

Committee Orientation Manual



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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your role as a volunteer to serve on a District of North Vancouver committee! Council thanks you for your service to your community. This manual is intended to provide information on committee participation and expectations.

This manual includes information on the basics of serving on a District of North Vancouver committee, including an overview of roles and responsibilities of committee members, staff and Council, and guidelines and procedural tips for new and returning committee members.



2. WHO DOES WHAT

ROLE OF COMMITTEES – ESTABLISHMENT AND AUTHORITY

Committees are established to provide information, advice and recommendations to Council and staff on issues of concern to the public and the District. Council considers this advice during the decision-making process.

There are two types of committees:

1 Standing Committee of Council

- Established by the Mayor
- At least half of the members must be council members
- Members are appointed by the Mayor

2 Select Committee of Council

- Established by council to consider and inquire into any matter and to report its findings back to council
- At least one member must be a council member
- Members are appointed by council

The District has two mandatory committees which are established under a statute and are administrative or quasi-judicial in nature:

- Board of Variance
- Library Board

The Advisory Oversight Committee is composed of council members to review applications and either appoint members where authorized or recommend appointments to Council where required.

A committee's Terms of Reference, or in some cases a bylaw as referenced above, set out the committee's mandate and duties. Committees must only consider issues within the areas specified in the Terms of Reference. Committees must refer recommendations to Council, Council may adopt the recommendations, amend, refer to staff or other committees for consideration, or not proceed at all.

Councillors may attend a committee meeting of which they are not an appointed member as an observer and will be allowed to address the committee in accordance with the rules of procedure but do not constitute quorum and cannot vote.

Committees undertake work referred by Council and work within the direction provided by Council.



ROLE OF THE CHAIR

The Chair and Vice-Chair are elected by the committee at its first meeting each year.

The Chair is responsible for the following:

- Sets the agenda in consultation with the Committee Staff Liaison
- Ensures the order of business as set out in the agenda is followed
- Conducts the meeting in accordance with the *Council Procedure Bylaw*
- Establishes order and decorum during the meeting
- Respects members' views and seeks agreement to build consensus
- Closes debate and guides the committee to a clear, complete and concise motion
- Ensures all members have the opportunity to participate in the debate
- Ensures the committee does not make decisions outside its authorized powers or mandate
- Ensures the work of the committee is consistent with the Terms of Reference (or applicable bylaw)

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair is required to chair meetings. Both the Chair and Vice-Chair may participate in debate and discussion, and vote on matters at the meeting.

The role of the Chair is critical for an effective meeting and should:

- **LEAD** the group by minimizing personal interests to encourage the whole group
- **ENCOURAGE** all members to participate, listen, and reflect on the discussion and perspectives of the whole group.





Committee meeting attendance is vital! Without quorum, the committee is unable to have an official meeting and cannot pass recommendations to Council.

ROLE OF MEMBERS

Committee members are generally appointed for two-year terms, with an option to renew for an additional two-year term. Members may then reapply for two, one-year subsequent terms thereafter for a total of six-years.

Committee members are responsible for the following:

- Regularly attend meetings to ensure a quorum is present
- Prepare for meetings by reading the agenda materials in advance
- Listen to others – ensuring fellow members have the opportunity to be heard!
- Follow the *District of North Vancouver Code of Ethics* and observe rules of decorum and debate
- Participate fully in the meeting
- Represent and respect their authority as defined by Council in the Terms of Reference.

If you are unable to attend meetings or cannot meet the necessary time requirements, please let your Committee Staff Liaison know, there are others on the waiting list who would like the opportunity to volunteer on a committee and serve their community.

Any committee member who is absent for 3 consecutive meetings (with exception for reasons of illness or with leave of the committee) is deemed to have resigned effective at the end of the third such meeting.

Committee members are volunteers and receive no remuneration for their participation.

ROLE OF COMMITTEE STAFF LIAISON

The Committee Staff Liaison is responsible for coordinating agendas and serves as the principal point of contact for committee members.

The Committee Staff Liaison is responsible for the following:

- Provides information and professional advice
- Supports the Chair in developing the meeting agenda and materials
- Provides updates on the committee Work Plan
- Reports to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and provides professional advice to council through the CAO

The Committee Staff Liaison is not a member of the committee, does not form quorum and cannot vote. Staff will advise the committee if a report recommendation or committee resolution requires council approval before staff take direction for action. Committee work plans are based on Council priorities and are subject to operations, legal and administrative requirements.

Staff, as professionals in their field, may be considered subject matter experts, and are obligated to provide information, recommendations and advice from a technical, operational, administrative or procedural perspective which may differ from the opinion and direction of the committee.



Committees must seek Council approval for initiatives, requests or projects that require a significant amount of staff resources or have budget implications.

3. AT THE MEETING

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTING TO COUNCIL

Recommendations and resolutions should be worded in an action-orientated manner and adhere to the '3 C's' – Clear, Complete, Concise. Not all resolutions are required to go to council for consideration, some may stay at committee. However, those resolutions that require council approval should be crafted in a way that allows council to adopt the recommendation as is, with ease. The Committee Staff Liaison and the Chair can assist with the formulation of a resolution.

As required in the *Council Procedure Bylaw*, committees are required to report annually to council to provide an update on their Work Plan. These appearances will be staggered throughout the year as to provide opportunity for all committees to appear and to balance out the agenda of council.

QUORUM

A quorum is a majority of the members of a committee **(50%+1)** and is necessary to hold a meeting, debate matters and pass motions. If quorum is not achieved within 30 minutes of the scheduled meeting time or is lost during the meeting, the meeting is deemed to be adjourned.

AGENDAS AND MINUTES

Agendas are prepared by staff in consultation with the Chair. The agendas typically follow the committee's Work Plan established at the beginning of each year. Agendas are circulated to committee members and posted on the District website, including Public Meeting Notice, minutes and additional meeting materials. Generally, the agendas are made available one week in advance of the meeting, however, may be delayed due to operational constraints.

Staff are responsible for recording the meeting proceedings in the form of minutes which are circulated in the next meeting agenda.

Meeting minutes record the following:

- Time, date and location of the meeting
- Committee members present and absent
- Staff attending
- Decisions including those voting in the opposition
- When the meeting started and concluded



4. COMMITTEE MEETING GUIDELINES

Agenda

- Follow the order of business on the agenda
- Read the agenda package in advance of the meeting as it will form the base of debate
- Respect fellow committee members and staff time by preparing for the meeting as the agenda may include supporting materials that can help answer questions instead of time at the meeting
- Do not add items and matters 'on-the-fly' without providing committee members and staff the opportunity to prepare before the meeting

Timing

- Start the meeting on time once quorum is achieved – do not wait for all members to be present
- Keep the meeting to 2 hours maximum (whenever possible). Longer meetings do not mean more productive meetings

Order of Business at the Meeting

- Focus on items that are for discussion or decision
- Keep discussion on information items to a minimum so attention can be placed on matters requiring action
- Respect opinions and comments of fellow committee members and staff
- Allow fellow members the opportunity to participate in a respectful environment to encourage thoughtful debate
- Respect the Chair and rules of decorum

Decision-making

- Any Committee member may move or second a motion and participate in debate
- Members should strive for consensus on a matter
- Final decisions are made by resolution and require a majority vote of those present
- The Chair will call the vote and declare the results

Informed decision-making requires background information, options and recommendations from staff, meeting preparation, and respectful participation of all committee members.





COMMITTEE RULES OF PROCEDURE

Committee meetings are governed by the *District of North Vancouver Council Procedure Bylaw* and common rules of procedure.

Common Terms

- **Unanimous Consent** is an informal way of resolving routine and non-controversial procedural issues (ex. varying the order of the agenda)
- **Friendly Amendment** is an informal way to make a minor adjustment to a motion (ex. changing a word to clarify the intent of the motion)
- **Motion** is the proposal by a member to take some action or make a decision
 - Motions should be the 3 C's: Complete, Clear, Concise and follow the below steps:
 1. A member makes a motion (I move that...)
 2. A member seconds the motion (I second the motion)
 3. The Chair asks the committee if there is any debate
 4. The Chair puts the motion to a vote (Those in favour? Opposed?)
Members should always clearly indicate their vote by raising their hand. Those members who do not vote are counted as voting in the affirmative.
 5. The Chair declares the vote as being carried or defeated. A tie vote is defeated.
- **Resolution** is the formal decision made by motion
- **Debate** is respectful discussion on a motion or matter
- **Amending a Motion or Amendment** can be done three ways:
 - By inserting or adding words (amend the motion by adding the word(s) following...)
 - By striking or deleting words (amend the motion by deleting the word(s) following...)
 - By striking and replacing words (amend the motion by striking and replacing the following...)



RULES OF DECORUM

Committee meetings are generally more informal than District Council meetings, however, the Chair dictates the level of formality (or informality) they feel is best to facilitate the work and functionality of the committee.

The following are some helpful rules to facilitate respectful and orderly meetings:

- The mover of a motion has a right to speak first to their motion
- Committee members should all be given the opportunity to speak before speaking for a second time
- Members must always be respectful of other members and staff and avoid personal attacks
- Comments during debate should be contained to the motion on the floor
- Comments and questions to staff should be directed through the Chair
- Members may only speak when called upon by the Chair
- There are no limits on the number of times a member may speak, however, must be introducing new information and not impeding the order of business
- Members may not challenge the declaration of the vote by the Chair other than to request a recorded vote
- A decision to close debate and call the question on a motion may be done by unanimous consent or by call of the Chair

CODE OF ETHICS

The District of North Vancouver has adopted a Code of Ethics which is applicable to all members of council and any person appointed to a board, committee, commission, panel or task force.

The purpose of the Code of Ethics is to ensure the following:

- Act in the public interest
- Comply with the law
- Conduct of members
- Respect for process
- Conduct of public meetings
- Decisions based on merit
- Communication
- Conflict of interest
- Gifts and favours
- Confidential information
- Use of public resources
- Advocacy
- Policy role of members
- Positive work place environment
- Implementation, compliance and enforcement

Every committee member is required to sign the *Model of Excellence Member Statement* affirming that they have read and understand the District of North Vancouver Code of Ethics.



CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Committee members must not participate in debate or the decision-making process if they feel they have a real or perceived conflict of interest. Staff are available to discuss issues related to a potential conflict of interest, however, cannot provide legal advice to any member.

What to do if you feel you have a conflict of interest:

- Advise the committee that you may be in a conflict of interest and state in general terms why you consider yourself to be in a conflict of interest
- Remove yourself from the meeting before the matter is discussed and any recommendation or resolution is considered

You may return to the meeting following the conclusion of the matter. The meeting minutes will reflect the time you left and returned to the meeting.

5. APPENDICES

A. DNV Code of Ethics

B. DNV Municipal Advisory Committees Policy

C. DNV Council Members Attendance at Committee Meetings Policy