

City of La Marque Boards and Commissions Handbook

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform procedures for all advisory boards and commissions of the City. Board and commission members are selected by the City Council and serve at the pleasure of the Council and will not be granted special privileges because of their appointment.

This policy applies to citizens appointed to boards appointed by the Mayor and La Marque City Council. This policy does not apply to the appointments of a Councilmember made by the Mayor, nor to appointments made by the City Council to external boards. An external board is defined as a board outside of the City of La Marque organization, including but not limited to, Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), Galveston County Mayor and Council Association (GCMCA), Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS), or various Galveston County Advisory committees.

Eligibility

Applicant qualifications include the following:

Must be a resident of the City for at least one (1) year and remain a resident for the duration of their term ***Planning and Zoning Commissioners shall not be subject to this requirement. However, they shall comply with Section 71-24 of the City Code (requiring that all Commissioners "be residents and real property taxpayers of the City of La Marque and none of whom shall hold any other position in the city government")*

Must be a qualified voter

May not apply to serve on a board with their immediate family members

Regular full-time City employees are not eligible unless required by State statute

No persons within the second degree by affinity or within the third degree by consanguinity to a council member are eligible to become a member of a board or commission

In the event that State statute requires certain qualifications, those qualifications shall be required

All qualified candidates applying for the first time or reappointment must complete an application form (Exhibit A) ~~and a signed consent for felony background history authorization form (Exhibit B)~~ to the City Clerk's office prior to the advertised deadline. The City Clerk will

review all applications for eligibility, then distribute to the Council for review and appointment.

Members shall be appointed for terms of two (2) years and may be removed at any time by the City Council. Terms of office will be staggered so approximately one-half the membership at any time has experience. In the event a vacancy occurs prior to the expiration of a full term, the City Council may appoint a new member to complete the unexpired term. Any board member or commission member may be re-appointed by the City Council upon completion of an application.

A member of a board or commission ceasing to reside in the City of La Marque during his or her term of office shall immediately forfeit his or her position.

Application Process

Application forms shall be made available online at www.cityoflamarque.org and at City Hall. The application shall solicit information about the applicant's background, including current and past occupations and involvement in and knowledge of issues related to the subject of the board to which they are applying. ~~In addition to the completed application, applicants are required to provide~~ Applicants may apply for more than one board; however, no person shall serve concurrently on more than one board.

Incumbents who are eligible and wish to seek another term must reapply in the same manner as other applicants.

Applications are considered current for two years from the submittal date, after which the application will be removed from consideration. To be considered in the next recruitment period, the applicant is required to submit a new application.

To encourage citizen involvement, no person shall serve concurrently on more than one City of La Marque board. Service as a City of La Marque board member is considered an office, and should a board member become a candidate for any other city public office; then the candidate will not resign until elected.

In addition to these eligibility criteria, the City Council may set specific skills and experience desired for each board.

NOTE: Information provided is public and subject to the Texas Public Information Act (Government Code Chapter 552)

FELONY BACKGROUND

~~As a representative of the City of La Marque and due to the nature of the business and associations performed by each Board and Commission member, a felony background verification will be conducted on all new applicants, effective with the adoption of this policy.~~

Any member already appointed to a board or commission as of the adoption of this policy is given a “nonconforming” status, and felony background verification will not be conducted when applying for re-appointment.

However, Any person who is appointed or current member who is re-appointed for a new two-year term after the adoption of the policy will be required to notify the City Clerk within ten (10) days of any charge for a felony or crime of moral turpitude during their term. A member failing to notify the City of such charges will be automatically terminated. A member who is charged and makes the required notification will may be subject to suspension from the Board pending final judgment by City Council.

TERM OF OFFICE

Board members serve for a staggered term of two years, apart from the Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors, who serve a consecutive six-year term. Terms expire on December 31 of the year. If appointments are not made prior to the expiration of the member’s term, the board member will continue to serve until appointments are made.

Citizens are appointed to serve on a board at the pleasure of the City Council. The City Council retains the right to replace any appointed member at any time and for any reason. Board members are appointed for a limited purpose and time, and once the assigned term of office is completed, they are excused from this appointment unless the City Council selects them for another term of service in accordance with the adopted policy for board service.

Mid-Term Appointments

Occasionally a board member may be unable to finish his or her term or will be removed by the City Council prior to the term ending. In such cases, the vacant position must be filled by a mid-term appointee who will serve out the remainder of the term.

New Members

Upon completion of the selection process, all new members should make every effort to become as familiar as possible with all aspects of their particular board or commission. To aid in the process, new members will be furnished copies of pertinent telephone numbers of other members and applicable information and regulations that govern that board.

All new members shall be required to attend specialized training on the Open Meetings Act, Public Information Act, and any State statutes pertinent to their position on the board within (30) days of their appointment. Such training shall be coordinated by, and expenses borne by the City.

~~All Members of boards or commissions must be administered an Oath of Office upon induction. The members must sign the oath, and it must be notarized and kept by the City Clerk's office until such a time deemed appropriate by the City's records retention schedule. Those persons authorized to administer the statement and the oaths are the City Clerk and any Notary Public.~~

General Duties

All boards and commissions shall act in an advisory capacity to the City Council with the exception of the:

Board of Adjustment whose decision is final as set out in Section 17.03 of the Code of Ordinances of the City of La Marque
Planning and Zoning Commission, in particular issues

Boards and commissions shall advise the Council on issues peculiar to their particular interests. No member of a board or commission shall become involved in the daily operations of the departments of the City or in personnel matters.

Specific duties of all boards and commissions are outlined in the Code of Ordinances as follows:

Board of Adjustment	Sec. 71-25
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Building Standards	Sec. 14-24
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Cemetery	Ch. 2 Article IX
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Charter Review	Charter
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Article XV

City Council	Charter Article II
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Civil Service	Ch. 2 Article VIII
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Economic Development
Keep La Marque Beautiful
Parks
Planning & Zoning

Ord. 695
Sec. 33-44
Ch.2 Article V
Sec. 71-24

Attendance

It is imperative that members maintain regular attendance. The following procedure has been established to assist in maintaining the record.

Members who cannot attend the meeting should contact the chairman or appropriate staff member concerning his or her absence prior to the meeting.

Four (4) absences from the meetings in any twelve-month period shall cause the removal of the member as a regular member, and the member shall become an alternate; further, the first alternate on the committee shall automatically replace the committee member removed for absences.

The Council is most appreciative of the dedication and contribution of those who are willing to donate their time to community service. Any decision reached by any of these boards has an impact on the entire community. Therefore, if a quorum is not present because of habitual absenteeism by certain members, the integrity of the board is affected.

Quorum

A quorum is established by a majority (50% +1) of members of the full board. To preserve the Open Meetings Act, and prevent unintended violations, all communications relating to the board and board-related business should be handled through the staff liaison.

Role of Staff Liaison

The role of the liaison is to act as a communication conduit between the City Council and the board or commission. The liaison shall take no part in the board or commission discussions unless requested.

A staff member (usually an administrative assistant) is assigned to each respective board to perform support services, provide technical data, prepare agendas, post notices of meetings, prepare minutes of the meetings, and other related functions. The staff member is an ex-officio member of the board but is not entitled to vote or preside over meetings.

Conduct of Meetings

The Chair shall preside over the meetings, and in their absence, the Vice-Chair shall preside. The Chair shall call the meeting to order.

The Chair may address the posted items on the agenda in any order they choose as long as every item is addressed.

A motion may be made by any member other than the presiding officer. A second to the motion is required before a vote can be taken. Any motion dies from a lack of a second.

Robert's Rule of Order shall be used as a guideline to conduct meetings.

All meetings will be held in compliance with the Open Meetings Act and shall be open to the public.

Record of Meetings

A record of all meetings is to be kept. Pertinent items to be included are as follows:

AGENDA - The agenda will serve as the order of business and provide the form for the posting of notice of meetings. The official posting of the agenda must be at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting in a place(s) readily accessible to the public. Two postings are recommended: (1) bulletin board at 1109-B Bayou Road; (2) on the City's official website. Copies of the agenda, along with supporting data, shall be provided to each member at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting date.

Some boards meet periodically or on an as-needed basis; however, others meet on a specified schedule. In the event a regularly scheduled meeting is canceled, a notice should be posted stating that the meeting has been canceled and giving the reason for such cancellation and, if known, the date of the next meeting.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS - The staff member will be responsible for keeping an accurate record of all meetings. The minutes shall include a record of attendance, summary of the discussion, recommendations and/or voting record, indicating by name members voting "for" or "against" all items of business, unless the vote was unanimous. Minutes are permanent record and should be retained as such.

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE - Minutes of each meeting shall accurately reflect the names of those members in attendance.

If a member is late, the minutes shall indicate the position on the agenda upon arrival.

Limitation of Liability

The Board shall have no power to contract in the name of the City of La Marque, Texas, or its own name. Subject to the City Charter and Code of the City of La Marque, Texas, no undertaking, contract, action, or inaction by the Board or its members, singly or collectively, or by anyone employed by or acting on its behalf, shall render the City of La Marque, Texas liable to respond in damages, or make indemnity or compensation of any character from any source.

Code of Conduct

All boards and commission members are, at all times, representatives of the City of La Marque and should conduct themselves to the highest moral capacity.

All boards and commission members are representatives of the city and are bound by the guidelines set forth in the City's Social Media Policy.

Any Board Member or Commissioner faced with a conflict of interest as described in Article XI of the City of La Marque Charter or as described in Texas Local Government Code §§ 171 and 176 shall complete and file a "Conflict of Interest Affidavit" form with the Board and shall abstain from discussing or voting on any matter with which the Board Member has a conflict.

Any member, including the presiding officer, who fails to observe decorous and orderly behavior during a meeting or who disturbs a meeting of a board or

commission with such disorderly conduct is subject to being expelled from such meeting upon motion passed by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the board or commission present at this meeting.

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