

MMB Review Committee

Rules, Norms, and Practices

Version: 1. Date: June 24, 2026

A. Rules

In accordance with Somerville Code of Ordinances, Part 1 (Charter) Section 8-7(3), the following rules are established for the Multi-Member Body Review Committee (ref Somerville Code of Ordinances Part 2 Section 2-186).

1. Establishment and Amendment: These Rules may be established, amended, or repealed by a vote of a majority of all committee members — more than half of all seats, not merely a majority of those present.
2. Baseline Rules: Except as otherwise provided by applicable law, including any controlling state statutes and local ordinances, the committee adopts the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (“RONR”) as its governing rules. In any case where these Rules or RONR conflict with applicable law, the requirements of applicable law shall govern, and the conflicting provision shall be deemed modified only to the extent necessary to resolve the conflict, with all remaining provisions continuing in full force and effect.

The presiding member is granted broad discretion to apply RONR without strict interpretation or formality, unless challenged by any committee members. In the event of such a challenge, strict interpretation of RONR shall govern the disputed matter.

3. Standing Agenda: The following items shall be included in the meeting notice (posted in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law) for all regular meetings of the committee. Inclusion of an item does not obligate the committee to take it up, and the presiding member or the committee may defer, pass over, or table any such item during the meeting.
 - a. Public comment
 - b. Committee logistics and standards
 - c. Revisiting past recommendations in light of new information
4. The agenda for regular meetings shall be established by the chair or their delegate, in accordance with Rule A.3 (“Standing Agenda”). The agenda for special meetings called by a majority of the members of the body as provided by Somerville Charter section 8-7(2) shall be specified by those members who have called for the meeting.

B. Norms and Practices

Norms and practices are non-binding. They represent a consensual agreement among committee members and guidance for non-members who may be participating.

1. "Participant" refers to committee members as well as other individuals invited by the committee to participate in a committee meeting, such as city staff supporting the work of the committee. It is understood that certain city staff have a standing invitation, such as the city liaison to the committee and project assistants.
2. In order to ensure that all participants are heard and not interrupted, participants only speak when recognized by the presiding member. Only the presiding member will interrupt a speaker, and only in service to their responsibility to facilitate a productive meeting. In order to be recognized, participants use visual cues (including the digital platform's "raise hand" feature), resorting to small verbal interjections to get the presiding member's attention as a last resort.
3. Discussion typically proceeds among participants without the formality of addressing one another "through the chair". With an intention of neighborliness, participants typically refer to each other and members of the public by their preferred name (e.g. first name) rather than titles or honorifics, unless specifically requested.
4. Committee members review materials provided by (or via) city staff in advance of meetings, allowing meeting time to be spent on questions and deliberation, rather than presentation. The committee requests that city staff provide materials at least one day prior to the meeting whenever possible.
5. Digital materials are made available for reference by committee members through attachments to the City of Somerville's web page for the meeting.
6. Meeting minutes are authored by the committee's city staff liaison. The committee requests that draft meeting minutes be provided to committee members as soon as reasonably possible after a meeting.