

WORKING GROUP PURPOSE:

A working group is defined in City Code § 2-1-2 (F) as “a body of board members established by a vote of the board, consisting of less than a quorum of the board, to which the board delegates a defined matter, or matters, for consideration and recommendation to the board. A working group is automatically dissolved after it reports its recommendations to the board. A board may appoint a non-member or non-members to serve on a working group.”

By design, a working group is temporary since they are automatically dissolved after they report their recommendations. Working groups provide the flexibility for members to do any necessary research, collect community input, gather information, and draft reports/recommendations without taking up time during an open meeting. A working group meets on their own time without the support of staff or restrictions of complying with TOMA. As a result, they are not able to take any formal action and are required to report to the full Board/Commission any of their findings or recommendations. The moment this occurs, they are automatically dissolved. Should the Commission determine there is additional need for that same working group beyond their recommendation report, a new one must be formed. There should be no working group operating year round. If a Board/Commission determines they have a year-round need for a certain goal, it would be best to investigate establishing a Committee (please be aware this option would need to follow the bylaw amendment process).

FORMING A WORKING GROUP:

In order to form a working group, an action item must be included on the agenda and it has to be voted on. A motion to create a working group should include a clear understanding of what the working group is expected to do and ideally a date to return and report. A very common working group is a budget working group. A budget working group exists to help draft recommendations that the entire Board/Commission will approve before the budget deadline. As soon as they make those budget recommendations to the full Board/Commission (which should occur typically in the spring) they are automatically dissolved. To continue working after the recommendations are made would require reformation. We understand that reforming the same working groups may at times seem unnecessary, but they are not standing bodies and we want to make sure they are being used appropriately and effectively.

Here is a comparison slide from the New Member Training that outlines some differences between Working Groups and Committees:

Committees and Working Groups	
Committees	Working Groups
Permanent bodies added to bylaw	Temporary bodies
Meet quarterly	No meeting requirements
Present annual report to full board	Make no final decisions and reports back to board
Comply with TOMA	Does not comply with TOMA
Only board members may be appointed <ul style="list-style-type: none">At least 3, but not a board quorum	Less than board quorum appointed <ul style="list-style-type: none">May invite stakeholders/nonmembers
Dissolves after approval by Audit & Finance	Automatically dissolves after recommendation reported to full board
Ideal for long term matters	Ideal for specific, short term assignments
Requires approval by Audit & Finance <ul style="list-style-type: none">Name and duties listed in bylaws	No staff present or assigned

WORKING GROUP TIMELINE:

We are often asked how long a working group can exist, but that is not something we can really place a specific time frame on and it depends on the specific objective. Again, a working group was never intended to be ongoing as they were established to be finite. It is essential to keep this in mind when thinking about a working group – they are ideal for specific projects, reports, and assignments as business needs arise within the Board or Commission.