



Committee Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in serving your community. The City could not function without the knowledge and time provided by individuals like you who selflessly volunteer to serve. The City's Committees link the Hyattsville City Council and staff to the residents of the City of Hyattsville and help keep our City government vital, responsive, and accountable.

Committee members provide indispensable services to our City and advise the Hyattsville City Council by making recommendations on important policy matters. The mission, responsibilities, and time commitments for each Committee vary. A description and worksheet of each Committee including regular meeting days, times, and locations can be found on the City's website under the "Government" dropdown menu link to Advisory Committees, Boards, and Commissions¹.

The City of Hyattsville is committed to appointing dedicated, diverse, individuals to these Committees to achieve membership with residents of all ages, interests, and backgrounds.

This handbook is for those interested in volunteering on a City Committee and those who have been recently appointed. You will find information on Committee administrative processes such as: qualifications for members, information for new appointees, roles, and responsibilities, City Council policies regarding Committee members, and a description of all City Committees to which City Council appoints members.

If you have any questions or need assistance, contact the City Clerk's Office 301-985-5009 or email cityclerk@hyattsville.org

Note – Advisory Boards, Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces are now referred to as "Committee" throughout the handbook, unless directly referring to a specific group

¹ <http://www.hyattsville.org/101/Advisory-Committees-Boards-Commissions>

MESSAGE ON YOUR APPOINTMENT

Thank you for volunteering to serve your community through an appointment by the Mayor and City Council to a Committee. This handbook will acquaint you with the Mayor and City Council's policies regarding Committees and the particular roles and responsibilities of members. This handbook is provided by the Office of the City Clerk along with their notice of appointment.

Committees are established to increase community input and participation in City government. Some Committees exist to advise and make recommendations to City Council while others have responsibilities that are established by City Charter and Code, such as the Board of Supervisors of Elections and the Ethics Committee.

By accepting this appointment, you are now in a position to work directly with your local government, on behalf of your fellow residents, to enrich community life on a wide variety of issues. Your participation in the work of the Committee will be critical in carrying out its charge and ultimately improving the community.

The Mayor and City Council consider community participation a vital aspect of good government. Working in partnership with the Mayor, City Council, City staff, and your community, we can continue to set the standards of excellence in good government and quality of life.

All Committee meetings shall comply with the Maryland Open Meetings Act², which requires that all meetings of "public bodies" be open to the public after proper notice has been given.

Unless otherwise specified, a quorum is a majority of the actual members of a Committee. A quorum of the Committee shall be required in order for a meeting to be held or any official action to be taken.

Appointees are subject to attendance policy, code of ethics, and disclosure requirements. Additionally, members are subject to City Council's adopted policies and procedures for Committees. These policies are included herein.

² <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/OpenGov/OpenMeetings/default.aspx>

QUALIFICATIONS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

RESIDENCY

A member of any Committee must be a resident of the incorporated City of Hyattsville.³ Exceptions to the residency requirement may exist for some Committees, per the Committee worksheet adopted by the City Council. See the Committee worksheets for further information.⁴

No resident shall be eligible to hold membership for more than two (2) standing Committees concurrently. Additionally, no resident may serve as the Chair or Co-Chair of more than one (1) Committee concurrently. This shall not apply to ad hoc Committees appointed by the City Council.

OATH OF OFFICE

Completion of an oath of office is required for appointment to the Board of Supervisors of Elections. Where applicable, newly appointed members will take and sign an Oath of Office following their appointment by City Council. Reappointed members shall also be administered the Oath of Office, when applicable.

Appointees to the Board of Supervisors of Elections and Ethics Commission are subject to the Code of Ethics, Gift Policy, and Disclosure Requirements for Members of Boards and Advisory Committees (Appendix D).

Annual reporting forms must be completed each calendar year and submitted to the City Clerk's Office by April 1st.

³ <http://www.hyattsville.org/538/Residency-Verification-Page>

⁴ <http://www.hyattsville.org/101/Advisory-Committees-Boards-Commissions>

APPOINTMENT PROCESS

The City of Hyattsville Mayor and City Council provide many opportunities for resident participation in local government Committees to which the Mayor and City Council make appointments.

The Mayor and the City Council appoint residents to both ad hoc Committees and standing Committees. Ad hoc Committees are temporary Committees that have been given a limited charge and are usually expected to provide recommendations to the Mayor and City Council within a year. Standing Committees have ongoing responsibilities and are advisory in nature. Committees are often charged with reviewing and commenting on local policies to provide recommendations to the City Council.

Appointments to Committees are confirmed during the first Council meeting in the months of April and October or as vacancies arise. In cases in which a member resigns before their term has expired, residents may apply for the position to serve as a member through the end of the original term. The vacancies are publicized on the City website, social media, and through other methods.

Applicants seeking appointments to a specific Committee are strongly urged to attend several meetings of the Committee. It is a requirement that all applicants attend at least one (1) meeting prior to completing and submitting an application. After submission, all applicants must meet with the Council liaison(s) for an interview either in-person or through virtual means. Upon completion of the interview, the Council liaison(s) may sponsor the appointment to the Committee and each member requires at least one (1) sponsor.

An application is required for consideration of an appointment to a Committee. Be aware that all information provided in completing the application becomes public information and is therefore subject to public records requests. However, personal information is not disclosable under the Maryland Public Information Act⁵ (i.e., email addresses, phone numbers, street addresses, etc.).

Once an application for an appointment has been filed with the City Clerk, it is placed on file and remains active for one (1) year.

The Clerk's office will verify that the applicant has attended at least one (1) meeting of the Committee for which they have applied and has completed an interview with the Council liaison(s). Once the required number of sponsors have been established, the appointments will be presented to Council during the Consent⁶ portion of a City Council open session.

⁵ <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/OpenGov/pia.aspx>

⁶ Under parliamentary rules governing City Council meetings, Consent Calendar items are reserved for items that are deemed to be non-controversial. They allow a City Council to save the bulk of its meeting time for issues in which there is a need for a serious public debate for voting.

Upon majority approval, the appointment is adopted by the City Council for the term defined in the motion. Once an appointment is confirmed, the City Clerk's Office will notify the candidate of their appointment⁷.

Please visit the City's website and select the "Advisory Committees, Boards, and Commissions" option under the "Government" dropdown menu to view vacancies, upcoming openings, and to apply online (Appendix C).

⁷ Members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections and the Ethics Commission are appointed by the Mayor.

NEW MEMBERS

These policies apply to all appointees by the City Council to a Committee associated with the City of Hyattsville.

ORIENTATION SESSION

Orientation sessions for new members will be scheduled semi-annually in May and November. Training will include a review of committee policies and procedures; Open Meetings Act requirements and public records requirements. All new committee members are required to attend an orientation session.

COMMITTEE MEMBER STIPEND PROGRAM

The City of Hyattsville's Stipend Program provides a stipend to committee members to lessen the financial burden that individuals may experience as a result of the time commitment required to serve on a committee.

All committee members are considered to be automatically enrolled in the program upon appointment but must complete a W-9 form in order to receive payment. Committee members will receive \$40 per meeting attended with a maximum of \$600 paid to an individual per fiscal year. Meeting attendance will be determined by the approved and publicly posted minutes of each meeting. Payments to committee members will be made on a semi-annual basis by check, through the City's finance office. A completed W-9 Tax Form must be submitted to the City's finance office prior to a committee member receiving a Stipend Program payment. Committee Members who wish to opt out of receiving the stipend payment may do so when completing the enrollment form.

VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS

Service on a committee is eligible for individuals to claim as volunteer or community service hours. Upon the approval and public posting of meeting minutes, the staff liaison(s) may sign to verify the amount of time served in a volunteer capacity by a committee member. Committee members are NOT eligible for volunteer or community service hours if they choose to participate in the Stipend Program or are otherwise financially compensated for their participation on a committee.

OPEN MEETINGS

All members are required to complete Open Meetings Act training⁸ as part of the Committee onboarding process. Appointees must complete the training prior to attending their first meeting

⁸ <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/OpenGov/Openmeetings/default.aspx>

and submit a copy of their certificate of completion to the City Clerk's Office at cityclerk@hyattsville.org. The training takes approximately one (1) hour to complete.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The public's right to information about government activities lies at the heart of a democratic government. Maryland's Public Information Act (Appendix E) grants the people of this State a broad right of access to public records while protecting legitimate governmental interests and the privacy rights of individual citizens.

TERMS FOR SERVING AS CHAIR

There are no terms limits for Committee members, however consideration of individuals on waiting lists for appointments is encouraged. No member of any Committee may serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in the role of Committee Chair. Chairs are elected by the Body annually in January and serve one-year terms. After serving two (2) full terms as a Chair, an individual may not serve in that role for one (1) full term before being eligible for appointment as Chair to the same body. An exception to this rule may be made on a case-by-case basis (i.e., a need for continuity or experience).

REPORTS

Each Committee that is part of the City or is established by City Council is required to submit annual written reports that must contain a review of the Body's activities including goals, objectives, successes, opportunities, and the need for Council assistance when applicable. These reports shall be submitted to the City Clerk who shall provide copies to the Mayor and Council.

RESIGNATIONS, TERMINATIONS, AND REPLACEMENTS

Any member of a Committee who desires to resign shall do so in writing or email to the Committee Chair, staff liaison, and Office of the City Clerk.

Members of a Board or Committee can be removed for failure to meet attendance requirements or at the discretion of the Mayor and Council. Procedures for removal of a board or committee member shall be done in accordance with Article II, section 4-5 (f) of the City Charter and the approved committee worksheet. Grounds for removal may include a member moving outside of the boundaries.

For information regarding partial terms, please see "Appointment Process" paragraph three (3).

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Listed below are general guidelines for roles and responsibilities. Committee members make recommendations to and receive their scope of work from the Mayor and City Council. Staff members are employees of the City and are accountable to their Department Head. Clearly defined responsibilities make the Committee and its work more effective.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Members are required to attend at least 50% of meetings held each calendar year unless otherwise specified in the Committee worksheet or City Charter and Code. Failure to comply with attendance requirements shall result in a review by the staff liaison(s) in collaboration with Council liaison(s) to determine the future standing of the member in relation to the Committee.

As a member, you should notify the Chair and the staff liaison if you will be unable to attend a meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Committee members are an important part of the City of Hyattsville government process. They are selected to be part of a Committee that advises the City Council on pertinent issues, policymaking, project development, and implementation. Any person seeking membership to a Committee is advised to consider the following items:

All members should be aware of the time, energy, and commitment that is involved in being a part of a Committee. Most of the work is accomplished at scheduled meetings in which all members in attendance contribute to the most effective work plan.

Individual members are encouraged to prepare materials that are substantive and meet required deadlines and members may be assigned to complete specific tasks which may include serving on Subcommittees.

All members contribute to the problem-solving process and are required to vote on recommendations and actions of the group unless a potential conflict of interest exists.

Members are asked to keep current on information relating to the Committee interest areas and to provide the most comprehensive information to the Mayor and City Council. All members must possess the ability to compromise and negotiate in order to reach consensus whenever possible.

COMMITTEE APPOINTED ROLES

Appointed roles in the Committee include the Chair and the Secretary. Committees may choose to have Co-Chairs or Vice Chairs at their discretion or at the direction of the Committee worksheet. The duties of these roles are described below.

- **Committee Chair:** The Chair is elected annually in January for a one (1) year term. The Chair provides leadership and direction to the Committee to facilitate the Body in pursuing its vision and mission. The Chair facilitates the meeting by calling the meeting to order and acts as the meeting Chairperson. The Chair develops the meeting agendas in partnership with Committee members and the staff liaison(s). The Chair also works with the staff liaison(s) to ensure meeting requirements are met for the posting of agendas and approval of minutes.
- **Secretary:** Elected annually in January for one (1) year term. Responsible for writing meeting minutes and submitting minutes for approval of the Body.

COUNCIL LIAISON(S)

A Council liaison is assigned to each Committee (except for the Election Board and Ethics Commission) by the City Council. Their primary role is to communicate the City Council's needs, policies, and interests to the members of the Committee and to communicate back to the City Council the recommendations made and discussions held by the Committee. The Council liaison(s) may also bring forth any budgetary recommendations of the Committee to the full Council. They are non-voting participants and serve as advisors only.

STAFF LIAISON

A staff liaison is assigned to each Board or Committee by the City Administrator or their designee. Staff liaisons are members of the administrative staff and have knowledge or expertise in the functional area in which the Committee is involved. The staff liaison may provide research and information to help members formulate their recommendations to the City Council. The liaison works with the Chair to coordinate and schedule meetings times, dates, and locations and to ensure the Committee meets the legal requirements for meetings. The liaison also advises the City Administrator or their Department Head on the activities of the Committee. They are non-voting participants and serve as advisors only.

COMMUNICATIONS

Committee members are encouraged to contact the City Administrator, their Council liaisons, the Mayor, and other Councilmembers at any time with specific concerns, issues, or questions. Official correspondence directed to the Mayor and Council on behalf of the full Committee should be addressed to the Mayor and Council and routed through the Chair, the staff liaison and the relevant Department Director. A copy should be provided to the City Clerk's office for the City's records.

INTERACTION WITH MEDIA OUTLETS

Any media inquiries should be referred to the City of Hyattsville Department of Communications at pio@hyattsville.org. Committee members should refrain from speaking to media on behalf of the City.

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Clerk's Office is responsible for setting up, removing, and making any updates or adjustments to Hyattsville Committees, as well as providing transparency and public access to information regarding any such actions.

The office informs the Mayor and Council of any resignations or other concerns from the Committees.

For additional information "Appointment Process" paragraphs six (6) and seven (7).

MEETING PROCEDURES

Listed below are the requirements for holding a Committee meeting. The Chair should work with the staff liaison to ensure all requirements are met. Committees who do not submit agendas within the required timeframe will be unable to meet.

MEETING AGENDAS

Agendas will be prepared by the Committee Chair, or their designee, in consultation with the staff liaison. The staff liaison will ensure the City Clerk has copies of all meeting agendas. Agendas must be submitted to the City Clerk in .doc or .pdf format no less than two (2) business days prior to the meeting. Virtual meetings must include the link for the public to register to attend. Failure to announce or submit an agenda will result in cancellation of the meeting. *Agendas must be emailed to committees@hyattsville.org.* The Clerk's office is responsible for the public posting of the agendas in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

MINUTES

Minutes must be kept of all meetings. The Chair, in the absence of the Secretary, shall have the discretion to appoint an individual to prepare the minutes at each meeting. The minutes should be brief and reflect decisions and recommendations of the Committee. Minutes should be reviewed and approved by the meeting Body at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Body. The staff liaison will ensure copies of the approved minutes are provided to the City Clerk for posting on the City's website. *Approved minutes must be emailed to committees@hyattsville.org.* Minutes should be posted on the City's website in a timely manner.

WHAT IS A PUBLIC RECORD?

A public record is any original or copy of any documentary material in any form created or received by an agency in connection with the transaction of public business. Included in this definition are written materials, photographs, photocopies, video recordings, email or text communications, maps, drawings, and other materials.

PUBLIC RECORDS AND YOU

All Committees receive and create public records while conducting regular business. Public records are also produced when a member is acting in their official capacity.

For example, if you communicate with another individual in your official capacity or exchange information about matters under your Committee purview, you may create a public record even if you use your personal email, voicemail, or video recording to transmit that information. Many misunderstand the law and assume communications on personal email accounts or via text messages are not subject to the public records law: this is untrue. All Board and Committee-related communications are subject to public disclosure (Appendix E).

The law may require you to turn over certain records if a member of the public requests them when they contain content related to your official capacity. This is true even if the records are on your personal computer, personal cellphone, or personal email account.

Requests for public records must be made available promptly. If records are requested of you from a City staff member to fulfill a public records request, please make every effort to provide the requested information in a timely manner.⁹

⁹ <http://www.hyattsville.org/76/Maryland-Public-Information-Act-Request>

COMMITTEE EMAIL DISTRIBUTION LISTS

To facilitate communications between committee members, staff, Council, and the public, the City has established email addresses for each committee. Upon appointment committee members are added to the appropriate email group. The email groups are intended for committee logistical planning (setting meeting dates and times, and agendas). They are not intended for any committee discussion. Discussion of committee matters is a public process and should take place during an open meeting. The email group is also intended to provide a way for the public to easily contact committee members.

The existing committee email addresses are listed below:

Board of Supervisors of Elections: electionboard@hyattsville.org

Code Compliance Advisory Committee: codecompliance@hyattsville.org

Education Advisory Committee: eac@hyattsville.org

Education Facilities Task Force: edtaskforce@hyattsville.org

Health, Wellness, and Recreation Advisory Committee: hwrac@hyattsville.org

Hyattsville Environment Committee : hec@hyattsville.org

Planning Committee: planningcommittee@hyattsville.org

Police and Public Safety Citizens' Advisory Committee: ppsac@hyattsville.org

Race and Equity Task Force: equity@hyattsville.org

Shade Tree Board: Treeboard2020@hyattsville.org

APPENDIX DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCE WEBSITES

APPENDIX DOCUMENTS

Appendix A – Committee Descriptions and Worksheets

Appendix B – Special Committees and City Departments, Hyattsville City Charter, Article II 4-5, A-F

Appendix C – Hyattsville City Code, Chapter 10 Code of Ethics, Gift Policy, and Disclosure Requirements for Members of Committees

REFERENCE WEBSITES

While every effort is made to ensure these links are valid, occasionally websites may change or fall out of date. Please notify the City Clerk's Office if a link is no longer valid.

Advisory Boards/Committee Home Page

<http://www.hyattsville.org/101/Advisory-Committees-Boards-Commissions>

Resident Verification Page

<http://www.hyattsville.org/538/Residency-Verification-Page>

Maryland Public Information Act

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/OpenGov/pia.aspx>

Maryland Open Meetings Act

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/OpenGov/Openmeetings/default.aspx>

Maryland Open Meetings Act Online Training

https://www.igsr.umd.edu/VLC/OMA/class_oma_title.php