

STRONG PARKS, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Tool 16: Helpful Tips for Boards

Boards work most effectively when they have clear expectations, meetings that work, and effective committees that do work in between meetings of the full board.

Clear expectations

- Establish the duties of the board.
- Evaluate the board every year.
- Create board and officer job descriptions and follow them.
- The role of the board chair really matters, particularly when it comes to:
 - ◆ Putting together the agenda.
 - ◆ Keeping discussions on track.
 - ◆ Ensuring everyone gets a chance to speak.
 - ◆ Dealing with problems on the board.
 - ◆ Serving as the board's liaison to executive staff, in the board's supervisory and supportive role.

Meetings that work

- Don't leave things to chance. Build an agenda that includes reasonable timeframes for both regular business and special discussions.
- Ensure the right people are present to participate in the meeting.

Effective committees

- Understand the role of committees. They are there to help the board get its work done.
- Every committee should have a charter that says what it is trying to accomplish.
- Committees don't make decisions for the board. They present options / recommendations.
- The exception is when there are no or very few staff, and the board *delegates* operational authority to a committee in a specific realm.
- Establish standing committees of the board, particularly a finance committee and a board development committee
- Assign *ad hoc* committees of the board as needed, such as strategic planning committee, executive director search / hiring committee, or policy committees
- Develop program committees as needed. This can be a great way to build leadership by including non-board members. Examples include; marketing committee, real estate committee, event committees