

STANDING COMMISSION GUIDELINES

- I. **PURPOSE:** Each standing commission implements the parish council's priorities and goals in its own areas of responsibility, working together to accomplish the parish's stated mission. All committee work leads to building a faith community, proclaiming the Word of God, calling people to prayer and motivating people to serve others.
- II. **SCOPE:** All commissions are accountable to the parish council. Commissions make decisions in their areas of responsibility following the principle of subsidiary, which means making decisions at the most appropriate level in the parish commission structure.
- III. **FUNCTIONS:** The basic functions of each parish council standing commission are to:
 1. Identify needs of the parish within its areas of responsibility and in keeping with the parish mission.
 2. Establish priorities among needs and communicate these needs to the parish council, discerning with them which needs can realistically be addressed and where inter-commission or inter-parish collaboration might be effective.
 3. Formulate long-range and short-term goals and objectives.
 4. Research and investigate options to implement goals.
 5. Submit the proposed programs to the parish council for support.
 6. Communicate with the pastor and pastoral staff about the implementation.
 7. Maintain communication with the parish concerning programs, encouraging active support and involvement.
 8. Maintain communication with the respective archdiocesan offices and agencies for guidelines and resources.
 9. Provide on-going formation of committee members in its areas of responsibility through workshops, study, spiritual formation, etc.
 10. Determine budget priorities in the areas of the commission's responsibility and make recommendations to the parish council through the Finance Committee.
 11. Periodically evaluate existing programs and activities.

In any case where any commission member interprets an action of a commission to be outside the limits of its responsibilities, that member shall present such interpretation to the parish council liaison or a parish council officer no later than the next meeting of the parish council and ask for reconsideration by the parish council. Pending reconsideration, the effect of the commission action shall be suspended.

IV. **MEMBERSHIP**

1. All commission members must be baptized, practicing Catholics and registered members of the parish. All members participate equally in decision-making.
2. Commission members need to be recruited actively and continuously by the committee itself and its subcommittees.
3. The term for commission members shall be one year. Annual membership lists shall be submitted to the parish council secretary.
4. Any commission member may resign by filing a written resignation with the commission chairperson.

5. At any regular meeting a member may be removed for good cause by consensus or by an affirmative vote of three-fourths of the commission. Any member whose removal has been proposed shall be given an opportunity to be heard at the meeting. Good cause includes missing two consecutive meetings with a good reason, physical or mental incapacity, or failure to perform duties as a commission member.
6. A vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the commission chairperson. The parish council secretary shall be notified of the change.
7. Each new member is to be adequately prepared for membership on the commission by being provided with the opportunities for spiritual growth, appropriate theological foundation and the skills and information required for membership on the commission.
8. OPTIONAL: A young person at least 14 years of age but not yet 18 may be recruited annually to serve as a representative of the parish youth to the commission.

V. OFFICERS

The officers of each commission shall be a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and a secretary. Officers are selected annually by and from the commission based on their competence, leadership and knowledge of the commission's responsibilities. Offices are filled in the following order: chairperson, vice-chairperson, and secretary. Ex officio members of the commission are ineligible to serve as commission officers.

The commission chairperson:

1. Is aware of the tasks and responsibilities of the commission and communicates these to the commission, parish council and parish community.
2. Organizes/coordinates the activities of the commission. Develops and maintains an annual commission calendar consistent with the parish council calendar.
3. Prepares the meeting agendas and submits it to commission members at least 3 days before the meeting.
4. Provides formation/education for commission members in its areas of responsibility, utilizing the parish staff and offerings on the district and archdiocesan levels.
5. Conducts meetings by assisting the commission members to work together effectively and arrive at appropriate decisions through consensus.
6. Facilitates the task of determining priorities and setting goals for programs and services to be developed within parish guidelines and archdiocesan structures and goals within the commission's areas of responsibility.
7. Monitors implementation of all commission decisions.
8. Establishes a budget based on commission objectives; and communicates budget information to the Finance Committee.
9. Forms ad hoc committees when necessary and appoints their chairpersons; makes appointments of subcommittee chairpersons; assigns individuals specific tasks; delegates responsibilities; and encourages cooperation both in and out of meetings.
10. Maintains commission membership roster and notifies the parish council secretary of any changes.
11. Is an *ex officio* member of all subcommittees of the commission.
12. Oversees recruitment and orientation of new commission members.
13. Assists the next chairperson in understanding the commission's history, responsibilities and resources. Transfers all commission materials to the new chairperson.
14. Performs duties consistent with the office as the parish council or commission may direct.

The commission vice-chairperson:

1. Conducts meetings in the absence of the chairperson and is familiar with the parish structures, commission guidelines and activities, and consensus decision-making so as to provide continuity for the group.
2. Becomes chairperson in case of a vacancy.
3. Performs special tasks consistent with the office as assigned by the chairperson or the commission.

The commission secretary:

1. Oversees the accurate recording of the minutes of each meeting and sees to it that the minutes and the agenda are made available to the commission members, parish council, other commission and the parish.
 2. Takes attendance at meetings and records absences.
 3. Maintains the official list of all commission members and their terms, the list of all ad hoc and subcommittee chairpersons and members and keeps these lists current with regard to addresses and phone numbers.
 4. Handles correspondence for the group, including agendas, minutes, notification of regular and special meetings, notes of thanks, etc.

5. Performs duties consistent with the offices as the chairperson or commission may direct.

VI. MEETINGS

Regular commission meetings are held at such time, place and date as the parish council may designate. Each meeting consists of prayer/formation, decision-making and planning.

An agenda is prepared before the meeting by the chairperson, after appropriate consultation with other commission members, based on an understanding of the on-going needs and concerns of the parish within the scope of the commission's responsibilities. A written agenda is presented to commission members at least 3 days before each meeting.

Special meetings may be called by the chairperson, parish council chairperson, pastor, or a quorum of the commission. A quorum consists of a majority of the members. Notice of such meetings are given to all commission members within a reasonable time prior to the meeting, indicating its time, place and purpose. No business other than that stated as the purpose is conducted at that meeting.

Advance notice of the time and place of commission meetings is published in the parish bulletin, and all members of the parish are entitled and welcome to attend as observers. The commission chairperson may open any meeting to discussion by parish members on such subjects and under such rules as the chairperson may announce.

VII. MANNER OF DECISION-MAKING

Commission's manner of decision-making is communal discernment, which includes gathering of information, prayerful reflection and dialogue, leading to consensus.

VIII. SUBCOMMITTEES

The commission chairperson shall form subcommittees as needed. Each subcommittee shall have a chairperson or representative who represents the subcommittee at standing commission meetings. The initial task of each subcommittee is to delineate its responsibilities for review by the standing commission and parish council. Upon approval, the subcommittee must develop its own goals. Guidelines and operating procedures should be established if they are significantly different from the standing commission guidelines.

VII. REVISIONS TO GUIDELINES

These Standing Commission Guidelines may be revised by the parish council by consensus or a two-thirds vote of the parish council.

Date of Approval: _____ 3/14/2002 _____

Date of Most Recent Revision: _____

Date of Next Full Review: _____