

# FLORIDA BUILDING COMMISSION

## CONSENSUS BUILDING DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND MEETING MANAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

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**FLORIDA BUILDING COMMISSION FACILITATOR**



# COMMISSION CONSENSUS PROCESS

The Florida Building Commission provides a forum for stakeholders representing different interests to participate in a consensus-building process where issues affecting the construction industry are discussed and evaluated on their technical merits and cost-benefits to the citizens of the State of Florida.

**COMMISSION'S CONSENSUS PROCESS.** The Commission's process is a modified form of Robert's Rules of Order, and parliamentary procedures are not used to achieve results without a full exchange of ideas and discussion. Motions are offered to achieve consensus within the Commission and not for one's specific preferred outcome.

# **COMMISSION CONSENSUS PROCESS**

**UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED MAY/JUNE 1999**

The Florida Building Commission (FBC) will seek consensus decisions on its recommendations and policy decisions.

General consensus is a participatory process whereby, on matters of substance, the members strive for agreements which all of the members can accept, support, live with or agree not to oppose.

In instances where, after vigorously exploring possible ways to enhance the members' support for the final decision on substantive decisions, and the Commission finds that 100% acceptance or support is not achievable, final decisions will require at least 75% favorable vote of all members present and voting.

This super majority decision rule underscores the importance of actively developing consensus throughout the process on substantive issues with the participation of all members and which all can live with and support.

# COMMISSION CONSENSUS PROCESS

**CONSENSUS DEFINITIONS.** Consensus is a **Process, an Attitude and an Outcome.** Consensus processes have the potential of producing better quality, more informed and better-supported outcomes.

As a **PROCESS**, consensus is a problem solving approach in which all members:

- Jointly share, clarify and distinguish their concerns;
- Educate each other on substantive issues;
- Jointly develop alternatives to address concerns; and then,
- Seek to adopt recommendations everyone can embrace or at least live with.

In a **Consensus Process**, members should be able to honestly say:

- I believe that other members understand my point of view;
- I believe I understand other members' points of view; and,
- Whether or not I prefer this decision, I support it because it was arrived at openly and fairly and because it is the best solution we can achieve at this time.

# COMMISSION CONSENSUS PROCESS

- At each Commission meeting, the public is welcome to speak during the public comment opportunity provided for each substantive issue under consideration, as well as general public comment periods provided at the end of each meeting.
- Most substantive issues before the Commission go through a technical advisory committee review or workgroup process where consensus recommendations are developed by appointed representative stakeholder groups, providing additional opportunities for public input.
- The Florida Building Commission provides a forum for stakeholders representing key interests to participate in a consensus-building process where issues affecting the construction industry are discussed and evaluated on their technical merits and cost-benefits to the citizens of the State of Florida.

# PARTICIPANT ROLES AND GUIDELINES

- **Commission Chair:** Provide leadership; Demonstrate commitment to consensus process; Participate in discussions while ensuring fairness and full exchange of ideas; and, Enhance the opportunity for consensus building encouraging constructive discussions.
- **Committee Chairs:** Demonstrate commitment to consensus process; Participate in discussions while ensuring fairness and full exchange of ideas; and, Enhance the opportunity for consensus building encouraging constructive discussions.
- **Commission and Committee Members:** Keep to the agenda and meeting procedural guidelines; Listen to understand, and seek a shared understanding even if you don't agree; Be focused and concise; Raise your hand to speak, and look to chair or facilitator to be recognized; Focus on issues; Offer options to address others' concerns; and, Participate fully in discussions. State name each time speaking and when making and seconding motions.
- **Members of the Public:** Respect meeting process and Guidelines; and, Offer input only during comment opportunities as provided.

# TAC CHAIR MEETING MANAGEMENT

- **Overview:** The Commission develops its decisions and recommendations using consensus-building techniques with the assistance of the Facilitator (i.e., brainstorming, acceptability ranking, prioritization, etc.).
- **Discussion Process Overview:** Overview of issue and any committee recommendations provided to Commission; Clarifying questions from members; Public comment taken; Commission discusses range of options as appropriate for the issue; Commission member through Chair or facilitator may seek clarification from a member of the public; A second opportunity for public comment may be provided if a new option is under consideration that the public has not had an opportunity to speak on; motion is made for a specific action, followed by a second, any discussion, and a vote.

# COMMITTEE MEETING MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- The role of the TAC chair will vary depending on the type of meetings.
- During the Florida Building Code development process the Commission's facilitator facilitates all aspects of the TAC meetings, including calling for motions, to ensure procedural consistency across TACs, stakeholder continuity of experience, and the process flows as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- Generally, during regular TAC meetings the facilitator will conduct roll call, the chair will review and seek approval for the agenda and meeting minutes, the facilitator will introduce and sequence substantive discussion items and public comment, and the chair will call for motions as required, and adjourn the meeting. This allows the chair to participate fully in the discussions while ensuring all members' perspectives are considered.
- Public comment is provided on each substantive discussion item per the Commission's process and guidelines.



# MEETING MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- **Opening:** Facilitator announces the opening of the meeting by name of the committee and the meeting date.
- Facilitator reviews Virtual Meeting Participation Guidelines.
- Facilitator conducts roll call to ensure there is a quorum.
- Members of DBPR staff are introduced.
- **Agenda Review and Approval:** Review posted agenda and seek approval.
- **Meeting Minutes:** Review posted minutes and seek approval.
- See *Commission Consensus Process and Committee Chair Meeting Management Guidelines* guidance document for details, and for examples of framing the respective motions.

# MEETING MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- **Discussion Agenda Items:** Facilitator introduces each agenda item.
- Staff or proponent provides overview, rationale for proposal, and any requested action.
- Clarifying questions from members (something you don't understand).  
Names stacked.
- Committee begins discussion only after all questions are answered.
- Facilitator asks if any members of the public wish to address the committee on the issue currently under committee consideration.
- Facilitator asks for those who wish to speak in favor of the proposal or topic under discussion to offer brief comments, others who wish to speak in favor will be asked to offer new points or simply state agreement with previous speakers.

# MEETING MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- The same opportunity and requirements will be offered for those who wish to speak in opposition to the proposal or topic under discussion.
- Chair and Facilitator ensures that all views are expressed and similar views are not repeated.
- Chair and Facilitator may instruct public to avoid repeating points, and to summarize key points and to submit lengthy prepared statements into the record (instead of reading them).
- Members of the public will be provided one opportunity to comment per discussion agenda item, and may be limited to three (3) minutes.
- Members may, through the chair, ask clarifying questions of members of the public offering comments.
- After public comment, facilitator calls for TAC discussion and stacks names of members wishing to speak.

# MEETING MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- If the complexity of the issue warrants it, members will be encouraged to explore a range of options (pros and cons) prior to making a formal motion.
- Any committee member may make a motion when a quorum is present. Requires a second.
- If a motion is seconded, the chair opens the floor for discussion. The facilitator will recognize members wishing to speak on the motion.
- If the motion involves an option that the public has already commented on, then no additional public comment is taken, if the proposed action (motion) is materially different from what was previously discussed, an additional opportunity is provided for public comment, and then the TAC votes.
- Once a motion is on the floor discussion is restricted to committee members except as allowed by the chair for purposes of clarification.

# MEETING MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- Members may offer friendly amendments and if accepted by maker and seconder of the motion, the friendly amendment becomes a part of the motion currently under discussion.
- The facilitator may recommend straw polls (non-binding votes) to get a read on an issue.
- Members may offer an amendment to the motion: second required, discussion, vote on the amendment.
- The motion on the table is now the motion as amended (if amendment was approved).
- After completing discussion, the chair/facilitator will call the discussion to a close and restate the motion, with any friendly amendments or approved amendments, and call for a vote.

# MEETING MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

- If the motion receives a 75% or greater favorable vote of the members present and voting it will be deemed approved. TAC actions on Code amendments require a 67% (2/3) favorable vote.
- For declaratory statements: If the motion receives a 51% or greater favorable vote of the members present and voting it will be deemed approved.
- At the conclusion of business an opportunity is provided for general public comment followed by committee member and staff comment.
- Subsequently, the chair should thank participants, and adjourn the meeting as follows: “We stand adjourned.”
- Please refer to the *Florida Building Commission Consensus Process and Meeting Management and Participation Guidelines* guidance document dated February 9, 2021 for more detail and examples.

# QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION



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# ABOUT THE FACILITATOR

**JEFF A. BLAIR** is faculty at Florida State University, and serves as Associate Director for the FCRC Consensus Center at Florida State University. He is principle and owner of *Facilitated Solutions, LLC* a consulting company specializing in stakeholder advisory groups, and strategic visioning and planning initiatives. His work for the Center and *Facilitated Solutions, LLC* includes facilitation, process design, strategic planning, and consensus-building on complex public policy initiatives. He has worked with federal, state, local government, and private sector representatives to design and implement collaborative approaches to planning, rule making, and dispute resolution with an emphasis on public participation in the design and implementation of policy in over 167 projects and over 2200 meetings. In addition, he teaches classes and conducts trainings in various dispute resolution topics. Projects include serving as lead facilitator and consensus-building consultant for agency stakeholder advisory councils and commissions such as for the North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnerships SAC (SRWMD, SJRWMD, FDACS, FDEP), the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), and the Florida Building Commission including facilitating over 68 special issue stakeholder workgroup projects and a total of over 1,200 individual meetings for the Building Commission since 1999. He has done work for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) including the National Saltwater Recreational Fishing Summit, Deepwater BP Oil Spill Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement scoping workshops, NOAA Fisheries Chesapeake Modeling Symposium and the Gulf of Mexico Grouper Forum. Work for United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) includes the National Bedbug Summit and the International Public Health Pesticides Workshop in London, England.

Work for the private sector includes designing and facilitating the Gulf Angler Focus Group Initiative, Recreational Boating Stakeholders Growth Summit, and working with National Pest Management Association (NPMA), National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), Association for Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials (ASPCRO), Association of American Plant Food Control Officials (AAPFCO), Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC), and National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). Mr. Blair has provided facilitation, planning, and process design for numerous agencies, entities, non-profit organizations and associations since 1977. He is a Florida Certified General Contractor and operated a successful design-build firm in Tallahassee Florida from 1980 – 1998 winning the parade of homes three times. He is a graduate of the University of Florida (Social and Political Philosophy and Anthropology) and the Florida State University (Social Policy and Dispute Resolution).