

Proposed Bylaws for Mount Vernon Disability Advisory Board

Purpose of the Board

- To advise the city of Mount Vernon on matters related to people with disabilities
- To make the public aware of the issues faced by people with disabilities and how they affect the community
- To empower and encourage people with disabilities to communicate their issues to city officials and the public

Membership of the Board

- The board will be comprised of at a minimum five standing members, and at a maximum, 11 standing members, and two non-voting members appointed by the Mayor.
- At least 80% of the board's standing members must be people with disabilities.
- The other board standing members must be the parents or legal guardians of people with a disability or professionals who provide services to people with disabilities.
- All standing members of the board must be Mount Vernon residents.
- If a standing member moves out of Mount Vernon they will cease to serve on the board.
- The non-voting members will not facilitate meetings or vote on items before the board.
- The board shall have at least eight meetings per year on a stated monthly date to be selected by the board. The board can decide to hold additional meetings.
- Any standing board member who fails to attend three consecutive meetings without good cause shall be removed from the board. A vote of the majority of the standing board members will be required to determine if a member who missed three consecutive meetings had good cause to do so.
- All standing members will serve for a term of three years.
- The mayor will appoint standing members to the board. Appointments would need to be approved by two-thirds of the board's current standing members.
- Standing members will be granted the right to step down from their position at any time after giving the chairperson a month's notice in writing, except in the case of a sudden medical emergency.
- In the case of a medical emergency a standing board member could step down immediately.
- Any standing member who is convicted of a crime greater than a misdemeanor will cease to serve on the board.

Conflicts on the Board

- Any standing board member who feels that another has acted improperly can submit a formal written complaint through email or in person to the board officers, excluding anyone involved.
- Improper behavior will consist of any action that puts the mission of the board or safety of members in jeopardy. This includes acting on the board's behalf without board approval, or harassing or bullying another member.

- After the written complaint is received, the board officers (excluding any subjects of the complaint) will hold an emergency meeting to separately interview the complainant and the subject of the complaint.
- The officers will then decide on an appropriate follow-up action including any or all of the following:
 - A group conversation to mediate the situation (with the consent of all parties involved)
 - A formal written request to cease the behavior
 - A vote to decide if the subject of the complaint should be removed from their position as an officer
 - A vote to decide if the subject of the complaint should be expelled from the board
- A vote will be held at the next board meeting and involve all standing members except those involved. At this vote, the officers and each participant in the conflict will have a minute to explain their position.
- The vote of two-thirds of the board's standing members will be required to make a decision.
- The board will encourage anyone who reports being the victim of sexual harassment to contact law enforcement.

Board Officers

- All of the board officers will have the following responsibilities:
 - Putting together annual reports for the city council with board input
 - Mediating conflicts on the board
 - Working together to create meeting agendas
 - Accessing an official city email address for the board
- Individual Officers will also have the following additional responsibilities:
 - **Board Chairperson**
 - Facilitating meetings and conducting votes
 - Delegating agreed upon tasks to standing members
 - **Secretary**—Taking minutes of board meetings and sending them to standing members
 - **Vice Chairperson**—Sending official communications to city officials and the public upon board approval
- **Elections of Officers**
 - An election for the board's officer positions will take place at its first meeting and every following three years, or if a vacancy exists.
 - Officers will serve for terms of three years and can run for reelection.
 - Any standing member of the board will be able to put their name forward as a candidate for an officer position.
 - Every candidate for a position will be given a minute to make a statement about why they should be elected.
 - All elections will take place via ballot created by the current secretary. All standing members can vote.

- Unless a candidate is running unopposed the candidate with the most votes will be elected to the position.
- The ballots will be counted by the current officers in front of the board.
- Officers will be given the right to step down from their position at any time after giving the chairperson at least a month's notice, except in the case of a medical emergency in which case they can step down immediately.
- If an officer is not fulfilling their responsibilities, they can be removed upon a vote of two-thirds of standing board members.
- When a board officer steps down or is removed there will be an election at the next meeting.
- If an officer must miss a meeting they can appoint a temporary substitute to fulfill their responsibilities.

Location and Frequency of Meetings

- Meetings will be held in an accessible location at city hall or another city property.
- The board will be required to meet at least eight times a year for 90 minutes.
- The board chair will be empowered to call an extra meeting after giving two days' notice.

Accessibility and Accommodations

- The city will be required to provide necessary reasonable accommodations to board members and meeting attendees as outlined in the ADA.

Decision Making

- The board will decide the following through a voting process requiring two-thirds of present standing members:
 - Approving official communications to the public
 - Approving official communications to city departments
 - Formally inviting city officials or others to attend a meeting
 - Editing the bylaws of the board
 - Making decisions about projects and ideas to pursue ***if the group cannot agree through discussion***
 - Approving the contents of annual reports for City Council
- The chair can call for a vote at any time. Members can vote by saying aye or nay or by raising their hands.
- Any member will be able to make a motion calling for a vote on any of the above items at any time, provided that the motion is seconded by another member. The chairperson will then facilitate the vote.

Meeting Agendas

- The chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary will put together each meeting's agenda and decide what will be discussed during the duration.
- The secretary will send the agenda to all standing members the day before meetings.
- There will be a period of 15 minutes at the end of every meeting governed by the following rules:
 - Only one additional brief item can be brought up by each standing member.
 - Items must be submitted to the secretary at least three days before the meeting.
 - Items will be discussed as time allows and in the order in which they were submitted.

Communication

- **Communication with the City**
 - Any city department or council will be able to ask the board for advice by contacting the vice-chairperson.
 - With the approval of two-thirds of the board the vice chairperson will be able to send an official communication or invitation to attend a meeting to a city official or other stakeholder
 - The board will present a formal report yearly to city council about issues faced by people with disabilities in Mount Vernon.
- **Communication with the Public**
 - Upon the approval of two-thirds of its members the board will be able to approve a plan for a communication or series of communications with the public including events, flyers, newsletters, and social media posts.