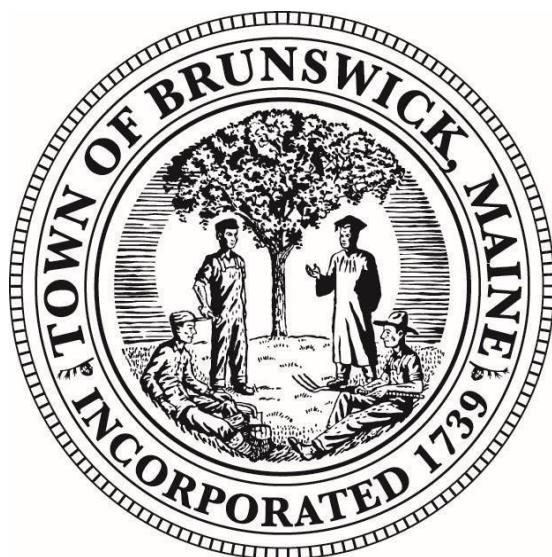


Brunswick, Maine

Town Committee Handbook



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I. Introduction

The Town of Brunswick values the involvement of its citizens as volunteers on its numerous Boards, Commissions and Committees. These volunteers support the work of the elected Town Council and the municipal staff by providing insights and recommendations related to Town policies, programs and initiatives of interest and concern to the community.

If you are a member of a Town Committee, thank you for volunteering! If you are thinking about applying to join a Committee, we welcome your interest. This Handbook provides detail on how you can apply to join a Committee, written guidance on Committee members' responsibilities, the different roles within a Committee, how Committees should function, and what Town or State policies must be followed. It provides a list of existing Committees, what they do, and how they fit into the municipal government network. In this handbook, the term "Committee" refers to all Town volunteer Boards, Commissions, Committees and Task Forces, whether standing or ad hoc.

While the Town Council establishes and authorizes the Committees and encourages each Committee to create policy initiatives which can be presented to the Council, in most cases the Council's approval is needed to move forward with any new policy or initiative. Except for certain Committees that have legal decision-making authority (adjudicatory committees, such as the Planning Board), Committees and their members are not authorized to act without official approval and/or direction from the Council.

Finally, as a Committee member, you will be representing the Town in your role. Your conduct reflects the Town and is part of how it can achieve its goals surrounding both public involvement and advancement of our community. You are expected to follow the Town Council's Rules of Order and Procedure, Section 502 Code of Conduct for Town of Brunswick Committee Attendees and Members with respect to courteous behavior, dialogue and interaction with all fellow community members (Appendix E). This requires that all attendees at Town meetings, including members of Town Committees, "shall accord the utmost courtesy to the Town Council, Town employees, and members of the public... and shall not disparage individual Town Councilors, staff, attendees or others, make rude, derogatory, or inflammatory remarks." The expectation is that you will abide by this and all other written rules of decorum contained in the referenced document.

To ensure clarity of mission, you will be required to acknowledge that you have read this Handbook and understand all the policies that must be adhered to as a member of a Town Committee. The Acknowledgement Form can be found in Appendix C of this Handbook.

Thank you again for your interest and involvement!

II. How to Join a Town Committee

Joining a Town Committee is not difficult but does require several steps starting with the completion and submission of a written application to the Town Clerk's office. The full process is detailed in the Town's [Boards, Commissions and Committees Appointment Policy](#). This Section provides some useful information on joining a Committee and summarizes the application and appointment process.

A. Before Applying:

- Get familiar with the various Committees in Town through the Town's website and the specific webpage for Committees (www.brunswickme.org/277/Boards-Committees). This webpage also contains a list of vacancies on Committees so you can see where members are needed.
- Consider contacting the Committee Chair or a member of a Committee that you think may interest you. Consider attending Committee meetings to learn more about what they do and how they function. All meetings are open to the public, can be attended in person or on TV3 where you can also find past meetings available on demand: (www.brunswickme.gov/313/Brunswick-Cable-TV3). A call or visit to the Town Clerk's office (the official record keeping department for the Town) is a good first step in this process especially if you are not familiar with Brunswick's volunteer opportunities. (207-725-6658, 85 Union Street – Room 202).
- Note that you need to be a Town resident to apply unless the Committee charge provides an exception to this rule.

B. Apply to Become a Committee Member

The application for all Committees is the same and can be found on the Town's website at: www.brunswickme.org/277/Boards-Committees. There you will find a fillable pdf form which can be completed and submitted online. The application can also be completed by hand by simply printing it out and then returning it by mail, fax, or hand delivery to the Clerk's office (fax - 207-725-6663).

C. The Interview & Review Process

- Once an application is submitted, the Town Clerk's office will telephone or email applicants to schedule an interview with the Appointments Committee.
- The Appointments Committee is a standing Committee comprised of three (3) Town Councilors who have been designated to review applications and make recommendations to the full Council for potential appointments.
- Interviews generally take place once per month at the Town Hall. Each interview lasts approximately 15 minutes. During the interview the Appointments Committee will ask questions about the applicant's experience and interest in volunteering for the Town. This is also an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions.

D. Formal Appointment to a Committee

- Once all the interviews have been completed the Appointments Committee will recommend candidates to fill vacancies, then transmit its selection(s) to the Town Clerk.
- The Clerk will include these recommendations as part of the Town Council's agenda, typically at the first regular meeting of each month.
- At the time of the recommendation Town Councilors may suggest additional nominations, approve the entire slate, or approve/disapprove candidates on an individual basis.
- The Clerk will notify candidates of the results. Those approved will begin serving their term. In most cases, it will be immediate.
- All new Committee members are required to review this Town Committee Handbook and to sign an acknowledgment that they have reviewed and understand the policies herein. The Acknowledgement Form is included in Appendix B.
- Candidates appointed to an Adjudicatory Committee will need to be sworn in by the Town Clerk prior to serving.

III. APPOINTMENT & TERM

A. Initial Appointment & Term

Once appointed to a Committee by the Town Council, you begin serving as of the official Term date provided by the Town Clerk.

Most Committees have 3-year terms for their members, unless otherwise specified in the Committee's charge. The terms are staggered to provide continuity for their activities. However, candidates may be approved to complete an unexpired term if a previous member has resigned. In this case, the initial term may be less than a full term.

We encourage all new appointees to contact the Chair and/or Staff Liaison for the Committee immediately following official appointment to a Committee.

B. Reappointment

The process of being reappointed to a Committee at the end of a term is the same as for the initial appointment process. The Town Clerk's office will notify the Committee member whose term is expiring several weeks in advance of their term expiration date so there is time to re-apply and be interviewed by the Appointments Committee.

Committee members are not obligated to reapply if they no longer wish to serve on the Committee and the Town Council is not obligated to recommend reappointment. If you do not wish to reapply, notify the Clerk as soon as possible. Likewise, by not submitting a renewal application, the Appointments Committee will assume that the candidate no longer wishes to continue as a Committee Member.

Reappointment may be based on additional criteria including attendance record, public conduct and contribution to the Committee's charge.

The Appointment Committee has the ability to waive the interview process for applicants that are re-applying and recommend reappointment to the full Town Council.

C. Resignation

Committee members who wish to resign their position before the end of their term must notify the Town Clerk and Committee Chair in writing as soon as possible to allow for timely recruitment of a new candidate.

IV. Committee Member Responsibilities

A. Code Of Conduct

As a member of a Town Committee, you are representing the Town and the interests of its citizens. It is understood that there may be a diversity of perspectives and ideas, but that all members are expected to be respectful in their communications. Therefore, in accordance with Town policy, all members of Committees are expected to act in accordance with the Town's Rules of Order and Procedure with respect to conduct, communications and actions.

B. General Committee Responsibilities

- Adhere to the Committee's Charge or Mission Statement
- Elect a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary annually in January, or at the first meeting of an Ad Hoc Committee
- Conduct meetings in person and on a regular schedule, or on an as needed basis, as designated in the Committee's Charge
- Ensure meetings are publicly noticed in accordance with Town policy and Maine's Open Meeting Law.
- Conduct meetings according to a set agenda
- Encourage public comment at Committee meetings (any meeting of a quorum of members)
- Set annual goals for the Committee, and track progress toward attaining those goals
- Report annually to the Council on Committee goals and accomplishments (See Appendix D for guidance on annual reports) according to a schedule provided by the Town Clerk.

- As warranted, inform the Council on issues pertinent to the Charge, including recommendations related to changes or updates on policy, programs and/or initiatives.
- Coordinate activities and recommendations with Town's annual capital planning and financing cycle (Capital Improvement Program and General Fund Budget)
- Review the Committee's Charge periodically (not to exceed every 5 years) and make recommendations to the Town Council regarding suggested changes.

C. Committee Member Responsibilities

- Work to the best of your ability in support of the Committee Charge
- Commit to attending meetings in person, or via remote access when appropriate (See Section VI of this Handbook – *Committee Policies* - for guidance on attending and conduct for meetings).
- Notify the Chair if you are going to be absent (attendance may impact a quorum).
- Be an active participant to carry out the Committee's Charge and reach its goals.
- Engage in respectful dialogue and communications and follow Section 502 of the Town Council Rules of Order and Procedure. This policy sets an expectation of decorum in all communications by Committee members. Within this policy Committee members specifically shall not:
 - a. Disparage individual Town Councilors, staff, attendees, or others.
 - b. Make rude, derogatory, or inflammatory remarks
 - c. Make statements vilifying the motives and integrity of others.
- Affirm your understanding of the Town Committee Handbook and your commitment to following the Town's policies contained herein by executing the Acknowledgment Form in Appendix B.

V. Officer, Staff & Council Responsibilities

A. Committee Chair Responsibilities

- Lead and organize the Committee to fulfill its Charge.
- Plan Committee efforts and initiatives, including setting annual goals.
- Organize and facilitate Committee meetings.
- Prepare and circulate a meeting agenda with input from members and staff well in advance of each meeting (recommended no less than three (3) days before the meeting date). Note that in some cases, such as Adjudicatory Committees (e.g. the Planning Board), the assigned support Staff will set the agenda.
- Ensure agendas, minutes and key Committee documents are maintained and updated on the Town website (with the support of assigned Staff).
- Ensure all decisions and/or recommendations are made by a formal vote of the full Committee (or quorum thereof) at a publicly noticed meeting.

- Serve as primary liaison between Committee members and staff.
- Communicate and present Committee recommendations to the Town Council.
- Notify the Town Clerk of member resignations or leadership changes.
- Orients new Committee members to the work of the Committee.
- Attends any meeting of Committee Chairs to provide the Appointments Committee feedback on activities and potential improvements to this Handbook.
- Ensure Committee member conformance with Town Policies referenced in this Handbooks, including the Code of Conduct.

B. Vice Chair Responsibilities

- Serve as the Chair when the Chair is unavailable or absent.
- Assist the Chair with the Chair's responsibilities and the effective management of the Committee.

C. Secretary Responsibilities

- Compile written minutes which include location, date & time, Committee members present, and a record of any decisions (votes) and major actions.
- Circulate draft minutes to the members for review and approval prior to the next scheduled Committee meeting.
- Ensure that final, Committee-approved minutes are sent to the Committee Staff Liaison for posting on the Committee's web page.

D. Support Staff Responsibilities

- Support Staff for each Committee are selected by the Town Manager.
- Serve in ex-officio, non-voting capacity.
- Attend Committee meetings.
- Ensure all meetings are advertised in accordance with Town Policy and Maine's Open Meetings Law , are posted on the Town's official calendar, and have a Zoom link to allow the public to attend remotely and to allow Committee members to attend when they cannot be present in person.
- Act as the primary channel for communication with the Town Manager and other Town Staff, including information requests, legal support, and all requests for expenditure.
- Ensure that the Committee Webpage and Town Website are maintained and accurate with respect to the Committee's work. This includes Committee membership, posting of meeting agendas, meeting minutes, and Video On Demand recordings of all meetings.
- Prepare Committee meeting agendas and minutes. Post minutes and agenda on the Town website.
- Ensure that all Committee members sign and return the Acknowledgement Form to the Town Clerk.

E. Town Council Liaison

- Town Council Liaisons are Councilors assigned at the beginning of the calendar year by the Council Chair to serve as advisors for most Committees.
- Serve in ex-officio, non-voting capacity (unless otherwise specified in the Committee Charge).
- Provide guidance and perspective to support the Committee in fulfilling its Charge.
- Attend Committee meetings.
- Act as the primary channel for communication with the Town Council.

VI. Committee Policies

A. Town Boards, Commissions and Committees Appointment Policy

The Town has a longstanding Boards, Commissions and Committees Appointment Policy which includes extensive details on policies related to the Appointment Committee, appointments' process, committee management, member training, member removal, conflicts and numerous other items. Committee members are encouraged to review this set of policies in its entirety.

The items discussed below in this Section do not supersede anything contained in the aforementioned Policy but are intended to clarify key aspects of how Committee's should function, and address some of the most frequently asked about items.

B. Committee Meetings

Most Committees meet one evening per month in Town Hall (85 Union Street), or as specified in the Committee's Charge. Some special Committees, such as Ad Hoc Committees or Task Forces may meet on an irregular or as needed basis. Some Committees may meet at other locations, as identified in their Charge adopted by the Town Council.

All Committee meetings must be posted on the Event Calendar on the Town's official website. If a meeting time or location is changed notification shall be provided by the Staff Support person via email to all Committee members and updated on the Town Website Event Calendar.

Brunswick has a Remote Meetings Policy which provides for remote access to public meetings (see Appendix H). Members of public bodies covered by this policy, including Committee members, are expected to be physically present for public proceedings except when being physically present is not practical. A member of the body who participates in a public proceeding by remote methods is present for purposes of a quorum and voting.

Public notice, broadcasting and recording requirements vary by Committee type, meeting purpose and number of attending members. In general, Committee's should follow the guidance below:

Adjudicatory Committees

- All general and sub-Committee meetings must be publicly noticed.
- All meetings must be televised and recorded.

Advisory and Ad Hoc Committees

- If a quorum is present (see definition in Section V) it must be publicly noticed, televised and recorded.
- If working groups or sub-Committees are meeting (fewer members than a quorum) they need not be publicly noticed, televised or recorded

Other Committees

- The Citizen's Initiative Clarity Board meetings are to be publicly noticed and recorded.
- The Fence Viewer, Growstow School, Personnel Board, Sealer of Weights & Measures, Appointments Committee, and Voter Registration Appeals Board are not held in public nor are they to be televised or recorded.

C. Sub-Committees

Committees may establish their own Sub-Committees, as approved by the Town Council and are subject to the same public meeting notice requirements as the full Committee.

A Public Body may from time to time establish Working Groups of fewer than a quorum of the body. Sub-Committees may also work with community groups in support of activities related to each Committee's Charge.

D. Reviewing your Committee Charge

The Town Council requests that each Committee review their Charge at least every 5 years to make certain that it reflects current Town, Town Council, and Committee priorities and circumstances. The process to update a Committee charge is as follows:

- If updates or changes are needed, the Committee should take this up as a regular business item and develop recommendations for adjustments or changes. Recommendations should be approved by a vote of the full Committee.
- The Committee Chair should send a draft of the recommended changes to the Appointment Committee for review.
- The Appointment Committee will then submit the draft with their feedback to the appropriate Staff and the Town Manager for further feedback.
- Finally, the Appointment Committee will forward the revised Charge, incorporating feedback from Town Staff to the full Council for consideration and approval.

E. Conflict of Interest

Brunswick has a [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) which applies to all Town officials, including members of Committees. This requires the disclosure of any actual or perceived conflict of interest and recusal from any deliberations or decision making that may imply bias. Citizens should also not serve on any Committee where the individual's personal financial interest conflicts with that of the Committee or Town. Applicants to Committees and Committee members should be familiar with this Policy. Any questions should be directed to the Town Clerk.

F. Communications

Special care must be taken with all form communications related to Committees, especially to ensure any formal deliberations or decisions are done publicly. Communication among all Town officials, including Committee members, is subject to Maine's Freedom of Access Act requirements. This includes personal e-mail communications, which are part of the public record.

The following guidance should aid Committee members in understanding the boundaries associated with various communications:

Among Council, Staff, and Committee Members

- Working documents and drafts can be sent by email, fax, or hand delivered.
- Feedback from members should be sent through the Chair or Vice Chair.
- Discussion and deliberation on a topic must happen at publicly noticed meetings and not through email.
- Staff Support members must be cc'd on all communications.
- The "Reply All" email function is discouraged except when reviewing logistics.

Among Committees

Formal requests or coordination should be handled between the Chairs.

With the Community

Public statements, press releases, and social media posts must be coordinated with the Committee support Staff and approved by the Town Manager.

Public Comment

Allowing public comment at Committee meetings is not legally required but is strongly encouraged. Refer to the Town of Brunswick's Town Council Rules of Order and Procedure Section 501 - Public Comments for guidance

G. Training

This handbook will serve as a guide to conducting Committee meetings. More formal training may be available through the Staff Support person.

VII. Definitions

Charge

The Charge of a Committee is the governing written scope of authority of the Committee, as approved by the Town Council and posted on the Town's website. It typically is comprised of the Committee's mission, membership, duties and responsibilities. It may be updated from time to time, by recommendation of the Committee and/or staff, and as approved by the Town Council.

Ex-officio

The ex-officio member of a Committee holds that position by virtue of the ex-officio's office rather than the individual in that office. Ex-officio members should not be included in the count when determining a quorum unless the member(s) is a voting member of the Committee. Whether or not the ex-officio member has voting privileges is determined in the Committee charge.

Public Notice

Brunswick adheres to the State Freedom of Access provisions found in Chapter 13, Subchapter 1. The Town of Brunswick also has adopted a Meeting Notice Requirements and adhere to that. Public notice must be given for "all public proceedings of a body or agency consisting of 3 or more persons." All postings of public meetings are handled by the Town Manager's office and are posted to the [Events Calendar on the Town Website Home Page](#)

Quorum

Quorum means a majority of the full membership of the Public Body, including any vacancies, unless otherwise provided by Charter, ordinance or state law (e.g. 2 members of a 3 member Public Body, 3 members of a 4 or 5 member Public Body).

Remote Meetings Policy -

Remote participation – means telephonic or video technology allowing simultaneous reception of information and may include other means when such means are necessary to provide reasonable accommodation to a person with a disability.

Appendices

Appendix A

List of Committees

The following list is current as of the date of revision of this Handbook. An up-to-date list with current charges can be found on the Town's Website at [Boards and Committees landing page](#).

Adjudicatory

Assessment Review Board

Serves as an appeals body to hear appeals of decisions of the Assessor or Town Council or on the exempt status of property.

Marine Resources Committee

Administers and coordinates the shellfish conservation program.

Planning Board

Reviews development plans against the Town's land use ordinance.

Rivers & Coastal Waters Commission

Oversees the implementation of the Harbor Management Plan and develops recommendations to the Town Council on the usage of the coastline, anchorages, moorings, and related town-owned property.

Village Review Board

Reviews new construction, exterior alterations, and demolition within the village review district.

Zoning Board of Appeals

Hears appeals of decisions of the Codes Officer, variance and special exception appeals of the zoning ordinance.

Advisory

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Serves to advise and guide public policy on safe, non-vehicular transportation issues and development.

Cable Television Committee

Proposes policy and advises the Council on management and operation of community access TV channels.

Conservation Commission

Advocates for conservation values and stewarding our ecologically rich natural communities and open spaces.

Davis Fund Committee

Provides grants to local non-profit organizations for projects that provide “pleasure to the citizens of Brunswick” from the proceeds of the Nathaniel Davis Grant Fund.

Housing Committee

Charged with making recommendations to expand the Town’s housing stock including more low-income and mid-range options.

Recreation Commission

Advises the Parks & Recreation Director on public recreation programs and policies.

Sustainability Committee

Studies and develops recommendations for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, sustainable management of Brunswick’s solid waste, and management of the town’s facilities and government operations.

Social Services Committee

Review grant funding requests from non-governmental charitable organizations and provide recommendations to the Town Council.

Town Commons Committee

Provides general management of the Town Commons property.

Tree Committee

Assists the Town in the dissemination of news and information regarding the selection, planting, and maintenance of trees and shrubs.

Trust Fund Advisory Committee

Establishes the investment objectives in its judgment are most appropriate for the town's pooled funds.

Ad Hoc**Captain Fitzgerald & Former Maine Gravel Committee**

Charged with re-developing the Fitzgerald property recreation plan to now include the adjacent former Maine Gravel property.

Climate Action Plan Task Force

Charged with developing strategies and actions to work toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the community.

Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee

Charged with updating the 2008 vision plan for Brunswick.

Cook's Corner Advisory Committee

Charged with advising Council on re-development plans for the Cook's Corner area.

Executive Recruiting Committee

Charged with guiding the process (along with an executive search firm) of hiring a new Town Manager.

LC4 (Landing Community Center Complex Committee)

Charged with coordinating plans for the new recreation complex at Brunswick Landing.

Central Fire Station Advisory Committee

Charged with developing a proposal for use of the former downtown fire station.

Mare Brook Watershed Plan Committee

Charged with collaborating with the Planning Department to protect the watershed and the waterfront.

Maquoit Bay Water Quality Task Force

The Task Force is charged with assisting Town staff in establishing a baseline of the quality of water within and entering Maquoit Bay, evaluating the water quality impacts associated with existing and future land uses in the watershed, and developing water quality loading models to assess present and future loadings of nitrogen and fecal coliforms.

Unique Chartered Committees

Brunswick Topsham Housing Authority

Provides safe, quality affordable housing for eligible persons in need of assistance, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, handicap, marital status, sexual orientation, familial status, or disability.

Brunswick Topsham Water District

Monitors the management of quality drinking water in the two towns.

Sewer District

Protects the health and environment of Brunswick through wastewater collection and treatment in an environmentally responsible, efficient, and reliable manner.

Council Sub-Committees

Appointments Committee

Consists of three Councilors appointed by the Chair; interviews applicants for Town Committees and recommends appointments to the full Council; assists staff in managing and promoting Town Committees.

Finance Committee

Provides councilor members with an opportunity for in-depth review and analysis of the Town's financial matters, resulting in feedback for staff and recommendations to the Town Council.

MRRA TIF Districts Committee

Works with MRRA (Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority) to manage the use of TIF funds generated at Brunswick Landing

Other Committees

Citizen's Initiative Clarity Board

Reviews citizen-initiated ballot items to make certain that they are clearly stated and understandable; meets irregularly.

Fence Viewer

A single member serving in an historic position that traditionally settles disputes over fences following state guidelines on an as needed basis.

Growstow School

Assists with special projects involving the historic school property.

Personnel Board

Assists in the hiring and promotion of Police Officers and Firefighters.

Sealer of Weights & Measures

A state managed position that verifies standards of weights and measures; appointed by the Town.

Voter Registration Appeals Board

Adjudicates complaints regarding voter registration; meets as needed.

Appendix B

Town Committee Member Acknowledgement Form

The Town Council and Staff of the Town of Brunswick are pleased that you are volunteering to serve on one of the Town Committees. Please review the Town Committee Handbook and acknowledge your understanding of Committee responsibilities, including the Town's Code of Conduct policy.

Please sign and return to the Committee Staff Liaison or to the Town Clerk's office.

Thank you for volunteering and for contributing to Brunswick and a brighter future for all of us.

Signed

Date

Name Printed

Committee Name

Appendix C

Frequently Asked Questions

How can the charge or mission statement of the Committee be changed?

The Committee decides on changes they feel are necessary.

They send these recommendations to the Appointments Committee and to the Staff Support person.

After review, the Appointments Committee will send the request to Town Council Leadership to be included on a future Town Council agenda for approval, changes, or disapproval.

What is the process for bringing an agenda item to the Town Council?

Requests for items (other than changes to the Committee charge) should be sent to Town Council Leadership by the Committee Staff Support person for inclusion on an upcoming agenda.

Where can I find a Committee Application Form?

On the Town's web site www.brunswickme.org/277/Boards-Committees

Are School Board Members and School Committees selected using these processes?

No. School Board Members are elected from electoral districts as are Town Councilors. The Board and the School Department have their own processes for volunteer opportunities and management.

What questions are normally asked of the applicant in an Appointments Committee interview?

- “Tell us about your interest in this Committee.”
- “Are there other Committees that are of interest as well as the one for which you are applying?”
- “How does your (work/volunteer/educational) experiences relate to this Committee’s work?”
- “In what ways would you work to develop cooperation and/or consensus within the Committee?”
- “Are you able to attend the Committee’s meetings (*i.e. – second Tuesday at 7 PM for two hours*) for the next three years?”
- “What are some new ideas and/or new practices that you would like to see during your time on the (name of Committee)?”
- “Do you understand the advisory and/or adjudicatory roles of this Committee?”

Appendix D

Annual Report to The Town Council

The presentation should be designed to inform the community about the Committee and the work it is doing to fulfill its charge. Any presentation should follow the following basic guidance:

- It should focus on the accomplishments of your Committee, as well as forward looking goals for Committee work.
- It should be no more than 5 minutes in length and may or may not include visual assistance (power point, etc.).
- Although one person normally presents, having other Committee members in attendance demonstrates support and enthusiasm for the Committee's mission.
- PowerPoint is recommended but not required. If you use PowerPoint, try to limit it to five slides. Words are good, but sometimes pictures tell more than words. Make sure to get your presentation to your designated staff support person well in advance to ensure it goes smoothly when you present.
- It may/should contain a promotional message to encourage citizen participation on Committees.