

History of Community Boards

- 1951 – First Community Planning Councils established by the Manhattan Borough President
- 1963 – 62 Community Planning Boards established by the New York City Charter
- 1968 – Local Law 39 expands the powers of Community Planning Boards
- 1975 – 59 Community Boards established by the Charter Revision Commission
- 1989 – Charter Revision Commission changes the structure of City government and increases the role of Community Boards in environmental review

Community Districts and Boards

59 Community Districts and Boards

- 12 Community Districts in the Bronx; 18 in Brooklyn; 12 in Manhattan; 14 in Queens; and 3 in Staten Island
- Maximum of 250,000 people per Community District

Appointments

- The Borough President appoints Board members
- City Council members nominate at least half of the appointees (divided proportionally based on the share of the district's population represented by each Council member)

Board Membership

- Up to 50 members who reside in, have a business, professional or other significant interest in that community; appointments should consider all neighborhoods and segments of the community
- Members serve staggered two-year terms that begin on the first day of April; ½ of the membership is appointed every year
- Not more than 25% of the appointed members shall be City employees
- Non-Board members can serve on committees

Removal

- A member may be removed for the cause, including frequent absence from Board and committee meetings over a period of six months, by the Community Board or Borough President

Role

- Community Boards are autonomous City agencies
- Board members are City officers

Structure

- Each Board adopts its own bylaws and elects its own officers
- Chairperson usually selects Committee Chairs

Community Board Mandates

The City Charter mandates that each Community Board:

- Consider the needs of the Community District which it serves
- Cooperate with, consult, assist and advise elected governmental officials about any matter that “relates to the welfare of the Community District and its residents.”

Community Boards participate in:

- Service Delivery

- City Budget process
 - Land Use planning
- Other Responsibilities
- Long-Range planning
 - Community Advocacy

Community Board Committees

Purpose

- Any and all district issues should be able to be considered and address by Board committee

Responsibilities

- Research issues, develop goals, plan activities, conduct public hearings, and present recommendations to the full Board
- Committees also have input into the City budget process and Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP)

Membership

- Committees are composed of Board members, and non-Board (public) members. Public members can vote only in committees
- Board members must join and regularly attend committee meetings

Mandates

- Committees are open to the public, and are required by the New York State Open Meetings Law to keep full and accurate minutes

Community Board Meetings

Purpose of Full Board Meetings

- The entire Community Board membership meets to consider the needs of the district and its residents

City Charter Requirements

- Monthly Board meetings are required except during July and August
- Actions, decisions, etc. can only be authorized by a majority of the members present and entitled to vote during the presence of a quorum.
- The Charter also requires:
 - Adequate public notices of meetings and hearings;
 - Time to hear the public at meetings must be set aside; and
 - Meetings are to be available for broadcasting and cablecasting

Typical Meeting

A typical meeting would usually include:

- Public session
- Public hearing
- Reports, e.g., Chairperson, District Manager, elected officials, guests, etc.
- Committee reports, presentations, etc.
- Action items and voting, e.g., resolutions, etc.

Public Hearings

- Public hearings are required each month except during the summer

Rules Governing Meetings

- Meetings are governed by New York State's Open Meetings Law, the New York City Charter, Community Board Bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order
- The Corporation Counsel has clarified and interpreted certain regulations
- The New York State Open Meetings Law requires that minutes be taken at all open meetings of a public body and the votes of all members must be recorded