

Triangle and Monona Bay Neighborhood Steering Committee Designated Roles

The first Triangle and Monona Bay Neighborhood Steering Committee (TMB SC) meeting will be held February 7 and will include Chair and Vice Chair elections. SC members should come prepared to nominate themselves or others on the Committee for these roles. You may also sign up for another role listed below.

Chair: The role of this person will be to work with city staff to set agendas and run orderly meetings. The Chair will do things such as call the meeting to order, ensure Robert's Rules of Order, ensure proper voting procedures (motions, seconds, deliberation, votes, etc.), moderate public comment, adjourn the meeting, etc.

Please nominate yourself or another Committee member (s). Role of the Chair.

- 1.
- 2.

Vice-Chair: The role of this person will be to take on the duties of the Chair as shown above, when the Chair is absent. Please nominate yourself or another Committee member (s).

- 1.
- 2.

Wisconsin Open Meetings Law Q & A

The Triangle and Monona Bay Ad-Hoc Neighborhood Steering Committee (TMB SC) is required to comply with the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law. Below are some questions and answers to help people better understand how to comply with the law.

Question 1. What is it and why is important to our work? Wisconsin State Statutes (19.81-19.98) requires appointed public bodies to comply with the Open Meetings Law. The law is based upon the belief that an informed public is essential to the health of a representative government and thus the public is *entitled* to observe government in action.

Question 2. Why does TMB Steering Committee need to follow the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law? The Mayor appointed the TMB SC to prepare a neighborhood plan that once adopted by the Common Council, will become City policy. It is imperative that deliberations and actions are open and transparent to the public.

The state statutes require compliance with the Open Meetings Law. Violations of the Open Meetings Law can leave members of this body personally liable for any action taken in a meeting void.

Question 3. How will TMB Steering Committee comply with Wisconsin Open Meetings Law?

All meetings of the TMB SC must be preceded by notice and an agenda, be open to the public, and be held in an accessible place. A meeting is defined as: the convening of members of a governmental body for the purpose of exercising the responsibility, authority, power or duties delegated to or vested in the body.

Question 4. When should TMB Steering Committee provide notice of a meeting? As part of the TMB planning process, city staff will provide notice of regularly scheduled meetings of the full steering committee.

Question 5. What other type of situations should TMB Steering Committee provide notice for and/or avoid? TMB SC members should be cautious of: *Negative Quorum* and *Walking Quorum*. In both cases, members should avoid situations when sufficient number of members are present to block passage of an action or affect the course of action taken by



the TMB SC. Rule of Thumb: Three (3) members constitute a negative/walking quorum.

If you know that there is a possibility that three or more members will be present at a meeting, notify city staff so they can post a “Notice of Possible Quorum of the Triangle and Monona Bay Neighborhood Steering Committee.” The South Metropolitan Planning Council and Monona Bay Neighborhood Association meetings will automatically be noticed throughout the planning process.

If three or more members are present at an event, and the event was not properly noticed, one or more members should immediately leave so no more than three members are present.

Question 6. As a TMB Steering Committee member, can I correspond with other members or the general public via email?

Listserv? All emails pertaining to TMB SC business are subject to Wisconsin Open Meetings and Public Records Law. To avoid negative/walking quorum, no Steering Committee members should send emails to other members.

TMB SC members should not communicate about steering committee business via a listserv.

Question 7. As a TMB Steering Committee member, can I inform and discuss committee work with others? TMB SC members were appointed based upon representation of a geographic area or a specific constituent group. A TMB SC member can freely discuss committee’s work, solicit input, and discuss potential points to bring back to the full body from the constituency the person represents. City staff will provide you with an updated list that specifies a member’s constituency.

Question 8. What if a TMB Steering Committee member(s) wants to discuss committee’s work with a constituency that he/she does not

represent? The full body must delegate this task to one or more committee members. An agenda must be posted and minutes of the meeting must be recorded. For example, if TMB SC members want to solicit and discuss information at the Monona Bay Neighborhood Association meeting, the TMB SC would appoint one or two people to solicit public input. An agenda would be placed describing when, where, and the time of the meeting.

Question 9. A TMB Steering Committee member is talking with someone from the neighborhood, and the person asks about issues concerning TMB Steering Committee work, wants to provide feedback, and wants to discuss in more detail how to address the issues. What are the appropriate actions of the TMB member? The simple answer is to *listen*. TMB SC members *can* discuss their committee business with anyone outside their meetings except for a quorum, walking quorum or negative quorum of the TMB SC. As a TMB SC member, you may want to preface any remarks as being YOUR own and not the official statements of the body itself.

Question 10: What actions may I take on my own? Any member of the body on their own initiative may meet with as many other persons (non-committee members) under whatever circumstances they deem best. The Open Meetings Law does not apply to such initiatives.

Question 11. Can the TMB Steering Committee delegate the responsibility to solicit input from the public to others? No. The Mayor appointed TMB SC members to work on the plan. The work of the TMB SC is required to comply with the Open Meetings Law, Public Record Laws, and the Ethics Code. Public input should be provided for during the planning process.

Question 12. Can the TMB Steering Committee request individuals and organizations to help inform the public about opportunities to have input during the planning process? Yes. Distributing fliers, circulating Internet



announcements, placing ads in neighborhood newsletters, and announcing events at various Southside events are welcome.

Question 13. An organization wants to solicit input from their constituency that would be useful during the neighborhood plan. Can they do so? What role can TMB Steering Committee members play?

Planning area neighborhood associations, business organizations, and other organizations are encouraged to creatively solicit input from their constituency. In many ways, they will know best how to get individuals in their organization engaged about neighborhood issues. TMB SC members can encourage organizations to solicit input and present their findings by providing: 1) written correspondence to the TMB SC; 2) a brief statement during the public comment period at a TMB SC meeting; or 3) scheduling a formal presentation at a TMB SC meeting. Instruct the respective organization to contact city staff to discuss the best method to provide public input. Outside organizations should not indicate that they are soliciting input on behalf of the TMB planning process.

TMB SC members should refrain from any preparation, coordination, or participation in any outside organization's outreach efforts.

For More information on Wisconsin Open Meetings Law: Department of Justice, www.doj.state.wi.us

City of Madison Attorney's Office
www.cityofmadison.com/attorney/index.htm

