

## City of Ferndale Board and Commission Effectiveness

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**INTRODUCTION:** Citizen engagement through the creation of boards, commissions and task forces is a major policy direction of the City of Ferndale. Citizen engagement is strongly encouraged and seen as a major policy thrust of the City Council. To that end, the City Council has created a number of citizen organizations to provide every citizen with an opportunity to participate and be involved in the community decision making process.

***Boards and Commissions and Task Forces created by the City are advisory only and the recommendations they present may be accepted modified or rejected by the City Council. The real value of these citizen groups is to provide City Council with the best thinking and desires of the community and to help strengthen the Council's decision making process. Citizen ideas, suggestions and dialogue are considered to be very important by the City and City Council.***

City Boards and Commissions work within the framework established by the City Council in the job description or work plan for each group. City Boards and Commissions are expected to involve others in the community in their work, research and evaluate alternatives, work cooperatively with City Staff and to develop recommendations for consideration by the City Council.

City Boards and Commissions provide leadership for citizen engagement, for policy creation or change while showing the community how to become effectively involved in the life of the community. Leadership through policy offers the opportunity to think big and to lead others to also think big. Leadership through service to others and the community is a major focus of this effort. **Open, direct and courteous dialogue will set the proper tone within the community while stimulating new ideas, leadership and followers.**

In Ferndale, it is recognized that City boards and commissions can tap into the many facets of thought and ideas within the community while providing a method for all citizens to be engaged. Volunteers on boards and commissions bring many skills, experiences and resources that are needed by the City in achieving its purpose and vision. Boards and Commissions are expected to sift through the many ideas, facts and details, explore all the options and conduct

extensive dialogue with the broader community in arriving at recommendations for action.

Looking into the future, thinking about what the community will look like and what we want our community to be is vital to the creation of an economically livable community. Engaging others, listening with honor to their opinions and enlisting the energy of the total community are important functions of Boards and Commissions. We must all feel a part of adding to the livability of the community and feel as though we are part of the action.

### **LEADERSHIP THROUGH SERVICE TO OTHERS**

The following concepts and ideas should be used in creating safe and effective places for citizens to be engaged to benefit the whole community.

**Leadership:** Serving the community on a Board or Commission places all members in a community leadership role. LEADERS;

- Make a commitment to do something
- Listen carefully to all sides of an issue
- Treat everyone with courtesy and honor
- Think in terms of community abundance
- Foster an atmosphere of working together to resolve problems
- Create a team that is open to all
- Stay focused on the vision
- Encourage others to participate
- Honor the resource available in City staff
- Ask questions and do not let people remain passive
- Do not let people “gang up” on others
- Attack problems and not people
- Encourage different points of view
- Focus on what can be done
- Forget about the past
- Report regularly to the City Council and the community
- Document and report findings and recommendations to the Council
- Work for the groups result and not your own

**Important Leadership roles:** Board, Commission and Task Force leaders play an important role in keeping the organization moving forward and ultimately being successful.

- Make sure everyone is heard and understood
- Ensure that the agenda allows time for really important issues
- Share the power and responsibility
- Encourage others to make a motion and second the motion so that action can be taken.
- Keep everyone fully informed
- Make sure the meeting stays on task
- Listen, hear and understand
- Encourage others to speak up
- Show patience with the long winded
- Thank everyone for coming to the meeting and speaking up
- Help the group arrive at a decision or recommendations
- Politely and with honor cut off debate or discussion when it is redundant or taking valuable time
- Keep the group focused on the vision, goals and priorities
- Love criticism
- Start the meeting on time
- Share the leadership and train new leaders
- Keep positive and energetic people involved
- Support and carry the group's decisions
- Stay focused on what is best for the community

**Change your Paradigm:** Building the community you want will require that you begin to change how you think and what you do.

**The old way**

**THE NEW WAY**

Scarcity

**ABUNDANCE**

Fostering Conflict

**FOSTER RESOLUTION**

Short term adversary

**FORMING LONG TERM  
COLLABORATION**

Secrecy

**FULLY DISCLOSING INFORMATION**

Winning

**LEARNING THROUGH RESOLUTION  
AND PROCESS**

Defer to others

**BECOME RESPONSIBLE**

Avoid Employees

**CREATE A TEAM THAT INCLUDES  
EMPLOYEES**

Avoid Conflicts

**BRING CONFLICTS OUT IN THE OPEN**

We're Broke

**COME LET'S MEET AND FIGURE OUT  
HOW TO DO IT!**

Go it alone

**CALL A COMMUNITY MEETING  
PARTNER WITH OTHERS**

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