

CITY OF VISALIA



COMMITTEES

AND

COMMISSIONS

HANDBOOK

“A Guide for Community Volunteers”

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Citizen,

This packet has been prepared to inform you of how you can be involved in local government through citizen advisory committees or commissions. It includes basic information about the purpose and responsibilities, qualifications for membership and how to apply for a city committee or commission.

By serving on a city advisory committee or commission, you can help plan Visalia's future. These committees and commissions are making recommendations that affect life in Visalia. It is important that prospective members understand the functions and responsibilities of membership before actively seeking appointment. A great deal of personal satisfaction can be received through public service, and the knowledge and experience gained will be invaluable to you.

If you are interested in serving on a committee or commission, please fill out the application included in this booklet. Feel free to include a resume or other information you feel would help the City Council to decide which committee or commission could best use your expertise. Information about specific vacancies is published annually by the City. For further information or additional application forms contact the City Clerk's Office, 220 N. Santa Fe, Visalia, CA 93292 or call (559) 713-4512 or visit our website at www.visalia.city

We welcome your attendance at any of our committee or commission meetings. Please see a listing of all committees/commissions and their meeting schedules at the end of this document and feel free to contact the staff representative for further information.

The City Council also encourages your participation and involvement at City Council meetings. The City Council meets on the first and third Mondays at 7:00 p.m., located at the City Hall Council Chambers, 707 W. Acequia. The Council Members are as follows:

Steve Nelsen, Mayor
Brian Poochigian, Vice Mayor
Greg Collins, Council Member
Brett Taylor, Council Member
Liz Wynn, Council Member

We look forward to working with you to create a better Visalia.

Steve Nelsen, Mayor
City of Visalia

THE COMMITTEE AND COMMISSION'S ROLE, AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of city committees and commissions is to advise the City Council in the determination of city policies and procedures. Committees/commissions facilitate public participation.

City committees and commissions are not involved in the administration or operation of city departments. Committee/commission members may not direct administrative staff to initiate programs. Committees/commissions may not conduct major studies or establish official policy without the approval of the City Council. City staff members are available to provide general staff assistance to committees/commissions.

Despite committees/commissions differing tasks, all share some basic responsibilities. Members need to stay informed on subjects of interest to the specific committee or commission.

Appointment to a commission or committee is an honor. It provides an opportunity for genuine public service. Each commission or committee member should be aware of the responsibilities that go along with officially serving the community. The specific duties of each commission or committee vary with the purposes for which it was formed. There are, however, many responsibilities common to all members.

1. Understand the role and responsibility of the commission or committee on which you serve. Be informed of its functions, work programs and relationship with other commissions/committees.
2. Represent the overall public good, not the exclusive point of view of a single group or interest.
3. Keep all lines of communication open. Each member serves as a communication link between the community, the City Council and the staff.
4. Do your homework and be prepared. Commission and committee members should become familiar with items under consideration prior to meetings in order to be fully prepared to discuss, evaluate, and act on matters scheduled for consideration. Feel free to seek staff's advice and assistance in advance of a meeting.
5. Establish a good working relationship with fellow members, the Council, and your staff representative.
6. Understand the scope and authority of your responsibility and strive to work within that scope.
7. Be a participant, an active representative and be enthusiastic.
8. Commission/committee members should not approve projects that violate adopted City policies. These bodies make recommendations to the Council about exceptions to or recommendations to change existing policies when appropriate.

COMMITTEE AND COMMISSION GUIDELINES

Formation of a new Committee or Commission by the City Council

Unless otherwise stated by Council, a committee or commission shall be formed initially for a period of one year with time extended at the request of the committee/commission and concurrence of the Council.

After a one-year evaluation and if the committee/commission is to continue, the length of terms will be increased, and the expiration of terms will be staggered.

A newly formed committee or commission will be convened by the city staff representative, and each committee/commission will elect a chairperson, a vice-chairperson, and a secretary once the members feel sufficiently acquainted with each other.

A staff representative will be assigned by the City Manager to work with each committee/commission to prepare agendas, keep minutes and furnish assistance.

The size of commissions and committees may vary from 5 to 15 members and is set for each body by the City Council. A committee or commission may decide that it is in the best interest of the committee/commission to modify the number of its members and may recommend a change to the Citizens Advisory Committee. After the Citizens Advisory Committee receives a recommendation from the committee/commission along with reason(s), a recommendation to modify the number of members will be made to the City Council.

Each Committee or Commission should have a mission statement. Ex: "It is the mission of the Citizens Advisory Committee to act as a liaison between the general public and the City Council concerning community issues."

Commissions are provided for in the City of Visalia's Charter and the duties of the Commissions are contained in the City's Municipal Code. The formation of a new Commission requires a Charter Amendment. Revision to Commission duties and responsibilities require an Ordinance change.

Appointment of Citizens to Committees/Commissions

All appointments and reappointments require formal action of the Council. Every committee/commission serves in an advisory capacity to the City Council.

Names to be considered for appointment will be recommended to the Council by the respective committee or commission. The Council may choose, however, to fill some positions in other manners as needed.

Persons in the community wanting to serve on an advisory committee/commission should submit their name and resume to the City Clerk's Office (a standard application form is available and included in this handbook). The City Clerk will annually publish a notice of the process and procedure to be followed by individuals wanting to serve the City.

Applications will be kept on file for a period of two years. Applicants will be contacted one year after they file their application to ensure their continued interest in serving on a City committee or commission.

Eligibility

City advisory committees/commissions will reflect, to the extent possible, the community's geographic, ethnic, gender and age composition.

Appointees to committees/commissions should be 18 years of age or older, and live or work within the urban area of Visalia as defined by Visalia Unified School District's boundary map. First consideration will be given to residents of the City of Visalia. Individuals under the age of 18 who indicate they are interested in participating are encouraged to attend meetings and participate as a member of the public. Additional requirements may be applicable to a specific Committee or Commission.

No person should serve on more than one committee or commission at one time as a regular member or as an alternate. However, individuals with unique qualifications may be asked to serve on an additional committee/commission by the City Council.

Immediate family members may not concurrently serve on the same committee or commission; however, family members are encouraged to serve on different committees/commissions.

Employees of the City of Visalia may not serve on any committee/commission other than as a staff representative. Employees of companies who do business with the City of Visalia are encouraged to serve on committees/commissions other than those where the actions of the committee/commission may directly benefit the work of the member's employer.

In accordance with Government Code Section 87200, planning commissioners are mandated to file Fair Political Practices Commission Form 700 Statement of Economic Interests upon assuming office, annually, and upon leaving office.

Government Code Section 53235 (AB 1234) requires that planning commissioners complete required ethics training within one year of assuming office and every two years thereafter.

Term Limits and Replacement Process

Term length for all members of Committees/Commissions is standardized to two-year terms. All terms begin on July 1st and end on June 30th.

Each committee member may serve three (3) two-year terms (for a total of six years). After serving for six years on a committee, a person must remain off for one year before reapplying to that same committee. This does not prohibit the person from immediately applying to a different committee or commission.

Each commissioner (Planning and Parks and Recreation Commissions) may serve four (4) two-year terms (for a total of eight years). After serving for eight years on a commission, a person must remain off for one year before reapplying to that same commission. This does not prohibit the person from immediately applying to a different commission or committee.

Because member turnover may periodically cause some difficulty in obtaining a quorum, a member's term may be temporarily extended for an additional six months by the committee.

Appropriate recognition will be made of services when a term is completed, and a member leaves a committee or commission. This recognition will be made by the committee/commission with the help of the staff representative.

Scheduled Vacancies: To comply with the Maddy Act, on or before December 31st of each year, the City Clerk's Office publishes the Local Appointment List informing the public of all scheduled vacancies for the upcoming year. The list is posted on the City's website, at all City Hall posting boards, and at the public library.

Resignations: Members resigning from a committee or commission should submit a letter of resignation to the Mayor, City Clerk and the secretary of their committee or commission.

Reappointments: When a member is eligible for another term, the committee/commission will present a recommendation to the City Council asking for reappointment of the member. Reappointments are not automatic; the City Council makes the final determination on all appointments and reappointments.

Unscheduled Vacancies: The public will be informed regarding all unscheduled vacancies within 20 days after the vacancy occurs and at least 10 days before the vacancy is filled. Postings of unscheduled vacancies will be made by the City Clerk's office by posting the vacancy on the City's website, on the City Hall posting boards, the public library, through a press release, and an announcement included in the Inside City Hall newsletter.

Filling Unscheduled Vacancies with Alternates: For committees/commissions with membership under 12, a maximum of two (2) alternates may be, but are not required to be, appointed to a committee/commission by the Council and designated as alternate 1 and alternate 2. For committees/commissions with memberships of 12 or more, a maximum of four (4) alternates may be appointed and designated alternates 1, 2, 3, 4.

Once appointed as an alternate, the advance process can occur automatically, without any further confirmation by the Council, unless the Council specifically asks for a position to be brought before them for consideration. When an unscheduled vacancy occurs, alternate 1 may automatically advance to the voting position, and alternate 2 will become alternate 1. If an alternate serves more than half of an unexpired term, it will be considered a full term. If a committee/commission prefers to recommend a different approach to filling unscheduled vacancies with alternates, Council approval must be obtained.

Alternates do not automatically advance to a voting position at the end of a member's term. When a term ends, the alternates and all other applicants are to be considered for appointment to the committee/commission and recommended to the City Council for final appointment.

Attendance

Advisory body members are expected to attend meetings regularly. Conscientious attendance is a fundamental responsibility, as irregular attendance lessens one's ability to study all aspects of items under consideration. It is important to notify staff of any absences for the purposes of determining a quorum. Members are required to notify the staff liaison no later than 24 hours prior to any regular meeting of his/her intent not to attend said meeting.

Excessive absenteeism, which is defined to mean missing three consecutive regular meetings or four regular meetings in a 12-month period, shall constitute resignation of the member and the member shall be considered removed from the advisory body. In the event a meeting is cancelled because of a lack of quorum, the member(s) whose lack of attendance caused the cancellation will be counted, even though no meeting occurred.

Tardiness and early departure of more than 30 minutes in a meeting is considered an absence.

A Council sub-committee, comprised of the Mayor and Vice Mayor, may grant an exemption to the attendance policy or approve an extended leave of absence for members of City Committees/Commissions, based on individual circumstances.

The attendance policy becomes effective April 1, 2012, and April 2012 begins the first month in the 12-month attendance counting period.

Compensation

The members of the Planning Commission receive a \$100 monthly stipend and paid conferences and training. Planning Commissioners do not receive city health benefits.

All other committee and commission members receive no compensation, stipend or benefits of any kind. Actual and necessary expenditures incurred by members, while engaged in official commission or committee business, may be reimbursed to said members, provided such expenditures have been previously approved by the department head responsible for staffing the commission or committee.

Planning Commissioners and Parks and Recreation Commissioners will be provided business cards at the city's expense at the request of the member. This is not available to committee members.

Removal

Commissioners and Committee members may be removed from office, upon the recommendation of any member of the City Council, and with the concurrence of a majority of the City Council, for breach of duty, for conduct unbecoming a public official of the city, for violation of the city's code of ethics, or for any cause deemed warranted by a majority of the City Council.

Meeting Notices

Effective January 1, 2012, each Committee/Commission will provide notice of each meeting, including

special meetings, on the City's web site. Committee/commission members, media representatives and any other interested persons who so requests will be notified in advance of time and place of each meeting. Meetings are open to the public and must follow the posting guidelines of the Brown Act.

The City Council is to receive all notices of meetings, agendas and minutes.

These guidelines may be waived or changed at the discretion of the Council. The Council has the discretion to make appointments outside of this stated policy. Statutory committees and commissions are separate from these guidelines to the degree required by State Law, City Charter or Ordinance Code.

ORGANIZATION

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings are held for most of the city's committees and commissions. An exception would be committees that meet as needed or "on-call" or committees that convene on an occasional basis.

Agendas of all regular meetings must be posted for public review at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. The official posting place of agendas is at City Hall West (707 W. Acequia), and the city's web page www.visalia.city . Notices may also be posted at City Hall East (315 E. Acequia) or Administration (220 N. Santa Fe)

Adjourned Regular Meetings

If for any reason the business to be considered at the regular meeting cannot be completed, the committee or commission may then adjourn to a specified time and location. A notice announcing the adjournment must be posted within twenty-four hours after the time of adjournment.

Special Meetings

If it is necessary to meet at a time or date that is not the regular meeting schedule, a Special Meeting may be called by the advisory body. A Special Meeting may also be called in order to discuss an important issue that needs to be addressed immediately. Notice of special meetings must be received by members and posted at City Hall and on the City's web page at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Only the business set forth in the agenda may be considered at the meeting.

Agenda

At least 72 hours before a regular meeting, an agenda shall be publicly posted which specifies the time and location of the meeting and contains a brief general description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting.

Minutes

Minutes of all meetings must be kept as a permanent record by the committee/commission's staff representative. The minutes should be taken and prepared by the committee/commission's secretary with the assistance of the staff representative. Written minutes, upon approval by the committee or commission, constitute the official record of its activities. Additions and correction of the minutes may be made only in public meetings, with the approval of the body, and not by the private request of individual members. Minutes are not verbatim but are instead, action minutes, which record the essence of the decision made and significant action taken.

Annual Reports

Each Committee and Commission shall submit an annual report to the City Council. The annual report should include the number of meetings held, approximate number of citizens attending, accomplishments for the year, goals for the next year, and any other significant areas of which the Council should be aware.

Parliamentary Procedure

In order for a commission/committee to meet, conduct business and take action, a quorum must be present. A quorum is generally defined as a majority (one more than half) of appointed members to the particular advisory body. Meetings of commission/committees are generally operated according to parliamentary procedure using Roberts Rules of Order as a guideline. Each body may establish additional rules, limit debate and eject unruly persons if necessary.

The use of Parliamentary Procedure...

- Promotes cooperation and harmony so that people can work together more effectively to accomplish their goals.
- Guarantees each individual an equal right to propose motions, speak, ask questions and vote.
- Protects the rights of minority points of view and gives the minority the same consideration and respect as those in the majority.
- Encourages the full and free discussion of every motion presented.
- Ensures that the meeting is fair and conducted in good faith.

Commission/committee action is taken by motion. Motions go through the following general steps:

1. The member making the motion asks to be recognized by the chair;
2. The member makes the motion... "I move...";
3. Another member seconds the motion (if there is no second, the motion dies and is not voted upon);
4. The chairperson states the motion or if he is not clear asks the member making the motion to re-state the motion;
5. The chairperson asks if there is any discussion on the motion;
6. When the chairperson determines that there is no more discussion on the motion, the debate is closed;
7. The chairperson puts the motion to a vote.

The vote on a motion may take the form of "all in favor" so state, "all opposed" so state, which is called a commission/committee vote. If members prefer, the vote may take the form of a voice or roll call vote. The Brown Act prohibits voting or taking action by secret ballot.

Appointment of Officers

Annually, each Committee/Commission shall elect a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary from their members. Commissions may have a staff person appointed as secretary.

Role of the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

During meetings, the chairperson is responsible for overseeing the public debate in a manner that encourages input while facilitating the decision-making process.

The chairperson should limit the discussion and debate to the particular scope of responsibility of the group and should ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to speak. The chairperson should expedite the business of the commission/committee by making sure that the discussion does not go off-track or bog down on peripheral issues.

In the event that the chairperson is not present at the meeting, the meeting will be chaired by the vice-chairperson and all duties of the chairperson will transfer to the vice-chair during the chairperson's absence.

Role of the Secretary

The secretary is responsible for recording the actions at the meeting and keeping the attendance record of the advisory body. A staff person may assist with this duty, if needed. The secretary should prepare the action minutes as soon after the meeting as possible and review them with the staff person prior to submitting to the committee for approval. The staff person is the "keeper" of the committee's agendas, action minutes and attendance records.

Role of the Members

The committee/commission members serve as the "workers" by providing ideas, suggestions, and perspectives that may not have been considered by the City Council, chairperson and staff.

Role of the Alternate

Alternates are not regular members of the committee or commission, and while encouraged to attend, they are not voting members and should not be accorded the same rights and privileges as voting members.

Role of the Staff Representative

The City Manager appoints staff representatives to serve each of the committees and commissions. The staff representative provides information, support services and facilitates communication between the committee, the City Council and city management.

The duties of the staff representative shall include:

1. Reserve and prepare a meeting location that is available to the general public and accessible to the handicapped throughout the entire meeting.

2. Secure the location when the meeting is completed.
3. Assure that the committee/commission maintains the established meeting schedule.
4. Monitor the committee/commission membership and assist members in filling open positions, notifying the City Clerk's Office promptly when an unscheduled vacancy occurs and when an alternate is promoted to regular member status.
5. Act as a resource for questions or inquiries generated by members of the committee or commission.
6. Act as liaison between the committee/commission and the City of Visalia.
7. Make proper meeting notifications, in accordance with the Brown Act, and make certain that all meetings are conducted in accordance with all laws.
8. Make certain that all documents related to the committee/commission are current and reflect the present operational status of the committee or commission.
9. Assist the Secretary in preparation of the action minutes; the staff person is the official "keeper" of the agendas, back-up materials, and action minutes
10. Oversee preparation and presentation of the required year-end summary to the City Council.
11. Perform other duties as assigned by the City Manager, Department Head or City Council.
12. Maintain a list of terms of the committee/commission members.

GUIDELINES FOR RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

Relations with Fellow Commission/Committee Members

Cooperation among fellow commission/committee members plays an important role in the successful efforts of these groups. In order to build consensus around common goals and objectives, members should first show a willingness to objectively define the issues at hand and then work to reconcile opposing viewpoints. When commissioners/committee members interact positively, the group as a whole will be more effective. Important points to keep in mind in working with other commission/committee members:

1. Respect an individual's viewpoint even though it may be different from your own;
2. Allow other members adequate time to present their view before making comments;
3. Be open and honest;
4. Welcome new commission/committee members and help them become acquainted with the commission/committee.
5. Accept responsibility, voice opinions and be fair and factual.

Relations with Council

The primary responsibility of commissions/committees is to advise and make recommendations to the Council. It is the Council's role to absorb the advice and recommendations offered by numerous sources and to make decisions to the best of its ability. Because the Council is in such a position to see the broader context and is aware of other concerns, it may not always follow the recommendation offered by individual commissions/committees.

Relations with Staff

The staff representative's role is valuable to the success of the commission/committee. They do research and provide relevant information that enhances a commission/committee's ability to get things done. Staff is available to answer questions and follow-up on items brought before the commission/committee. However, members should be aware that the staff representatives are there as liaisons, assisting the members of the commission/committee by gathering information when needed or requested, submitting recommendations of the commission/committee to the Council, etc. Staff representatives must sustain a balance between their role as a liaison and as a city employee. Commission/committee members must be sensitive to the unique and vital relationships that staff representatives must maintain.

Relations with Media and Public Statements

Commissioners and Committee members should not make public statements as a spokesperson for the City of Visalia or of their particular committee/commission. Any statement made reflects the opinion of that particular member only. Any inquiries regarding city committees or commission matters should be referred to the staff representative and/or the Community Relations Manager.

LIST OF ALL BOARDS/COMMITTEES/COMMISSIONS

Committee/ Commission	Composition	Regular Meetings	Summary	Staff Representative
Citizens Advisory Committee	11 members	Held the first Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at City Administration 220 N. Santa Fe	Acts as a liaison between the general public and the City Council concerning community issues.	Jason Serpa 713-4533 Luma Fahoum 713-4103
Historic Preservation Committee	7 members	Held the second and fourth Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. at City Administration 220 N. Santa Fe	Administers and carries out standards and specifications of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Promotes historic preservation including encouraging building owners to initiate preservation efforts. Develops funding and/or incentive options, conducts tours, and oversees building identification.	Cristobal Carrillo 713-4443
Park and Recreation Commission	5 members	Held the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m., at City Hall Council Chambers 707 W. Acequia	Advises the City Council and City staff in matters pertaining to parks, playgrounds and recreation centers.	Laurissa Roggenkamp 713-4042
Planning Commission	5 members	Held the second and fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m., at the City Hall Council Chambers 707 W. Acequia	Makes recommendations to the City Council concerning land use, building and subdivisions, administers the Zoning Ordinance and handles matters that affect the growth and development of Visalia	Paul Bernal 713-4025

The following Boards have city appointees:

Committee/ Commission	Composition	Regular Meetings	Summary	Staff Representative
Delta Vector Control Board	1 City representative	On call.	Monitors, controls abate and otherwise controls animals which carry diseases	Leslie Caviglia 713-4332
Tulare Mosquito Abatement District Board	1 City appointee	On call	As a political subdivision of the State of California, the district monitors, inspects, abates and otherwise controls insects which carry transmittable diseases	
Visalia Civic Facilities Authority	2 City appointees	Obligated to meet once a year.	Serves as the governing body for matters pertaining to the Convention Center, the L.J. William's Theater and the Rotary Theater. The authority acquires constructs, manages, maintains, operates and leases buildings.	Visalia Unified School District lead agency

Members of Committees may serve up to three (3) two-year terms (maximum 6 years)

Members of Commissions may serve up to four (4) two-year terms (maximum 8 years)



CITY OF VISALIA

APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO CITY BOARD, COMMITTEE OR COMMISSION

Name of Board, Committee or Commission

Name _____

Mailing/ Address _____ Residence Phone _____

_____ Zip Code _____ Work Phone _____

Email _____ Facsimile _____

Resident of Visalia for _____ years Visalia Registered Voter: Yes _____ No _____

NOTE: Of the contact information provided, please indicate with an asterisk “*” which is the best way to reach you.

TRAINING, EXPERIENCE and/or EDUCATION:

SCHOOL	MAJOR	GRADUATION DATE & DEGREE

Additional Pertinent Skills, Experience or Interests: _____

Community activities in which you are involved: _____

Current or prior service on a City Board, Committee or Commission: _____

Employment Information:

Present Occupation:

Name of Firm: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Rules of law and ethics prohibit members from participating in and voting on matters in which they have a direct or indirect conflict of interest including a financial interest. Are you aware of any potential conflicts of interest which may develop from your occupation or financial holdings in relation to your responsibilities as a member of the Board, Committee or Commission to which you seek appointment?

(If yes, please explain in detail any potential conflicts)

YES _____ NO _____

(If you should have any questions about this matter or need further information as it relates to your situation, please advise the City Clerk's Office prior to submitting your application.)

When completed mail/submit original to: Office of the City Clerk –
City of Visalia
220 N. Santa Fe St.
Visalia, California 93292
CityClerk@Visalia.city

ON OCCASION, BOARD/COMMITTEE/COMMISSION MEMBERS, CITY STAFF, AND/OR THE PUBLIC MAY HAVE NEED TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU, PLEASE BE SURE TO NOTE ON YOUR APPLICATION THE BEST WAY TO CONTACT YOU (i.e., mailing address, phone number, or email address.)

I hereby certify that the information contained in this application and any accompanying documents is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Applicant

Date

The following information will be used for statistical purposes only. This information is requested on a voluntary basis. If you have questions regarding this request, please contact the City Clerk's Office. Your application *will be* processed whether or not you complete these questions. Thank you for your assistance.

☐ Male ☐ Female

Ethnic Category: check all categories that apply:

☐ White

(The category "White" includes White, Anglo-Saxons, Europeans, and person of Indo-European, North Africa or Middle Eastern origin.)

☐ Black

(The category "Black" includes Blacks, Afro-Americans, and persons of Jamaican, Trinidadian, and West Indian descent.)

☐ Hispanic

(The category "Hispanic" includes Mexican, Chicano, Latino, and all persons of Puerto Rican, Cuban Central or South American or Spanish descent.)

☐ American Indian

(The category "American Indian" includes persons who identify themselves, or are known as such, by virtue of tribal associations, including Alaskan Native.)

☐ Asian

(The category "Asian" includes Asian-Americans and persons of Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Filipino descent, Pacific Islanders and Vietnamese.)

You are invited to attach additional pages, enclose a copy of your resume or submit supplemental information which you feel may assist the City Council in the evaluation of your application.