

# CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH ADVISORY COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

## Introduction

The City of Sunny Isles Beach is pleased that you are interested in becoming a member of one of the City's Advisory Committees. The City's Advisory Committees were created to foster public participation and to encourage Sunny Isles Beach residents to take an active role in local government.

Committee members are volunteers who are appointed by the City Commission and serve at the pleasure of the City Commission. Committee members should be knowledgeable and experienced in the areas of interest of the committee on which he/she wishes to serve. Additionally, there must be clarity, understanding, and acceptance of the roles assigned to the Committee.

## Application

If you are interested in serving on an Advisory Committee ("Committee"), please complete a Sunny Isles Beach Board/Committee Application and return it to the *Office of the City Clerk, City of Sunny Isles Beach, 18070 Collins Avenue, Sunny Isles Beach, FL 33160*, prior to the advertised closing date.

## Selection

The Mayor appoints both the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of each Committee. In addition, each Commissioner shall appoint one (1) member to each Committee. However, the Liaison Commissioner of each committee shall appoint one (1) additional member to their respective Committee. As such, Advisory Committees consist of seven (7) members.

## Welcome

As a new member of a Committee, you are about to embark on a tremendously rewarding exercise of your basic right to participate in the governmental process. If selected as a member, you would serve in an advisory capacity. However, with all rights come responsibilities,

and participation on a City Committee is no different.

The Committee process is essential to the successful function of City Government and the contribution of Committees is invaluable. Committee members help shape the future of Sunny Isles Beach and can have a direct impact on the quality and level of services the City offers to its citizens.

This Committee Handbook provides guidelines for City committee members. The information contained in the handbook closely follows the rules and regulations that apply to the City Commission and creates a uniform public process for Sunny Isles Beach's public bodies. The Handbook is intended to assist committee members to meet challenges along the way and to guide them through their roles.

## Conflict of Interest

The first consideration for the new Committee member is whether he/she has any potential conflict of interest relating to his/her representation of the Committee. A conflict of interest occurs if the Committee member, a member of his/her immediate family, or his/her employer would receive any financial gain as a result of any decision/recommendation of the Committee.

Florida's Conflict of Interest Laws and the ordinances and policies of the City of Sunny Isles Beach protect you and the public. Simply put, you should avoid any decision or discussion that compromises your or the City's integrity in the eyes of the public. If it seems wrong, ask the City Attorney or City Manager, first.

Inadvertent, seemingly innocent actions in government can be construed as intentional and harmful. *Perceptions* often can be as damaging as reality in the eyes of the public. Our goal in offering these guidelines is to avoid any hint of conflict that may be adverse to you, your fellow committee members, and/or our community and its citizens.

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When in doubt, ask for the advice of the *Office of the City Attorney*. Asking does not relieve you of your obligation, but it offers professional help from those who know the law. By asking, you demonstrate good faith so long as you follow the advice you receive.

Conflict of interest violations can be sensitive and even inadvertent. Common sense is a good guide, but when in doubt, ask for help.

***For additional information or questions, please contact the Office of the City Attorney at (305) 792-1702.***

### **Voting**

As a committee member, you are required to vote on any matter presented for a vote, unless you have a conflict of interest.

### **Sunshine Law**

The next consideration is the additional responsibilities you have taken on with regard to the “Sunshine Law.” All divisions of City government, including its Advisory Committees, are subject to the Florida Government-in-the-Sunshine Law. This is a requirement of Article I, Section 24 of the Florida Constitution, which states in part:

All meetings of any collegial public body of the executive branch of state government or of any collegial public body of a county, municipality, school district, or special district, at which official acts are to be taken or at which public business of such body is to be transacted or discussed, shall be open and noticed to the public and meetings of the legislature shall be open and noticed as provided in Article III, Section 4(e), except with respect to meetings exempted pursuant to this section or specifically closed by this Constitution.

In its simplest form, the Sunshine Law prohibits two (2) or more members of a Committee from discussing any matter in private that the

Committee intends to vote on. E-mails and telephone communication between members on matters that the Committee will vote on are prohibited by the Sunshine Law. While the Sunshine Law prohibits discussion between committee members outside the public forum, members may discuss matters individually with a member of the City Commission.

Following your appointment to a Committee, you will be given a copy of an excerpt from the “Government-in-the-Sunshine Manual.” The Manual is published each year by the Florida Attorney General and contains various examples of situations which you may find yourself in and the “sunshine” implications of each.

***For additional information or questions, please contact the Office of the City Attorney at (305) 792-1702.***

### **Financial Disclosure Statement**

Florida Statutes, Section 112.3145(1)(a) provides a list of those local officers who are required to file a statement of financial interest. The initial financial disclosure statement must be filed within 30 days of appointment. Subsequent to the initial filing, committee members are required to file financial disclosure annually by July 1.

### **Term**

Each member shall serve a one (1) year term commencing on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year and ending on December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. The City Commission may remove a member of a Committee with or without cause.

### **Commission Liaison**

Each member of the City Commission is assigned to serve in a liaison capacity with one (1) or more committees.

### **Absenteeism**

The City Commission of the City of Sunny Isles Beach has an attendance policy for its Advisory

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Committees, which requires the removal of any Committee member who has missed three (3) consecutive meetings, without cause.

### Role and Authority of Committee Members

Most Committees do not become involved in the administration or operation of City departments. Additionally, Committee members shall not direct administrative staff to initiate programs, conduct major studies, or establish official policy. However, City staff members are available to provide general staff assistance to Committees.

### General Guidelines

- Individual members should not publicly present their personal views or recommendations as representing the Committee or the City Commission, unless such body has voted to approve such action.
- Public or written statements/positions should not include promises that may be construed to be binding on the City or City Commission. **When making public or written statements or positions, members must indicate that Committee actions are recommendations subject to final approval by the appropriate authority, i.e. the City Commission.**
- Work to establish a good relationship with the other members. The success or failure of Committee efforts is dependent upon the degree of cooperation evident among the individual members of the body. Each member should keep in mind these important points.
  - Show respect for one another's viewpoint.
  - Allow others adequate time to fully represent their views before making comments.
  - Be open and honest.
  - Make new members welcome and help them become acquainted with their duties.

### Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

The Mayor generally appoints a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson at set times of the year. Although the appointment is for one (1) year, the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson serve at the pleasure of the Mayor.

### Responsibilities of the Chairperson:

- Preside at all official meetings of the Committee.
- Consult with staff liaison in drafting the meeting agenda.
- Attend City Commission meetings as needed to represent the Committee.
- Solicit opinions and positions from reticent Committee members.
- Protect new thoughts from being rejected prior to fair evaluation.
- Discourage blame-oriented statements.

### Responsibilities of Individual Members

- Attend every meeting (if unable, contact staff liaison requesting an excused absence).
- Demonstrate respect, kindness, consideration, and courtesy to others.
- Prepare in advance of meetings and be familiar with issues on the agenda
- Be respectful of other people's time. Stay focused and act efficiently during meetings.
- Serve as a model of leadership and inspire public confidence in Sunny Isles Beach government.
- Act and speak with honesty and integrity.
- Do not speak for the Committee unless authorized by action of the Committee.
- Do not speak for the City unless authorized to do so by action of the City Commission.

### Additional Information

Please contact the *Office of the City Clerk at (305) 792-1703* for additional information or questions concerning the City's advisory committees.