

Community Participation Organizations (CPO) 101

Who can join a CPO?

- Anyone who lives, owns property, or owns a business within the CPO boundary is eligible to be a CPO member. Active members attend meetings, participate in discussions, and vote according to voting eligibility requirements set forth in each CPO's bylaws.

What are the requirements for a CPO?

The CPO must, except as otherwise provided, adopt bylaws which reflect the following:

- Elect officers annually (for positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and CCI Representative).
- Record minutes of general membership meetings.
- Hold at least one general membership meeting per year.
- Maintain open records of meeting attendance.
- Notify the Board of newly elected officers.
- Provide public agendas of each meeting.
- Do not charge dues.
- Adopt criteria for democratic voting.
- Provide a forum for accommodation of neighborhood concerns.
- Affirm the boundaries of the CPO.

CPO Officers and Steering Committee

- Each CPO has a Steering Committee, sometimes called an Executive Committee, composed of officers described in the organization's bylaws. The specific roles of the officers may vary depending upon the bylaws, and each Steering Committee will develop their own strategies to get the group's work done.
- Other members who are willing to serve, but without specific duties, can be included as At-large Members.
- The Steering Committee needs to share the duties of recruiting and retaining membership, or designate an officer or team of members to take this on.
- CPO officers qualify for one annual \$50 reimbursement from the CPO Program to a conference, seminar, workshop or class of their choice that is in keeping with the mission and values of the CPO Program. They may also be able to use it to be reimbursed for membership dues in a community organization with common civic-minded goals and objectives. CPO officers should talk to Program staff to see if their expense qualifies.

- People serving in most types of local government staff positions may serve in any position with a CPO without objection, provided they disclose and manage any potential conflicts of interest, including recusing themselves from participating in some topics when necessary.

CPO officers are stewards of the meeting process and ensure that:

- Information is accurate and balanced, representing multiple points of view.
- Meetings are well-managed with an eye to timely, focused, on-topic discussion.
- Everyone who wishes to has an opportunity to speak on issues, sharing air-time.
- Meetings are respectful: comments and discussions address issues and are not personal attacks on community members, developers, staff, decision-makers or others.
- Agenda items reflect the interests and direction of CPO members.
- Meetings start and end on time, unless members agree to extend the meeting.
- All agenda items are covered, except when members agree to delete an agenda item.

Routine tasks that each CPO Steering Committee is responsible for are:

- Allowing CPO members and the public to raise issues before the Steering Committee.
- Meeting at a regular time and place which is known to the CPO members.
- Administrative tasks, such as keeping track of meeting materials and supplies, etc.
- Planning meeting agendas.
- Inviting speakers, composing and finalizing agendas, and submitting agendas for newsletter publication and posting.
- Reviewing land use application notices received and bringing issues to the membership for discussion.
- Reviewing proposed ordinances to be able to summarize and determine if issues are likely to be of interest to CPO members.
- Answering or referring questions that might come to the CPO via email or telephone.
- Attending neighborhood meetings regarding proposed development to hear what neighborhood concerns might be, ask questions, and raise concerns based upon knowledge of the CPO.
- Attending public events (resource fairs, etc.) to help promote the CPO and increase membership.
- Participating in workshops, forums and trainings to increase knowledge, share information, and build community connections.
- Developing a strategy to sustain the CPO by recruiting and mentoring other community members to take on leadership roles in the CPO.

CPO Chair

- The Chair acts as the official representative of the CPO, presides at the CPO meetings, and is responsible for following the meeting agenda. Alternate facilitators may be the Vice Chair or other Steering Committee members. This role can be split between two Co-Chairs if desired.
- Acts as Point of Contact - The Chair is the main point of contact for the CPO. The Chair will supply an email address and/or telephone number which they will check regularly. Most contacts will come from CPO Program staff, plus staff and officials of Washington County and other jurisdictions. The Program's preference is for the Chair to list a telephone number, but if the Chair cannot commit to this, and there is not a Steering Committee member who is willing to do it, the Program staff phone numbers will be listed. To help ensure that all Steering Committee members are aware of CPO business the Chair is encouraged to set up a shared CPO Chair e-mail account and give access to the Steering Committee. This is also helpful to ensure coverage when the Chair is ill, on vacation or has work or family obligations.
- Provides Meeting Agendas - The CPO may choose to designate the responsibility for formulating the CPO meeting agenda to the Chair after gathering input from other Steering Committee members, or alternatively the CPO may decide to rotate the responsibilities for agenda development and inviting the speakers.
- The Chair is responsible for providing the finalized agenda to the CPO Program office by the newsletter deadline unless that duty is specifically delegated to another Steering Committee member.
- Oversees Cancellations - It is the responsibility of the Chair to inform the CPO Program staff as soon as possible if a meeting is cancelled so steps can be taken to inform the public, post the meeting room and any other necessary actions. During the winter months the CPO Program policy is to cancel meetings due to inclement weather based upon whether Portland Community College is canceling evening classes. This can be checked at <http://www.pcc.edu/>.
- Presides Over Meetings - The Chair is considered the presiding officer, according to CPO bylaws, and he or she is in charge of the meeting. Meeting facilitation is an art, and it takes some practice to run a meeting that starts and ends on time, gets business accomplished and provides an environment that engages all of the participants. While these are listed as the responsibilities of the presiding officer, it helps to think of the Steering Committee as a team that bears all responsibility for stewardship of the meeting process, jumping in to help support the Chair as needed during the meeting.

Other responsibilities of the presiding officer(s):

- Follow the agenda. It is your tool to ensure a successful meeting. During the call to order you can welcome members, introduce officers and speakers, and explain briefly the

purpose of your organization. Self-introductions of all present help to make new members comfortable.

- Make certain that you and the speakers can be heard. Arrange for a microphone if necessary.
- Study your CPO bylaws and be prepared to answer questions about your organization. Copies of the bylaws should be available at meetings.
- Have some basic knowledge of parliamentary procedure to keep the meeting moving and ensure an open process for decision making. Be honest and flexible. Keep a chart handy on motions or ask a member to serve as parliamentarian.
- Be non-partisan. Common sense, good judgment, and tact will assist you to be courteous and fair. It is also essential to be neutral when presiding. As a leader, you need to be a good listener.
- Listen to the minority, and obey the voice of the majority of your members. If you know ahead of time that a topic is one that: you feel you really need to take a stand on; immediately impacts your property; or involves a developer or property owner with whom you have a professional/business relationship, it is helpful to ask the Vice-Chair or another Steering Committee member to manage that portion or all of the meeting. This will leave you free to ask questions and state opinions. It will also ensure that if the CPO takes a position, the presiding officer will avoid issues relating to conflict of interest or bias.
- State clearly all motions which have been properly proposed and restate any motion which is unclear. If the motion is long or complex, you may ask for it in writing.
- Make sure CPO members understand the effect of the motion if it is not obvious. Try to alternate between those speaking in favor of the motion and those opposed.
- Rule improper motions out of order but be courteous in explaining rules of procedure.
- Be sure to count and announce the vote, even if it is unanimous. Include the count when you give input to officials to help them consider your input along with other comments and testimony. If your process successfully included participation and discussion from various sides of an issue, make a note of this when you deliver your input to decision makers.
- The presiding officer should make members feel comfortable participating in the discussion. Presiding is an act which takes practice and patience. If a controversial topic is on the agenda, you may wish to establish some ground rules prior to introducing the topic. During the discussion look around the room and make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak.

CPO Vice Chair

- The Vice Chair performs the duties of the Chair during the Chair's absence and assists the Chair in all of their duties. This individual assumes other responsibilities as needed to conduct CPO business.

CPO Secretary

- The Secretary, or Recorder, is responsible for taking meeting minutes, preparing CPO correspondence, and collecting meeting rosters. The Secretary makes sure that the meeting rosters and minutes are provided to the CPO Program office in a timely fashion (7 days post-meeting for rosters and between 15 days to a month post-meeting for minutes). Information from the rosters is important for ensuring individuals get added to the CPO newsletter mailing list and for routine reports compiled by CPO Program staff. The Secretary is also responsible for making sure that copies of correspondence are provided to the CPO Program according to public meetings and records law.
- The Secretary may be the Steering Committee member who maintains an email list of active members or maintains a CPO Google group, blog or Web site, and/or social media accounts.

CCI Representatives

- Each CPO is entitled to send two voting representatives to the CCI (Committee for Community Involvement). CCI Representatives present information about emerging issues within their CPO and bring information back from the CCI to share with the CPO Steering Committee and general membership. The CPOs may use this information to guide their decision-making. Alternate Representatives are allowed. Representatives should let the alternates know if they are unavailable to attend a CCI meeting.
- CCI Representatives are encouraged to volunteer for CCI initiatives to evaluate and improve community participation in the County. CCI Representatives are expected to attend CPO and CCI meetings on a regular basis in order to have a good understanding of the concerns, interests and opinions of all active CPO members.

Committee for Community Involvement (CCI)

The Washington County CCI is an advisory group of CPO elected officers and/or representatives. CCI membership consists of two representatives and two alternates from each recognized CPO. Representatives are selected by any method approved by the individual CPO consistent with the CPO Bylaws. The term of each representative is determined by the CPO.

The CCI:

- Serves as the County's officially recognized community participation resource committee, which is representative of geographic areas and interests.
- Is dedicated and committed to the success of public participation in the government decision-making process.

- Evaluates public involvement processes.
- Encourages and promotes the expansion of the CPO program.
- Provides a direct line of communication between community members and County government.
- Meets regularly and acts as a forum for the exchange of ideas among CPO leadership, membership, and interested parties.
- Promotes communications among the CPOs, County, regional and state governments.
- Provides support for the CPOs including informational, educational, and promotional assistance.
- Provides for continuity of community participation and of information that enables community members to identify and comprehend issues.
- Appoints, or recommends for appointment, community representatives to various committees and commissions (see CCI bylaws for its policy).
- Evaluates the Washington County Community Participation Organization Program, or other vehicles for community involvement, as CCI is interested or invited.
- The CCI shall not interfere with the internal policies, actions, or activities of individual CPOs; pass judgment on the individual actions of CPOs; or disrupt the essential link of direct contact between government or private entities and the individual CPOs. The CCI will be accountable to the CPOs they represent and to the Board of Commissioners.