

Board & Commission Handbook

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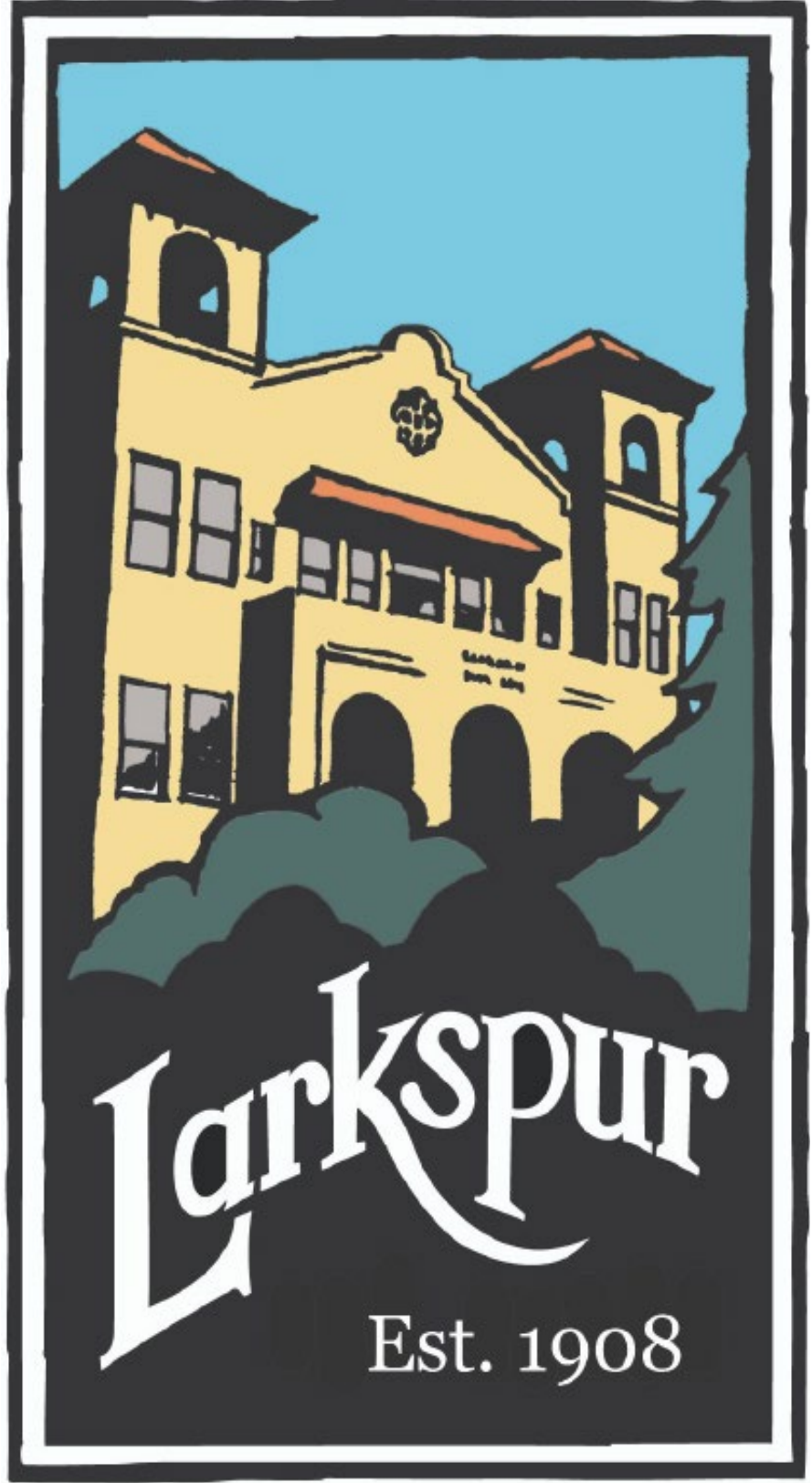


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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in a City board or commission.

This handbook is designed to guide you through the process of applying for and serving on a City board or commission. The City's boards and commissions include: (1) [Library Board](#); (2) [Planning Commission](#); (3) [Parks and Recreation Commission](#); (4) [Heritage Preservation Board](#); (5) [Marin County Commission on Aging](#); and (6) [Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District](#). To learn more about a specific board or commission, contact the staff liaison identified in this handbook or visit the [City's website](#) to review agendas and minutes from recent meetings.

Your participation is appreciated by the City Council, City staff and the community.

For more information, contact City Clerk Alison Foulis at cityclerk@cityoflarkspur.org or call (415) 927-5002.

ABOUT THE CITY

The City of Larkspur was incorporated on March 1, 1908, with a population of approximately 600 and a downtown that included two hotels, bakeries, a blacksmith, a cobbler, a larger livery stable, meat and grocery stores, real estate offices, a bustling lumberyard, and at least three saloons.



Downtown Larkspur – 1910

Baltimore Park Train Station – 1926

Blue Rock Hotel – 1949

To learn more about the history of Larkspur, pick up a copy of [Larkspur Past and Present: A History and Walking Guide](#) from the Larkspur Library or download and read the book on the City's website.

Today, over 100 years later, Larkspur covers an area of 4.5 square miles at the base of Mount Tamalpais, and its population has grown to approximately 12,000.

Larkspur's residential neighborhoods include the more traditional Baltimore Park and Murray Park neighborhoods, the waterfront developments at Larkspur Marina and Boardwalk No. 1, moderate to steeply sloped hillside properties on Palm Hill and Christmas Tree Hill, and the historic Madrone Canyon with residences nestled in groves of redwood trees. There are also several higher density apartment and condominium complexes in the Greenbrae neighborhood, at Drakes Landing Road, and along Larkspur Landing Circle.

Larkspur's commercial properties include the smaller, more historic shopping areas located along Magnolia Avenue in the Downtown Historic District and at the Shops at North Magnolia. There are also larger, more modern commercial areas which include the Bon Air Shopping Center on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and the Marin Country Mart on East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

As noted in the Larkspur General Plan, one of Larkspur's top priorities is to preserve, enhance and strengthen the City's community character. The City's character is influenced by a variety of factors including its diverse residential and commercial neighborhoods discussed above, as well as its natural setting, strong school systems, beautiful parks, and the historic downtown, including the City Library, which echoes the City's small-town charm.

Residents have the opportunity to assist the City Council in preserving and enhancing the City's community character by serving on a Board or Commission. There are currently four permanent City boards and commissions; residents also have the opportunity to serve on one County Commission and one regional board. This is a powerful way to make a difference.

CITY GOVERNMENT

City Council

Catherine Way, Mayor
Kevin Haroff, Vice-Mayor
Scot Candell, Council Member
Dan Hillmer, Council Member
Gabe Paulson, Council Member

The City of Larkspur was incorporated in 1908 and operates under the council-manager form of government. The Council, as the legislative body, represents the entire community and is empowered by the general laws of the State of California to formulate citywide policy.



City Manager's Office

City Manager: Dan Schwarz

The City Manager is the chief executive officer of the City and is responsible for the administration of the City in accordance with City Council policy. The City Manager's duties include administering the City Council's Strategic Plan, monitoring the progress of the City's major capital projects and development plans, being involved in emergency management and monitoring the City's financial condition.

City Attorney's Office

City Attorney: Sky Woodruff – Meyers, Nave, Riback, Silver & Wilson

The City Attorney is appointed by and reports directly to the City Council. The City Attorney provides legal advice to the City Council, Larkspur's boards and commissions, and the City staff. The City Attorney also represents the City in a variety of legal proceedings.

Finance Department

Administrative Services Director: Cathy Orme

The Finance Department is responsible for administering the financial affairs of the city including accounting for the collection and disbursement of all monies, investing of idle funds and managing the budget. Typical day-to-day functions include maintaining the City's general ledgers, preparing the periodic budget reports on revenue and expenditures, processing the payroll, processing bills for payment, collecting revenues and procuring supplies at the lowest cost.

Human Resources Department

The City of Larkspur contracts for Human Resources services from a shared position with the Central Marin Police Authority and the Town of Corte Madera.

City Clerk Department

City Clerk: Alison Foulis

The City Clerk's Office is committed to ethically serving the needs of the citizens of the community by preparing and distributing the City Council agenda and packet, coordinating board and commission recruitment, maintaining an up to date municipal code, facilitating municipal elections and coordinating the records management program.

Public Works Department

Public Works Director: Julian Skinner

The Public Works Department oversees the management, maintenance and construction of public facilities, infrastructure and the public rights-of-way. This includes oversight, management and supervision of private contractors who perform capital projects and maintenance on public streets, sidewalks, storm drains, street lights, traffic signals, signs and traffic markings, parks, trees, landscaping and public buildings.

Planning & Building Department

Director of Planning and Building: Neal Toft

The Planning Department processes applications for both discretionary and ministerial planning permits for proposed development projects. The Department also undertakes advanced planning projects such as revisions to the General Plan, preparation of specific plans and Zoning Ordinance amendments.

The Building Department is responsible for enforcing the building, housing, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical codes. The Department also performs inspection work to ensure that residential, commercial, and industrial construction is in compliance with applicable codes and ordinances.

Library Department

Library Director: Franklin Escobedo

The Larkspur Public Library has been in its current location since it first opened in 1913, and echoes the small-town charm of the City of Larkspur.

The library collection is comprised of 50,000 books, DVDs, audio books and magazines. As part of the Marin County MARINet Consortium, the library shares the collections of the other five Marin County city libraries, the nine Marin County Free Library branch libraries, the Dominican University of California and the College of Marin collections.

Recreation Department

Recreation Director: Dick Whitley

The Recreation Department organizes and administers passive, active, and communal recreation programs throughout the year. The Department also coordinates and supervises the use of city facilities and parks by groups and individuals.

Central Marin Fire Authority

Fire Chief: Scott Shurtz

In August 2017, the City of Larkspur and the Town of Corte Madera formed a Joint Powers Authority for shared fire services, with an effective date of operation being January 1, 2018. Together, the agency's 36 uniformed and support personnel serve the City of Larkspur and Town of Corte Madera, covering an area of 8 square miles.

Central Marin Police Authority

Police Chief: Michael Norton

The Central Marin Police Authority is a full-service police agency for the communities of Larkspur, Corte Madera, San Anselmo and portions of Greenbrae.

Two members from each City/Town Council sit on and represent the Central Marin Police Council. Overall management of the Police Authority is the function of the Management Committee comprised of the City and Town Managers of each jurisdiction. Operational function of the Authority is assigned to the Chief of Police.

APPLICATION AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS

Eligibility

Residents of Larkspur and the portions of Greenbrae under the City of Larkspur's jurisdiction are eligible to apply for service on a City board or commission.

Persons appointed to a board or commission must maintain their principal residence within Larkspur/Greenbrae for the duration of their term. If, at any time during the term, a member moves to a principal residence outside Larkspur/Greenbrae, the member shall become ineligible to continue as a member of that board or commission.

Application

When a vacancy occurs, the City Clerk advertises the vacancy on the City's website and at the Larkspur Library.

Applications may be obtained from the City Clerk's office at City Hall or on the City's website – www.cityoflarkspur.org. An official application form must be completed for each position. Applications are kept on file for two years for consideration upon any vacancy.

Appointment

Applications are carefully reviewed by the City Council.

Applicants are interviewed before the entire City Council at a special meeting. Appointments are made after formal voting occurs during a regular City Council meeting.

Term Length

The term length for most boards and commissions is four years, with terms expiring on June 30.

An individual appointed to fill a vacancy prior to the expiration of the term for which the predecessor was appointed serves for the unexpired term.

Reappointment

Incumbents are considered for reappointment at the conclusion of their terms. Reappointments will occur during a regular City Council meeting.

Resignation

In the event that a member is unable to continue serving on a City board or commission, a formal letter of resignation must be submitted to the assigned staff liaison and the City Clerk. The letter should be submitted as soon as possible in order to provide staff with adequate time to appoint a new member.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Attendance

The Larkspur Municipal Code provides that *if a member of a board or commission absents himself from one-third or more of the regularly scheduled meetings during a six-month period, without specific permission from the City Council, or ceases to be a qualified elector of the City, his office shall become vacant and shall be so declared by the City Council.* (Larkspur Municipal Code § 2.48.060)

Regular attendance at meetings is critical for the effective operation of City boards and commissions. In order for a board or commission to legally conduct business, a minimum number of members must be present. Contact the staff liaison immediately with any scheduling conflicts.

Ethics Training

Assembly Bill 1234 is a state law that requires local officials to receive training on public service ethics laws and principles every two years. The ethics training must be completed within a year of taking office, then every two years thereafter.

The Institute for Local Government and the Fair Political Practices Commission developed a free, online ethics course to help local officials meet their ethics training requirement.

<http://www.fppc.ca.gov/learn/public-officials-and-employees-rules-/ethics-training.html>

Upon completion of the ethics training, members are required to print their certificate, sign their certificate and return the original hard copy document to the City Clerk.

The City of Larkspur requires members of the following boards and commissions to complete ethics training:

- Planning Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Heritage Preservation Board
- Marin County Commission on Aging
- Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District

Compliance with the Brown Act

The Ralph M. Brown Act ([Government Code Sections 54950-54963](#)) provides that all meetings of the legislative body of a local agency shall be open and public.

This requires that every meeting of a legislative body be properly noticed with an agenda that contains sufficient information on what actions will be taken by that legislative body. Additionally, the public must have an opportunity to comment on any matter under the body's jurisdiction, as well as comment on specific items on the agenda.

In order for meetings to remain open and public, a majority of governing body members cannot discuss, deliberate or take action privately about an issue that may be on the body's agenda no matter how the conversation occurs, whether in person, by telephone, email or intermediary.

Important Considerations

- Discussing procedural issues (time, date and order of matters on an agenda) with other members is not prohibited.
- Avoid substantive communications with other members regarding items that are on the agenda or likely to be placed on a future agenda.
- Email – (1) Avoid emailing the entire board; (2) Do not use the “reply all” feature; (3) BCC recipients; (4) Remember that emails are discoverable by means of a Public Records Act request.
- It is not uncommon for members to attend the same social gatherings. Whenever a majority of members gather, care must be taken to avoid discussing any specific item or topic that may be within the jurisdiction of the board or commission.
- Communicate through the staff liaison assigned to the board or commission. Staff is permitted to speak to individual members about matters pending before the body to answer questions or provide information as long as staff does not communicate the comments of one member to the other members of the legislative body.

For additional information, please review the League of California Cities’ publication: [Open & Public V: A Guide to the Ralph M. Brown Act](#).

Conflict of Interest

It is inevitable that matters will occasionally come before a board or commission in which individual members have a conflict of interest.

California Political Reform Act of 1974 (PRA)

The PRA states that a financial conflict of interest may exist when a person influences a decision that will materially affect an economic interest connected to a member or a member’s immediate family.

A member who has a conflict of interest shall, upon identifying a conflict of interest and immediately prior to the consideration of the matter, do all of the following:

1. Publicly identify the financial interest that gives rise to the conflict of interest or potential conflict of interests.
2. Recuse himself or herself from discussing and voting on the matter.
3. Leave the room until after the discussion, vote, and any other disposition of the matter is concluded.

Notwithstanding this, a member may speak on the issue during the time that the general public speaks on the issue.

Statement of Economic Interest

The PRA requires every state and local agency to adopt a conflict of interest code that identifies employees within the agency who make governmental decision based on the positions they hold. The identified employees must report their financial interests on a form created by the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) called the *FPPC Form 700: Statement of Economic Interests*: <http://www.fppc.ca.gov/Form700.html>

The City of Larkspur’s Conflict of Interest Code requires members of the following boards and commissions to file the FPPC Form 700:

- Planning Commission
- Heritage Preservation Board

Filing dates are as follows:

- Annual Filings: Must be filed with the City Clerk by April 1 of each year.
- Assuming/Leaving Office Filings: Must be filed with the City Clerk within 30 days of assuming or leaving office.

If a public official fails to timely file his or her FPPC Form 700, the case will be referred to the FPPC's Enforcement Division, and a penalty of up to \$5,000 may be imposed.

MEETING REQUIREMENTS

Rosenberg's Rules of Order

Rosenberg's Rules of Order are used by decision making bodies as a set of procedures designed to guide the discussion and decision-making process. The Rules cover topics such as quorum requirements, the role of the chair, the basic format for agenda item discussion, the process for making motions, and courtesy and decorum.

Quorum

A quorum is defined as the minimum number of members of the body who must be present at a meeting for business to be legally transacted. The default rule is that a quorum is one more than half the body. For example, in a five-member body, a quorum is three. When the body has three members present, it can legally transact business. If the body has less than a quorum of members present, it cannot legally transact business.

Role of the Chair

Since the chair runs the conduct of the meeting, it is usual courtesy for the chair to play a less active role in the debate and discussion than other members of the body. This does not mean that the chair should not participate in the debate or discussion. To the contrary, as a member of the body, the chair has the full right to participate in the debate, discussion and decision-making of the body. What the chair should do, however, is strive to be the last to speak at the discussion and debate stage. The chair should not make or second a motion unless the chair is convinced that no other member of the body will do so at that point in time.

Basic Format for Agenda Item Discussion

1. Chair announces item
2. Chair requests staff report
3. Chair asks for technical questions from the members
4. Chair invites the public to comment
5. Chair asks for a motion
6. Chair asks for a second
7. Chair invites discussion amongst members
8. Chair takes a vote
9. Chair announces the result of the vote

Motions

Three following three basic motions require a simple majority to pass.

1. Basic Motion: Puts forward a decision for consideration
2. Motion to Amend: Suggests changes to the basic motion
3. Motion to Substitute: Replaces the basic motion entirely

Courtesy and Decorum

The Rules are meant to create an atmosphere where members of the body and members of the public can attend to business efficiently, fairly and with full participation.

Important Considerations

- A member should be recognized by the chair before proceeding to speak.
- Debate should be focused on the item and the policy in question.

To learn more, see [League of California Cities' publication on Rosenberg's Rules of Order.](#)

CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Library Board

Staff Liaison:	Franklin Escobedo, Library Director fescobedo@cityoflarkspur.org
Website:	http://www.cityoflarkspur.org/117/Larkspur-Library-Board
Purpose:	The Library Board provides recommendations on the activities of the Library and sets policy concerning its function. The Board also reviews and makes recommendations on the annual budget.
Total Members:	5 members
Term Length:	4-year terms
Meeting Date/Time/Location:	Second Monday of each month at 6:15 p.m. in the Larkspur Council Chambers – 400 Magnolia Ave, Larkspur
Ethics Training:	Not Required
FPPC Form 700 Statement of Economic Interest:	Not Required

Planning Commission

Staff Liaison:	Neal Toft, Planning and Building Director ntoft@cityoflarkspur.org
Website:	http://www.cityoflarkspur.org/120/Planning-Commission
Purpose:	The Larkspur Planning Commission is designated as the official planning agency of the City and is governed by the regulations in Title 7 of the Government Code, “Planning and Land Use”, and the Larkspur Municipal Code.
Total Members:	5 members
Term Length:	4-year terms
Meeting Date/Time/Location:	Second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Larkspur Council Chambers – 400 Magnolia Ave, Larkspur
Ethics Training:	Required
FPPC Form 700 Statement of Economic Interest:	Required

Parks and Recreation Commission

Staff Liaison:	Dick Whitley, Recreation Director dwhitley@cityoflarkspur.org
Website:	http://www.cityoflarkspur.org/119/Parks-Recreation-Commission
Purpose:	The Parks and Recreation Commission formulated plans for development of park and recreation areas, facilities, and activities. They also make recommendations to the City Council on activities within their jurisdiction and supervise and coordinate recreational activities. The Commission also processes requests for the removal of Heritage Trees.
Total Members:	5 members
Term Length:	4-year terms
Meeting Date/Time/Location:	Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Larkspur Council Chambers – 400 Magnolia Ave, Larkspur
Ethics Training:	Required
FPPC Form 700 Statement of Economic Interest:	Not Required

Heritage Preservation Board

Staff Liaison:	Kristin Teiche, Senior Planner kteiche@cityoflarkspur.org
Website:	http://www.cityoflarkspur.org/116/Heritage-Preservation-Board
Purpose:	The Heritage Preservation Board has compiled an inventory of historic resources. They are responsible for maintain this inventory and for reviewing the potential for additions to historic structures. Based on this inventory, the Board recommends to the Planning Commission properties which should be in a historical district (H zone). They also make recommendations to the City Council pertaining to historical preservation matters, as well as demolition permits. They serve as a resource to provide advice to the Planning Commission.
Total Members:	7 members
Term Length:	4-year terms
Meeting Date/Time/Location:	Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Larkspur Council Chambers – 400 Magnolia Ave, Larkspur.
Ethics Training:	Required
FPPC Form 700 Statement of Economic Interest:	Required

Marin County Commission on Aging

Staff Liaison:	Gary Lara, Marin Health & Human Services Administrative Assistant II glara@marincounty.org
Website:	https://www.marinhhs.org/boards/commission-aging
Purpose:	The Marin Commission on Aging is an advisory council to the County Board of Supervisors and the Area Agency on Aging about issues affecting the elderly of Marin County. The Commission serves as an advocate and provides leadership for the elderly. The Commission holds public meetings on the Area Plan and recommends programs to the Board of Supervisors for funding. The Commission also advises the Area Agency Aging Board on allocations of funds and on legislation affecting policies pertinent to the elderly.
Total Members:	21 Voting Members – 1 from the City of Larkspur
Term Length:	3-year terms
Meeting Date/Time/Location:	First Thursday of each month at 10:00 a.m. at various locations throughout Marin
Ethics Training:	Required
FPPC Form 700 Statement of Economic Interest:	Not Required

Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District

Staff Liaison:	Dawn Williams, MSMVCD Administrative Assistant dawnw@msmosquito.com
Website:	https://www.msmosquito.org/board-meetings
Purpose:	The Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District programs consist of 6 major service areas: mosquito surveillance and control, vector-borne disease surveillance, yellow jacket control, pest advisory for any and all organisms of concern, planning consultation for public sector planning agencies and private developments and educational presentations for

	service organizations, homeowner groups and an active school program for kindergarten through 12th grades.
Total Members:	20 Voting Members – 1 from the City of Larkspur
Term Length:	2- or 4-year terms
Meeting Date/Time/Location:	Second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the District Office Board Room - 595 Helman Lane, Cotati, CA 94931
Ethics Training:	Required
FPPC Form 700 Statement of Economic Interest:	Required