

Design Review Committee Membership Handbook

**An overview and guide for procedures for the
Town of Winchester's Design Review Committee**



The summaries, descriptions, and procedures provided here are for general reference for the DRC member. The Office of the Town Clerk is the municipal department to contact with specific questions pertaining to the conduct of meetings, public records law as well as conflicts of interest concerns.

1. Design Review Committee Mission

To provide design review services to Town boards, committees or departments, including the Zoning Board of Appeal, Planning Board, Heritage District Commission, Select Board, Department of Public Works, and Engineering Department.

As with all Town boards and committees; whether paid or unpaid, elected, or appointed; the Design Review Committee will conduct its business according to the rules and regulations of the Open Meeting Law, public records law, and the Commonwealth's State Ethics Commission. The Winchester Town Clerk is the department head to disseminate educational requirements in all three areas.

2. Committee Goals

The DRC will support responsible development and promote good design

3. Committee Responsibilities

3.1. The Design Review Committee (DRC or "Committee") is responsible to the Building Department, the Select Board (SB), the Planning Board (PB), the Board of Appeals (or Zoning Board of Appeals, ZBA), and the Department of Public Works (DPW).

3.1.1. For issues within the Central Business District (CBD), the PB has purview and shall ask the DRC for input through the CBD Review Subcommittee (CBDRS). The DRC provides members to the CBDRS.

3.1.2. For issues relating to subdivisions, the PB has purview and shall ask the DRC for input.

3.2. The Committee reviews and advises on site improvements, visual design, and façade changes within the town.

3.2.1 For larger projects, the DRC may ask the ZBA or PB to retain a design professional to provide peer review under M.G.L. ch. 44, sec. 53G.

3.3. The Committee makes recommendations on all sign permit applications transmitted to the Building Commissioner; or sign applications requiring a variance from the ZBA.

3.4. The Committee assists the Department of Public Works in the implementation of visual improvements when requested by the Select Board.

3.5. The Committee designates a member to sit on the Rangeley Park

3.6. The Committee also responds to donors who wish to fund landscaping projects for the beautification of town property, evaluates the proposals, and assists with their execution.

4. About the Committee

4.1. There are seven members. Members serve three-year terms. They are appointed as follows:

- 2 by the Select Board
- 2 by the Town Moderator
- 3 by the Planning Board

4.2. The recommended backgrounds for Planning Board appointees are:

- 1 shall have a plant material or horticultural background
- 1 shall have a visual design background as an architect or landscape architect
- 1 shall represent a local business

Ref: Town Meeting, May 24, 1982, Art. 22, November 4, 1991, Art. 5, and November 17, 2003

4.3. The remaining members appointed by the Moderator and BOS are citizens at large.

4.4. One member will be the Chairperson and one will be the Vice Chairperson. Roles are described in this document.

5. Meetings, Agendas and Minutes

5.1. Meetings will be announced and held in accordance with Open Meeting Law requirements.

5.1.1. The Town Clerk shall provide to each newly appointed member the written statutes governing the open meeting law. Each member must sign a receipt and submit to the Town Clerk at townclerk@winchester.us

5.2. Meetings are held monthly in the Town Hall or other public Town spaces.

5.3. Meeting announcements will be posted in the Town's meeting calendar (www.winchester.us under "Government Calendar") and wherever else Notices are posted.

5.3.1. Meeting dates will be reported to the Town Planner ("Planner") so that the Planner may attend the meetings from time to time.

5.4. Meeting Notice and Agenda requirements:

5.4.1. Meetings must be scheduled with at least two business days' notice.

5.4.1.1. To schedule a meeting, the DRC will complete a Meeting Notice form (link below) and submit it to the Town Clerk (Clerk) and the Town Administrative Assistant (AA) with the Agenda.

5.4.1.2. The Clerk and the AA will post the meeting.

5.4.1.3. To receive confirmation of the meeting posting DRC members must enroll in the "Notify Me" email sign up on the Town of Winchester's Official website at www.winchester.us,

5.4.2. Agendas must be submitted at least two business days before the meeting. In accordance with Open Meeting Law requirements, the Agenda must be submitted with the Meeting Notice form.

5.4.2.1. If there are substantial changes to the Agenda after initial submittal, the DRC will submit an updated Agenda prior to the meeting. Note: any changes to the agenda must be submitted not later than 48 hours prior to said meeting to be in compliance with open meeting law. Items may not be added to the agenda on the floor of the meeting.

5.4.2.2.

5.5. The DRC will attempt to notify Applicants prior to a meeting, that their proposals will be reviewed and that they are welcome to attend the meeting to discuss their proposal.

5.5.1. The applicant must provide an email address with their application in order to be notified. For Applicants providing an email address, the Agenda will be sent electronically to them, noting the meeting location and time.

5.5.2. An Applicant does not need to submit an application to the Town prior to meeting with the DRC. It is, however, intended that Applicants meeting with the DRC are in the process of finalizing their proposals and will eventually submit an application to the Town.

5.5.3. NOTE: Although Applicants are encouraged to meet with the DRC and avail themselves of the Committee's experience and recommendations, the DRC is not a design agency to provide or complete design documents for an applicant.

5.6. Minutes are recorded during the meeting, distributed to the Members for review and comment, and approved at the following meeting. Unless otherwise noted, Minutes will be distributed and submitted electronically.

5.7. After the meeting, the preliminary Minutes and the related Agenda will be submitted to the Building Commissioner, Planner, AA and Librarian. These should be distributed within five days of a meeting, unless other Town or Commonwealth provisions apply. Unless otherwise noted, Minutes will be distributed and submitted electronically.

5.7.1. The AA will post the Minutes and Agenda to the DRC webpage, and the Librarian will archive them.

NOTE: Meeting notices and agendas are recorded and posted by the Town Clerk and any public records request shall be to the Town Clerk concerning said postings and agendas. The posting and archiving of Minutes are handled by the Town Manager's Administrative Assistant and the Public Library.

5.8. If changes to the Minutes are made at the next meeting as part of Approval, the Approved minutes will then be re-submitted to the AA and Librarian as amended and approved (only if changes are made).

5.9. Meeting references: the noted documents are stored on the DRC webpage.

5.9.1. Reservation contact information is provided at the end of this document.

5.9.2. The Meeting Notice Form is used to request a meeting and request a room.

5.9.3. The Agenda form is used to create and/or update the planned content of the meeting. When submitting a meeting request, the completed Agenda form must be included with the Meeting Notice Form.

5.9.4. The Meeting Minutes template is used to record the meeting.

6. Committee Member Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. Chairperson: Selected from the membership for a one-year term beginning in January on a rotating basis, although the term may be renewed by mutual agreement with a majority of the members. The election of the Chair is by a majority vote of the DRC members. Typically, the new Chairperson is promoted from the Vice Chairperson position.

Responsibilities:

6.1.1. Schedule and chair the monthly meetings. Maintain order during the meeting.

6.1.2. Establish and distribute the Agenda for the monthly meeting.

6.1.3. Reserve Meeting resources for the meeting.

6.1.4. Act as the initial conduit to receive information from Town boards and committees for review. Review the materials for adequacy; respond to the issuing Town office or Board if additional information is needed. Determine how to review the information and distribute to Committee members.

6.1.5. Act as the initial conduit for communication with other Town boards, committees, and personnel, in particular the Town Planner, on DRC issues.

6.1.6. Notify Applicants of upcoming review meetings. Act as the conduit for communication with the Applicants.

6.2. Vice Chairperson (VC): selected from the membership for a one-year term beginning in January on a rotating basis, although the term may be renewed by mutual agreement with a majority of the members. The election of the VC is by a majority vote of the DRC members. The VC typically becomes the Chairperson the following year.

Responsibilities:

- 6.2.1. Acts as the meeting chairperson in the Chairperson's absence.
- 6.2.2. Records Minutes during the meetings. Distributes the preliminary Minutes to Committee members for review prior to the next meeting.
- 6.2.3. Distributes the Minutes to the AA and Librarian for posting as described above in "Meetings and Minutes".
- 6.2.4. If the VC is unable to attend a meeting, another member will record the minutes. The member may then forward the minutes to the Chair or VC for distribution or may distribute them on behalf of the VC.
- 6.3. Additional Committees: The DRC provides representatives to the following standing committees:
 - 6.3.1. Rangeley Park Heritage District – one representative
 - 6.3.1.1. RPHD webpage: <https://www.winchester.us/393/Heritage-District-Commission>
 - 6.3.1.2. Map of Facades: <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/1417>
 - 6.3.1.3. RPHD Handbook: <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/1774>
 - 6.3.2. Central Business District Review Subcommittee – a five-member subcommittee, composed of personnel from the DRC and the Historical Commission (HC). The CBD is regulated by the PB; questions about the CBD should be directed to the PB.
 - 6.3.2.1. For issues pertaining to new construction and/or renovations to non-historic structures, the DRC will send three representatives to the CBDRS. The DRC as the majority faction will issue the Minutes and Recommendations.
 - 6.3.2.2. For issues related to historic structures, the DRC will send two representatives and the HC will be the responsible majority.
 - 6.3.2.3. CBD Boundaries: <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/1066>
 - 6.3.2.4. Regulations, Exec Summary: <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/1078>
 - 6.3.2.5. CBD Zoning Bylaw (chapter 7.3): <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/1088>
 - 6.3.3. Permanent Street Tree Committee – one representative
 - 6.3.3.1. <https://www.winchester.us/325/Permanent-Street-Tree-Committee>
 - 6.3.4. MBTA Working Group – TBD.
 - 6.3.5. Additional temporary assignments can be made as needed.

7. Resources

- 7.1. References: The Committee's reviews and decisions are guided by the Town of Winchester's Code of Bylaws, the Zoning Bylaws, and Subdivision Rules and Regulations. The requirements specific to signage have been adapted and condensed from these bylaws into the Sign Book.
 - 7.1.1. DRC home page: <https://www.winchester.us/329/Design-Review-Committee>
 - 7.1.2. Sign Bylaw: <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/1933>
 - 7.1.3. Code of Bylaws (Clerk's page): <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/225>
 - 7.1.4. Zoning Bylaw (Clerk's page): <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/228>
 - 7.1.5. CBD Zoning Bylaw (chapter 7.3): <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/1088>
 - 7.1.6. Subdivision Rules and Regulations (Planning Department page) <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/2364>

- 7.1.7. GIS Mapping (plot plans, abutters): <http://host.cdmsmithgis.com/WinchesterMA/>
- 7.1.8. Town Document Center: <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter>
- 7.1.9. Open Meeting Law requirements:
- 7.1.9.1. <https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2017/09/25/New%20OML%20Regulations%20%28Clean%20version%29.pdf>
- 7.1.9.2. <http://www.mass.gov/ago/docs/regulations/940-cmr-29-00.pdf>
- 7.1.10. MA State Ethics Commission, <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/state-ethics-commission>
- 7.1.10.1. Standards of Conduct: <http://www.mass.gov/ethics/education-and-training-resources/educational-materials/advisories/advisory-05-01-standards-of-conduct.html>
- 7.1.10.2. Summary of the Conflicts of Interest Law:
<http://www.mass.gov/ethics/education-and-training-resources/required-education-and-training/municipal-employee-summary.html>
- 7.1.11. Parliamentary Procedures (adapted from Roberts Rules):
<https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/View/1218>
- 7.2. Personnel Resources
- 7.2.1. Town Clerk: 781-721-7130; townclerk@winchester.us. As of 1/1/2018, the Chief Clerk is MaryEllen Lannon, melannon@winchester.us.
- 7.2.1.1. Town Clerk's webpage (many useful links):
<https://www.winchester.us/199/Town-Clerk>
- 7.2.2. Planning Board: The day-to-day representative of the PB is the Town Planner, in the Planning Office. The Planner functions as the DRC's liaison and advocate to other (standing) boards and committees within the Town. As of 1/1/2018, the Planner is Brian Szekely, bszekely@winchester.us; 781-721-7162
- 7.2.2.1. PB page link: <https://www.winchester.us/233/Planning-Board>
- 7.2.2.2. Planning Department: <https://www.winchester.us/180/Planning-Department>
- 7.2.3. Building Department: as of 1/1/2018, the Administrative Assistant for the BD is Janine Viarella; jtustin@winchester.us, 781-721-7115
- 7.2.3.1. BD webpage: <https://www.winchester.us/146/Building-Department>
- 7.2.3.2. Sign Permit Application:
<https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/92>
- 7.2.3.3. Sign Bylaw: <https://www.winchester.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/1933>
- 7.2.4. Zoning Board / ZBA: as of 1/1/2018, the Administrative Assistant for the ZBA is Janine Viarella; jtustin@winchester.us, 781-721-7115
- 7.2.4.1. ZBA webpage: <https://www.winchester.us/253/Board-of-Appeals>
- 7.2.5. Town Administrative Assistant: Send Minutes and Agendas to the AA to be posted to the Town's and DRC pages. Address any Town or DRC webpage issues to the AA.
- 7.2.5.1. As of 1/1/2018, the AA is Jennifer Cafarella; jcafarella@winchester.us.

7.2.6. Librarian: the Librarian archives hard copies of Agendas, Minutes, and correspondence from the DRC in the Library.

7.2.6.1. As of 1/1/2018, the Librarian is (Ms) Ran Cronin, Head of Information Services; rcronin@minlib.net; 781-721-7171 x323.

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