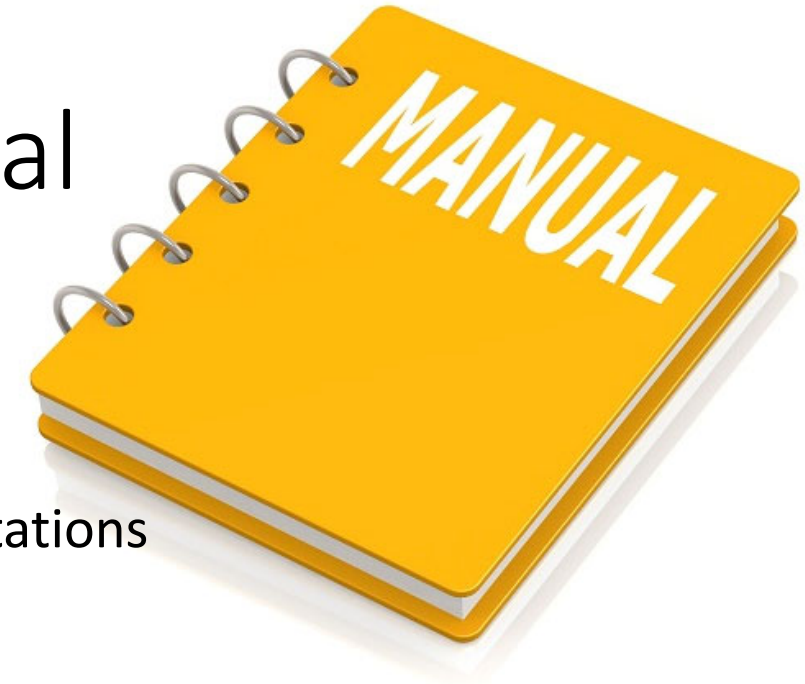
Commissioner's Manual



- ❑Statement of purpose or mission (if developed and adopted by the Board)
- ❑History of the municipality
- ❑Board member job description and expectations
- ❑Minutes from the past fiscal year
- ❑By Laws
- ❑Staff organization chart, number of professional and non-professional staff, date of last major revision of any policies.
- ❑Policy statement and procedures which have been formally adopted by the Board (related to the board, such as Conflict of Interest)
- ❑Alphabet Soup: Glossary of abbreviations and acronyms used to refer to agencies and programs with which this organization is connected

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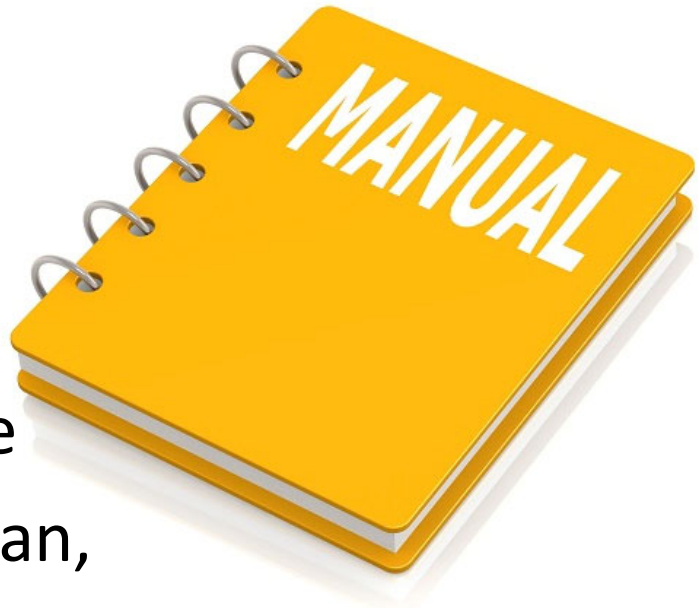
Commissioner's Manual



- copy of the Municipal Planning Code
- the municipality's comprehensive plan,
- zoning ordinance, and subdivision and land development ordinance
- municipality's official Act 537 sewage facilities plan
- stormwater management ordinance
- other pertinent ordinances will also prove to be useful, and should be included in the informational packet for planning commission members

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board member orientation

- Special meeting for new Board members
- Review Board Manual
- Paring with “mentor” - personal phone call or meeting with an experienced Board member
- Follow up personal contact after first three months of Board service

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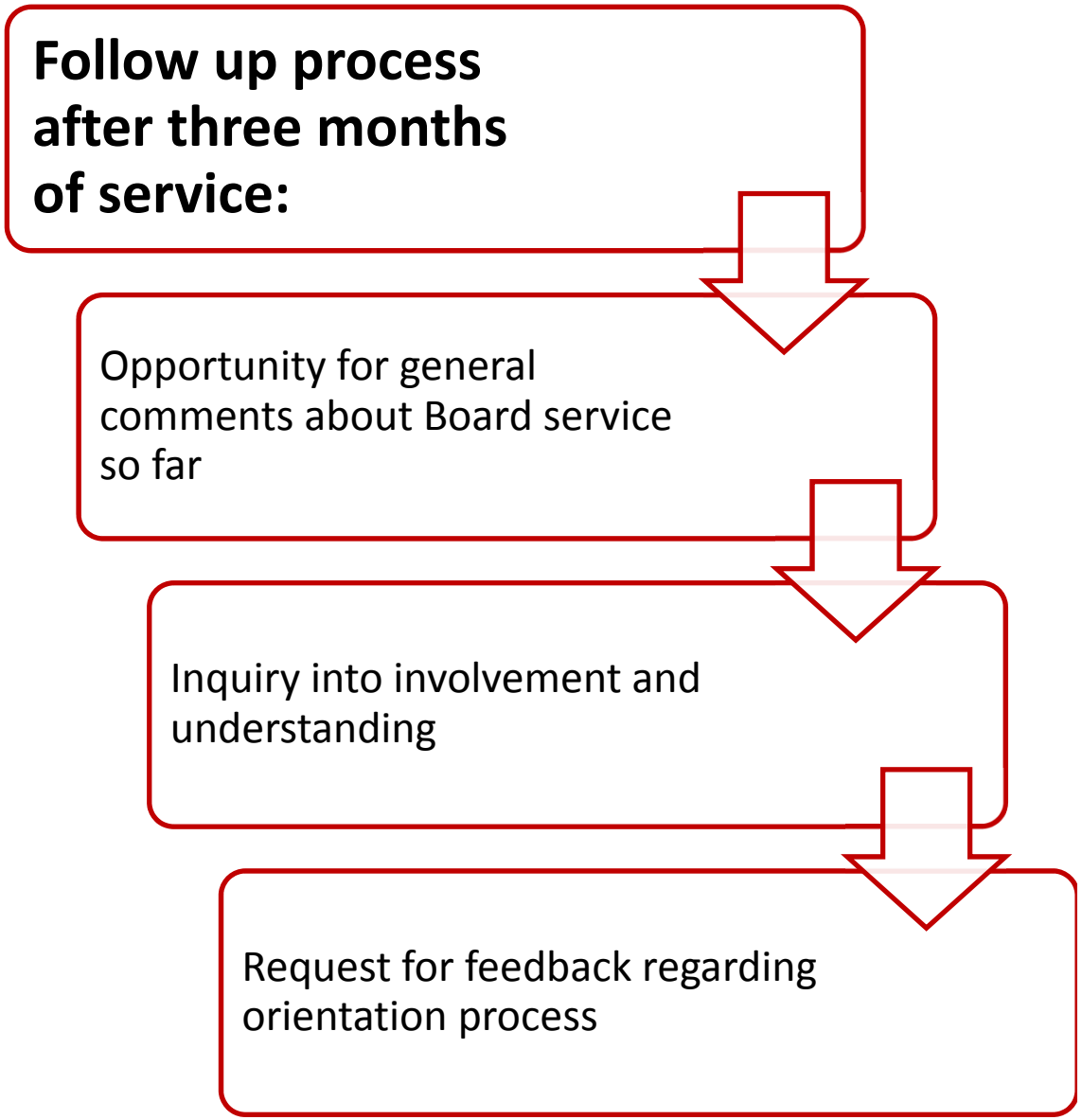
Board Mentors

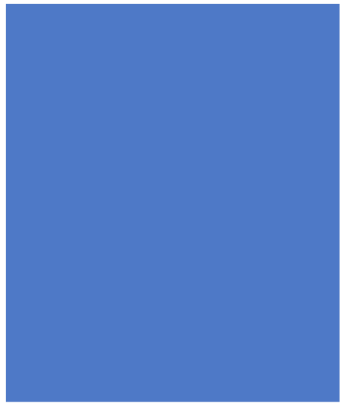
- Discussion of new Board member knowledge and questions
- Brief explanation of upcoming significant Board decisions or events
- Explanation of board “culture” and performance expectations
- Specific commitment to greet the new Board member and provide personal introductions to Board members with common interests

Board Engagement



Assessing Board Effectiveness

Strategies for improving board or commission performance



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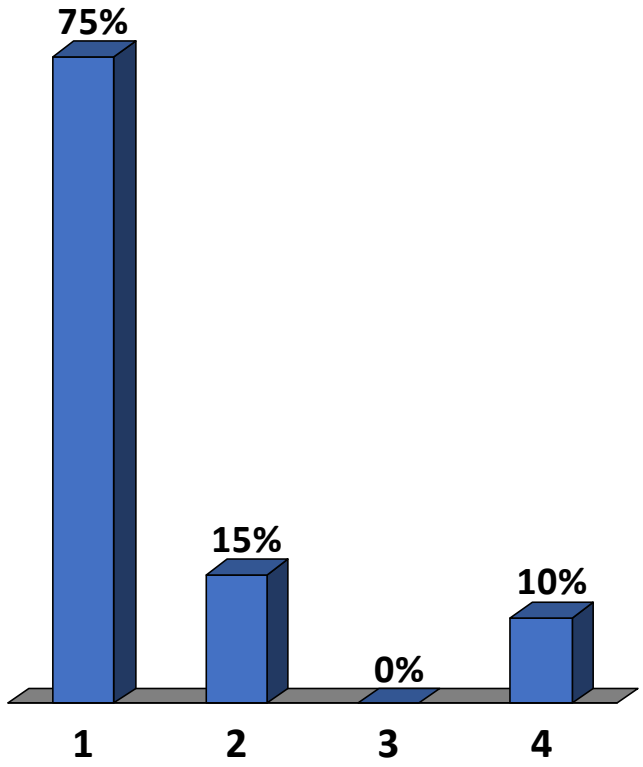
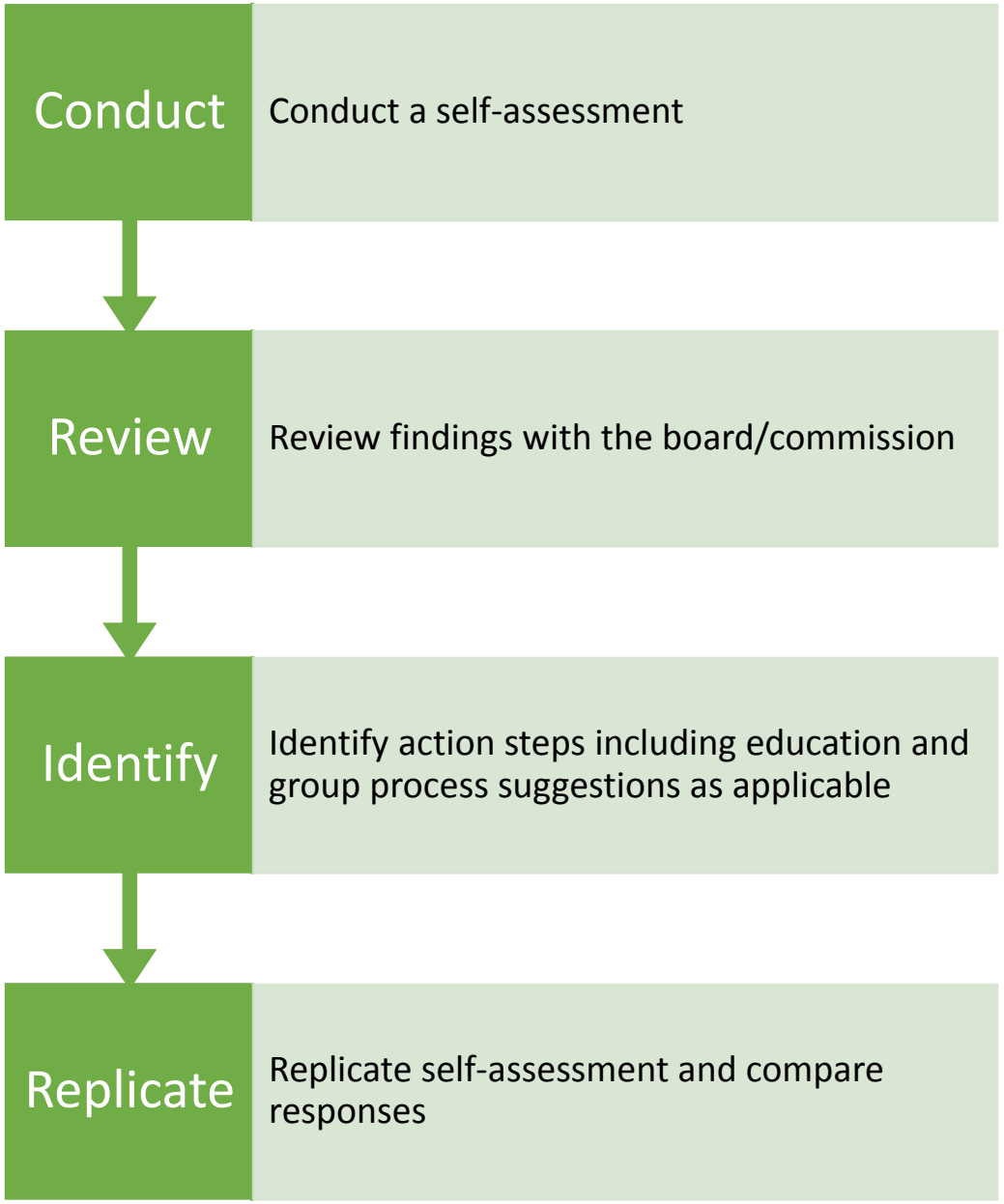
Which of the following best describes the current performance evaluation approach of the board(s)/ commission(s) that you work with?

1. what performance evaluation approach?
2. performance evaluation is not a priority
3. they are working on something now
4. performance self-assessment is a regular practice (at least once every two years)



Strategies for improving board or commission performance



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Board Self-Assessment Questions

How satisfied are you that you: How satisfied are you that the board as a whole:

Very satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Not Satisfied

A. Understand the board/commission's mission
B. Support the board/commission's mission
C. Have a good working relationship with other board members
D. Have a good working relationship with staff/consultants
E. Are knowledgeable about issues and ordinances
F. Follow trends and important developments in the field
G. Act knowledgeably and prudently when making decisions
H. Recommend qualified individuals with relevant skills and experience as possible nominees for the board/commission
I. Prepare for and participate at Board and committee
J. Complete all assignments in a responsible and timely manner
K. Take advantage of opportunities to enhance the organization's public image by periodically speaking to leaders in the community about the work of the organization
L. Respect the confidentiality of the Board's executive sessions
M. Speak for the Board or Commission only when authorized to do so
N. Hears and considers all sides of an issue before making a decision

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Achieve effective planning through leader recruitment and development

- Strategically assess the composition of your commission or board
- Identify knowledge, skills, abilities and characteristics that you would like to have
- Conduct formal orientation and training as necessary (and encourage members to attend external training available)
- Conduct bi-annual performance self-assessments
- Use evaluation to learn rather than criticize

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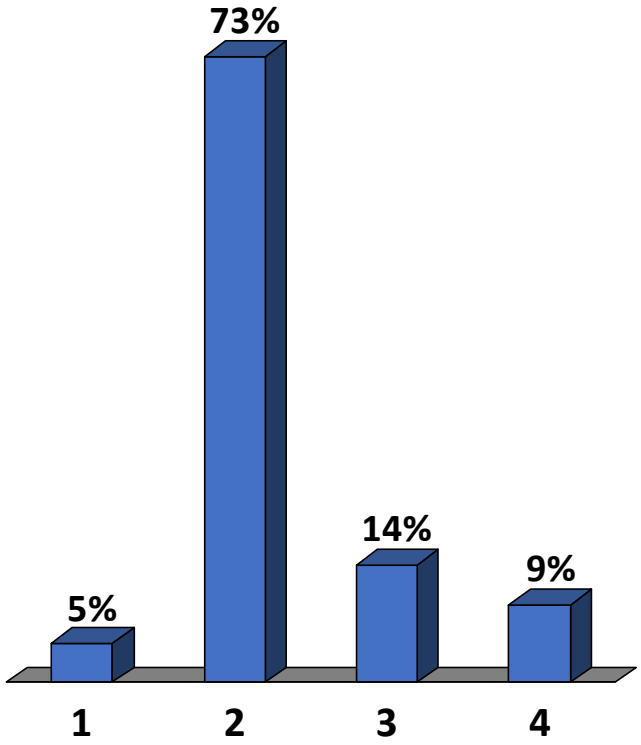
How are you feeling right now?

1. To be honest, I'm a little overwhelmed with all the information
2. Energized and feeling we can make some improvements with a little bit of focus
3. I am ready to go implement what I have learned!
4. Something else



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Never doubt that a small group of citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

Thank you
For your participation!

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