



City of Damascus
**Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI)
Protocol**

Preface

The Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) is an advisory body to the City of Damascus Staff and Council regarding recommendations for implementing the city's Citizen Involvement Program. The Citizen Involvement Program and CCI Implementation Plan serve as the basis of the CCI work plan which outlines our overall mission to be a liaison to and from the citizens of Damascus. The protocol defines roles and responsibilities and serves as an operational guide for how the CCI will function during meetings.

The CCI recognizes the value of citizen input and welcomes it. Thereby, the CCI will provide members of the public with reasonable opportunity to express opinions on matters during meetings as long as respectful order is maintained. The processes set in place to accomplish this are outlined below.

1. Preparation of Meeting Agendas

City of Damascus staff prepares the agendas for CCI meetings in coordination with Council directives and in consultation with the Chair of the Committee for Citizen Involvement.

Agendas must be publicly noticed in advance of meetings and posted on the city webpage at least one week prior to the next meeting.

Individuals, groups, and organizations are welcome to send letters or other written communication to the CCI, through the current communication methods set in place at the City of Damascus. Methods are city address, website "citizen request" menu, city email, or fax.

2. Agenda Format

The agenda format will include a minimum of the following items:

- a. Call to Order
- b. Approval of Agenda
- c. Approval of Minutes
- d. Call for Public Comment
- e. Agenda Items
- f. Reports and Communications
- g. Next meeting Date/Adjournment

Public Comment at Committee Meetings

The Call for Public Comment is a permanent agenda item. During this time, members of the public will be given an opportunity to give testimony, provide factual information or express opinions on matters under consideration during the meeting or other items of general community concern. To assure residents of Damascus are heard and meetings are conducted efficiently and in an organized manner, the following guidelines have been established by the CCI members to manage Public Comment.

1. Citizens may speak to the CCI during the public comment section of the meetings by submitting a Public Comment Form to the Chair. The CCI asks that each speaker limit themselves to 5 minutes. If unable to make the statement within the designated time, citizens may choose to submit a request to be placed on a future meeting agenda.
2. Requests to be placed on a future CCI agenda must be made in writing to the Staff Facilitator at least ten days prior to the scheduled meeting. If relevant to the CCI's scope of work, such items may be added to an upcoming agenda and shall not exceed 15 minutes of total meeting time.
3. When public comment does not involve matters on the CCI agenda, no action shall be taken by the CCI other than possible referral of the comment to city staff or council for response.
4. Public speakers may submit written information to be distributed. The speaker is responsible for bringing an adequate number of copies for distribution (a minimum of 10 copies).
5. Each speaker shall identify him or herself; any relevant title; the group or organization, if any, for which he or she serves as spokesperson; the topic to be addressed and any personal or business interest in the subject matter on which comment will be made. The Chair will recognize each speaker consecutively, maintain order, and require adherence to a five minute maximum time limit allotted to each speaker. The Chair retains discretion to decline a request to comment if an individual, group, or organization has previously appeared before the committee regarding the same matter.
6. If an item presented requires information gathering, further discussion, or answers to questions, the CCI may schedule the matter for a future meeting or refer it to City Staff or City Council as appropriate. If action is desired, the topic must be placed on the agenda of a future meeting.
7. If a citizen wishes to register a personal complaint, he or she may request a meeting with the City of Damascus Staff and/or Council. The CCI Chair may terminate the speaker's privilege to speak if the speaker persists in any disrespectful conduct.
8. The CCI Chair may permit comment by members of the City of Damascus staff and council present at the session, with the understanding that, by law council must operate as a whole when discussing issues for which they may be asked to make decisions.

9. To ensure that the scheduled business of the CCI meeting is conducted in a timely manner and according to the published agenda, the time allotted for each agenda item shall not be extended. Persons whose comments were not heard due to time constraints are encouraged to attend the next meeting to address that agenda item and/or to communicate in writing.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles

Every meeting requires a Chair, Recorder, and Timekeeper. One or more roles can be taken on by the same person.

The role of the Chair will be a one-year term at which time the individual may be re-elected or a new Chair may be elected by a majority committee membership vote.

Chair Selection

Chair selection will be made by nominations and majority vote by CCI members. Self nominations are welcome. A Vice-Chair shall be determined by the same process and shall take on the responsibilities of the Chair in his or her absence.

Selection of a Recorder and Timekeeper

Any member may volunteer to fill these roles, which may rotate among CCI members for each meeting.

Council Liaison

A Council Liaison is assigned to serve as a non-voting member of the group. Like the Staff Facilitator, they are available as a resource and to provide guidance as requested by the CCI. The Council Liaison will aid in the flow of communication between Damascus City Council and the CCI.

Responsibilities of the Chair

- Maintain the agreed upon protocol.
- Lend sufficient support and authority to staff and recorder to ensure that they can carry out their delegated tasks efficiently.
- Promptly begin and end meetings according to the agenda.
- Ensure that speakers understand and restrict their comments to the topic of discussion.
- Be confident and assertive when necessary, while maintaining an atmosphere of calm discussion and respectful debate.
- Maintain progress at the meeting
 - Ensure that the most important items of business are dealt with effectively; re-order the agenda as needed.
 - Ensure that all views are aired and properly considered, and curtail discussions which are repetitive or irrelevant to the issue.
 - Summarize or ask others to summarize their main points.
 - Remind the Recorder of all action points and decisions made as needed.
- Make committee reports to Council monthly or as designated.

Responsibilities of the Recorder

- Accurately record the topic of discussion, actions and decisions.
- Accurately summarize each speaker's statements and all discussion, and request clarification as needed.
- Add any amendments to the records.
- Read out loud the main points of discussion and decisions at the end of each meeting.
- Record proposed future agenda items.
- To record meeting minutes so that they are: brief but informative, identifying beginning and ending times, those present, and their role at the meeting; understandable months later without recourse to memory and; written in clear English using the past tense throughout and summarizing points agreed upon and actions taken with responsibilities marked in bold.
- Complete draft minutes within 7 days of the meeting for which they were written.

Responsibilities of the Timekeeper

- Notify the group of beginning and ending times of meetings.
- Notify the group when the agreed upon discussion, action, or announcement portions of the meeting are about to expire.
- If necessary, indicate to a speaker that their allotted time is about to expire.
- Leave time at the end of each meeting to close gracefully.

Responsibilities of all CCI Members

- Act as neutral members of the CCI by keeping an open mind, considering all sides of an issue, while representing collective views of neighbors and other citizen groups.
- Support the Chair if discussion needs to be curtailed.
- Submit agenda items and documents or document requests to the Staff Facilitator at least 10 days before the next meeting.

Responsibilities of the Staff Facilitator

- Ensure that grammatically and factually correct agendas and supporting papers are distributed to CCI members and Council Liaison at least 7 days prior to the subsequent meeting.
- Schedule and post the draft agenda, supporting documents and previous meeting minutes on the city website, one week prior to the subsequent meeting.
- Make available complete notes of the meeting to anyone who requests them.
- Maintain electronic and paper records of meetings and have them available for review at meetings.(include a section of proposed future agenda items)
- In coordination with the chair, prepare meeting agendas
- Set conference room up for meetings to include agendas, comment cards and other required AV equipment or documents.
- Distribute minutes to the CCI in draft form within seven days after the meeting.
- Ensure minutes are in compliance with Public Meeting and Public Records Law and made accessible to those who request them under the Freedom of Access to Public Information Act.

- Post the approved Meeting Minutes to the city website and make them available to all interested parties by the following Monday after the meeting at which they were approved.

Communication Guidelines

Only those documents that have been approved by the CCI during a public meeting shall serve as official documents of the CCI.

Individual members of the CCI are without authority to act or speak for the CCI unless so charged by the committee as a whole. Public statements or responses to questions must be considered by the full CCI membership during a meeting.

E-mail records are public records and may be requested and viewed by any member of the public. If any email communication is necessary, members shall send it to the CCI as a whole including the staff and council liaison. Electronic mail is not a forum for debating an issue.

A draft summary of the meeting minutes will be posted on the city website and made accessible by request at City Hall to meeting participants and to the general public at least 72 hours before the next meeting.

Meeting Procedures

- The chair shall open and close the meeting based on the agenda format
- Decisions require a quorum of fifty percent of the CCI membership plus one.
- Decisions and/or actions shall be taken in accordance with the Consensus Process, that is, all committee members shall be in agreement with the proposed decision or action or be willing to allow it to move forward without further opposition. Any committee member, who cannot, in good faith, concur with the committee consensus, can have that concern annotated in the minutes.
- Participants shall speak in “around-the-table” sequence so that every participant will have an opportunity to speak before any member may speak a second time.
- Participants may call attention to a breach of meeting protocol and are expected to hold themselves and each other accountable to agreed upon protocol
- The Chair will acknowledge raised hands for permission to discuss after all members have had a chance to speak once.