

# Meeting Processes and the Simplified Rules of Procedure

City Clerk's Office

November 25, 2025



# Principles of the Rules of Procedure: the Rights of Members

- The majority of members have the right to decide
- The minority of members have the right to be heard
- All members have the right to the same information to help make decisions
- Members have a right to an efficient meeting
- All members have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy
- All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations

# Open Meetings

- All meetings are open to the public
- Advance notice of the meeting and all agenda items must be given
- All consideration and debate of agenda items takes place at the meeting
- Meetings are streamed on-line with closed captioning, during regular business hours
- The Committee may close a meeting to the public if the subject of debate falls under one of the exceptions to the open meeting rules in the City of Toronto Act
- Examples:
  - Personal matters about an identifiable individual, including a city employee or a local board employee
  - Litigation or potential litigation affecting the city

# Role of the Chair

- Presides at the meetings
- Maintains order and decorum in the meeting
- Makes procedural rulings
- Determines the order of questioning or speaking
- Rules on whether motions are in order
- Determines when all Members who wish to speak have spoken and are ready to vote, and ensures Members understand what they are voting on
- May call, cancel or reschedule meetings

The Vice Chair has all the powers and performs all the duties of the Chair in the Chair's absence

# Responsibilities of Members

- Attend scheduled meetings
- Carefully consider and make decisions about meeting business
- Vote on motions put to a vote
- Speak respectfully, listen attentively, and not interrupt the proceedings
- Refrain from using any offensive, disrespectful or unparliamentary language about any member, City Officials or other City employee, or City Council
- Speak only on the matter or motions under discussion
- Respect the confidentiality of matters discussed in closed session and not disclose the subject or substance of these discussions
- Obey the Chair's rulings and Council's decisions

# A meeting agenda

- Prepared by the City Clerk's Office
- Closes ten business days before meeting
- Published five business days before meeting, and distributed to members (via weblink)
- Is a “live” document once published – revisions are updated in real time

# Agenda Items

- Items must be within the Committee's Terms of Reference, and submitted to the Secretary by the agenda closing
- Staff from the Clerk's Office and the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, are able to assist you, if you wish to put an item on the agenda

## Who can add Items to an Agenda?

- A member of the Advisory Committee
- City Council
- A Council Committee
- A local board of the City
- A City official

- Every item has a unique identifier
- Some items are Ward-specific
- Some items originate with a report or letter
- Some items have recommendations for the Committee to consider

# Order of Business at a Meeting

- The Chair calls the meeting to order once quorum is present
- Confirmation of Minutes
- The Committee considers each Item one at a time
- Once the agenda is complete, the Chair adjourns the meeting – no motion required

# On Each Item

- Chair identifies the Item
- Staff presentation (if there is one)
- Public Speakers (if there are any)
- Members may ask questions of public speakers
- Members may ask questions of officials
- Members may speak and move motions
- Members vote

# How do Council Advisory Bodies give advice?

- A Council Advisory Committee gives advice by:
  - Making recommendations to City Officials on matters within their jurisdiction
  - Making recommendations to a Council Committee
  - Making recommendations to City Council on a matter on the Council agenda
- A recommendation that requires action by City Officials or City Council must first be considered by the appropriate Council Committee and, when necessary, approved by City Council.

# How are Decisions Made

- **Receive** the item for information
- **Adopt** the recommendation(s)
- **Amend** or add new recommendation(s)
- **Defer** the item to a future meeting
- **Refer** the item to a specific person or decision body

# Motions

- A decision is made by voting on a proposal contained in a motion.
- City Clerk's Office staff will assist members with preparing their motions. Please email your motions to [cabrac@toronto.ca](mailto:cabrac@toronto.ca).
- Motions are typed and displayed and should be read aloud so that all Members hear and understand the proposal.
- Motions do not need to be seconded.
- The Chair will rule motions which are not within the mandate of the Committee out of order.

# Voting

- All Members present must vote (unless prevented by law)
- Majority vote is required to pass a motion
- Motion fails if the vote is tied
- Members may vote by a show of hands or may ask to have the vote recorded in the minutes

# Other Meeting Matters

- Quorum
  - The minimum number of members required to be present to conduct business at the meeting
  - In our case: a majority of the total membership
  - Quorum must be present within 30 minutes of the scheduled start time of the meeting
  - If no quorum present, the meeting cannot take place
- Absence
  - Let the Clerk and the Chair know in advance
  - Chair will move to excuse absent members at the end of the meeting
  - If you are absent from 3 meetings in a row, without being excused by motion, your seat becomes vacant and you are no longer a member

# Minutes & How to Follow Decisions

- Minutes are prepared without note and comment, they include motions, votes, decisions and attendance
- Agendas, Minutes and all meeting information are posted online <http://www.toronto.ca/council>
- Subscribe to e-updates to receive notification about any Council, Committee or Board agendas and minutes <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/e-updates/subscribe.htm>

# Contact:

## City Clerk's Office

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