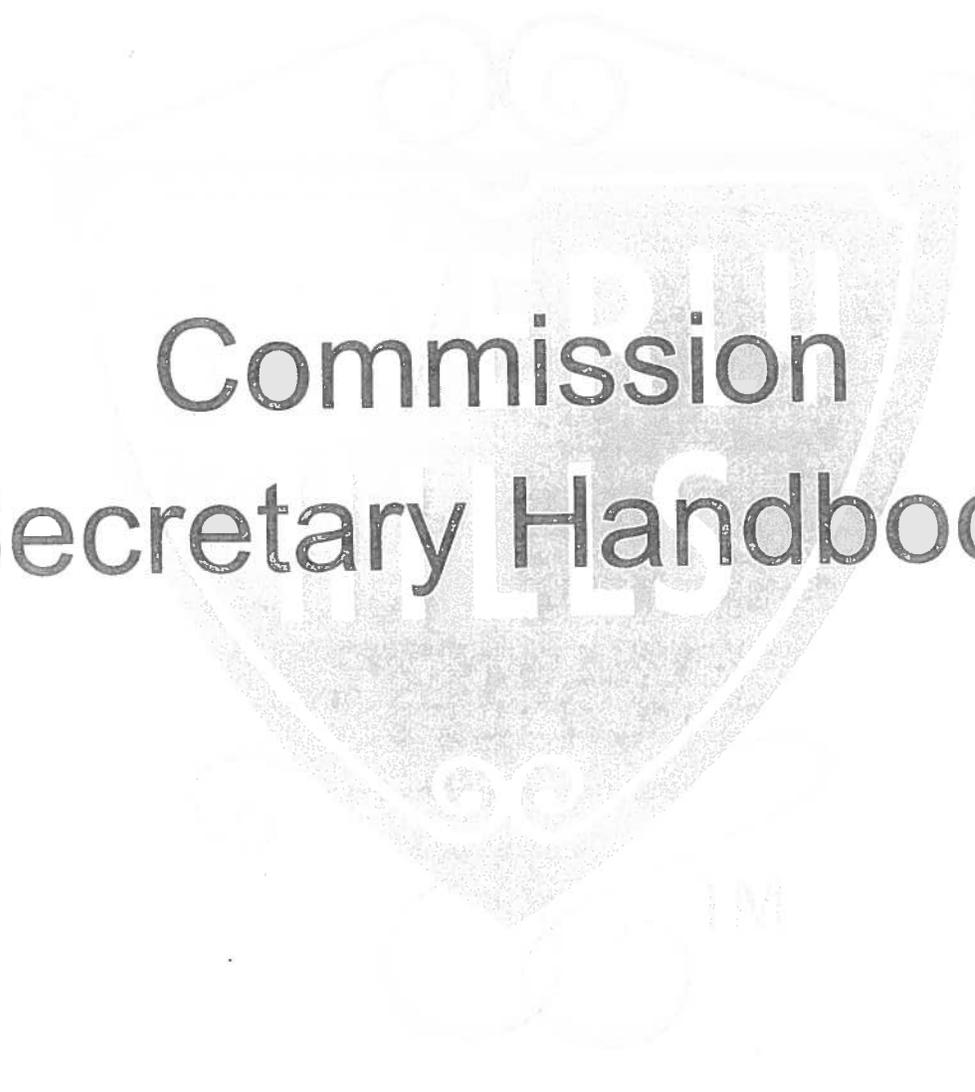




CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS
PUBLIC WORKS & TRANSPORTATION
MEMORANDUM

TO: PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
FROM: Chris Theisen
DATE: September 11, 2012
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE FORMAT OF MEETING MINUTES

The attached are handouts from a training session given by the City Clerk's office to secretaries recording commission meetings. This is in response to Commission's request for more information on the preparation of Commission minutes.



Commission Secretary Handbook

*Every job is a self-portrait of the person who does it. Autograph your work with excellence.
~Author Unknown*

Introduction

Congratulations on your new position as secretary to one of the City commissions! Your role as a secretary is vital to our democratic process and to the smooth operation of Beverly Hills municipal government. The City Clerk's office looks forward to working with you for the betterment of our City government!

This handbook was designed to help you understand the more important aspects of being a Commission Secretary. Accepted best practices are summarized for the sake of brevity, but you can always find more detailed information about any topic in the City Clerk's Office. The procedures outlined here should help to guide your actions as a Secretary and to clarify your role and the expectations of the City.

Minutes

Minutes of all meetings are kept as an official record of proceedings and actions taken. They are available to the public and to the City Council, which may use the commission's minutes as background in making decisions. Corrections and changes to the minutes can be made only in public meetings with the approval of the advisory body and not by the private request of any person.

Minutes across the organization should share the same general look and style (see Appendix #3). They should be reviewed thoroughly and be free of typographical, grammatical and technical errors. And they should be clearly laid out, visually appealing and easy to read.

The following guidelines will hopefully standardize minutes and help accomplish the following results:

- Consistency of content and format across the organization.
- A tool to train new Commission Secretaries.
- Establishing that minutes are a significant document to the organization.
- Reducing arguments about what to record in the minutes.
- Eliminating demands on the Commission Secretary to record inappropriate details.
- Creating an organizational incentive to develop standards for planning and running meetings.

Action Minutes

Action minutes contain objective and concise point-form summaries of discussions, without contributing comments to individuals. Summaries are followed by decisions made, or motions voted on (if any).

Action minutes are shorter and less personally focused but they go beyond simply recording decisions and motions and include "snapshots" of the thought process that led to the decisions. This is valuable when researching legislative history.

Style and Tone

- The style is narrative.
- The tone is impersonal and objective.
- No descriptive or judgmental phrases such as "a heated debate".
- Always use formal names, never use just first names or nicknames.
- Always identify individuals with their titles such as Councilmember Beverly or Chair Hill.
- Use few adjectives and a minimum of pronouns.
- Never use the following pronouns: I, You, We, Our.