



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilor Judith Kurtz, Chair
Ad-Hoc Committee on the Quasi-Judicial Board Approval Process

DATE: December 1, 2025

SUBJECT: Recommendations to support City Councilors in reviewing first-time applications to the City's Quasi-Judicial Committees

Recommendation

Accept this report and approve the attached suggestions for considering first-time nominees to Quasi-Judicial Boards within the City of Concord.

Background

The Ad-Hoc Committee on the Quasi-Judicial Board Appointment Review Process was established to evaluate how the City Council reviews, assesses, and appoints individuals to the City's quasi-judicial bodies. These boards, including the Board of Assessors, Board of Building Appeals, Board of Health, City Council, False Alarm Appeals Board, Licensing Board, Personnel Appeals Board, Planning Board, Taxicab Licensing Board (whose members are all ex-officio City Employees), Utility Appeals Board, Zoning Board, and other committees charged with rendering decisions under statutory or regulatory authority, play a crucial role in ensuring fair, transparent, and legally sound municipal decision-making.

As the volume and complexity of applications before these boards continue to grow, it is essential that the City Council has a clear, consistent process for evaluating nominees, particularly those applying for the first time. After review and discussion, the Ad-Hoc Committee respectfully submits the attached suggestions for considering first-time nominees to the Quasi-Judicial Boards.

Suggestions for Considering First-Time Nominees to Quasi-Judicial Boards

Purpose

City Council plays a vital role in ensuring Concord's quasi-judicial boards remain fair, credible, and community-centered. By approaching vetting with thoughtfulness, respect, and consistency, Councilors help ensure that qualified residents feel confident stepping forward to serve — and that the public has trust in the process.

These suggestions are intended to help City Councilors review and vet nominees applying for the first time for Concord's quasi-judicial committees. These are the Zoning Board of Adjustment, Planning Board, The Personnel Appeals Board, Utilities Appeal Board and Heritage Commission. Because these boards make decisions that directly affect residents' property rights and community development, appointments must be handled carefully, fairly, and respectfully. The goal is to ensure a consistent, transparent, and professional vetting process that inspires public confidence and encourages volunteer participation.

A. Transparency and Discretion

- Be open and fair in vetting, while respecting the policy that protects nominees' privacy during the process.
- Keep discussions professional and focused on qualifications.
- Avoid any behavior or appearance of favoritism or bias.
- Act in a discreet and respectful manner consistent with Council's expectations for professional conduct.

B. Research and Outreach

1. Application materials

Review all applications materials submitted to the City Clerk or staff. Quasi-judicial board applications must include a resume or application (as for all committees) AND the following:

- *A short letter of intent explaining interest and relevant experience, and*
- *One to three outside references attesting to integrity and judgment may be provided.*

2. Checking public information:

- Review public records, board minutes, news coverage, or professional profiles as appropriate.
- Public social-media accounts may be reviewed at the Councilor's discretion.
- Avoid creating or participating in open online discussions about nominees.

3. Community feedback:

- Consider input from residents familiar with a nominee's public service, but separate facts from opinions.
- Do not pursue personal or private information unrelated to the nominee's ability to serve.

C. If Concerns Arise About a Nominee

If a Councilor becomes aware of potential concerns about a nominee's suitability for a quasi-judicial board:

- Share the concern discreetly with the City Manager or Mayor. They can advise on next steps.
- Respect the nominee's privacy and avoid public discussion. The goal is to handle concerns carefully, fairly, and without discouraging future volunteers.

D. Nonpartisan and Ethical Conduct

In all of the above areas, Councilors should adhere to the following:

- Appointments should be based on qualifications, primarily one's capacity and willingness to engage in thoughtful public service.
- Follow all City ethics policies and State conflict-of-interest laws.
- Maintain professionalism and impartiality throughout the process.

We hope Councilors find these suggestions useful in developing your own process for vetting nominees.