



## Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District Policy & Procedure Manual

Title:	Board Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy	
Department:	Board	Effective Date: June 2, 2014
Policy No:	1005	Revisions:

### 1.1 Policy Statement

The Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD) Board of Directors, in recognition of its responsibility to the community it serves, and the staff for whom it must provide wise governance, affirms its commitment to the following tenets on ethical conduct. The tenets enlarge upon, or are in addition to many of the Board's legal obligations.

### 1.2 Applicability

This policy shall apply to all Directors.

### 1.3 Responsibilities

The Board of Directors of MPRPD is committed to providing excellence in legislative leadership that results in the provision of the highest quality services to its constituents and to comply with State laws including AB 1234.

In order to assist in the governance of the behavior between and among members of the Board of Directors and District staff, Directors will:

- 1.3.1 Work together in a spirit of harmony and cooperation, treating other Directors with respect and courtesy even though vigorous differences of opinion and philosophy may arise during debates on points of issue.
- 1.3.2 Base their decisions upon all available facts, vote their honest conviction in every case, unswayed by partisan bias, and abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the Board.
- 1.3.3 Understand and remember that individual Board Members have no legal authority to represent the District outside of Board meetings and are to conduct their relationships with the public and staff on that basis.
- 1.3.4 Resist every pressure and temptation to use their position as a Board Member to benefit either themselves or any individual or agency apart from the welfare of the District.
- 1.3.5 Place the needs of the District and their constituents as the priority. If a Director believes that he or she may have a conflict of interest, consult legal counsel to make a determination if one exists or not.
- 1.3.6 Treat members of the public and staff courteously and with dignity.

- 1.3.7 Devote the time, thought and study to their duties as a Board Member, which will enable them to render effective and creditable service.
- 1.3.8 Understand that the Board's function is to provide leadership to the District through its review and evaluation of programs, planning, the developing of policy, and maintaining the fiscal integrity of the District. Board Members recognize that it is not their function, either individually or collectively, to actively engage in the administration of the District and understand that to do so, or even to give the appearance of doing so, can erode the trust and mutual respect which are the cornerstones of successful Board/Staff relationships.
- 1.3.9 Respect the intent, as well as the letter of the Ralph N. Brown Act, discussing in Closed Session only those topics designated for discussion in Closed Session and taking official actions in public sessions.
- 1.3.10 Maintain the confidentiality of privileged and Closed Session information.
- 1.3.11 Serve as a positive spokesperson for the District in the community and act constructively, in communicating and promoting the needs of the community to the District.
- 1.3.12 Be responsible to all citizens of the District, and not, solely, to selected citizens/groups.
- 1.3.13 Employ a competent and effective General Manager and exercise oversight, supervision of the General Manager and take the necessary steps to ensure his or her accountability to the Board and the District.

#### **1.4 Board Action**

Directors should practice the following procedures:

- 1.4.1 In seeking clarification on informational items, Directors may directly approach professional staff members to obtain information needed to supplement, upgrade, or enhance their knowledge to improve legislative decision-making.
- 1.4.2 In handling complaints from residents and property owners of the District, said complaints should be referred directly to the General Manager.
- 1.4.3 In handling items related to safety, concerns for safety or hazards should be reported to the General Manager or to the District office. Emergency situations should be dealt with immediately by seeking appropriate assistance.
- 1.4.4 In presenting items for discussion at Board meetings, follow the standards outlined in the Board's Rules of Procedure.
- 1.4.5 In seeking clarification for policy-related concerns, especially those involving personnel, legal action, land acquisition and development, finances, and programming, said concerns should be referred directly to the General Manager or District Legal Counsel.
- 1.4.6 If approached by District personnel concerning specific District policy, Directors should direct inquiries to the appropriate staff supervisor or General Manager. The chain of command should be followed.

## 1.5 Teamwork and Collaboration

The work of the District is a team effort. All individuals should work together in the collaborative process, assisting each other in conducting the affairs of the District.

- 1.5.1 When responding to constituent requests and concerns, Directors should be courteous, responding to individuals in a positive manner and routing their questions through appropriate channels and to responsible management personnel.
- 1.5.2 Directors should develop a working relationship with the General Manager wherein current issues, concerns and District projects can be discussed comfortably and openly.
- 1.5.3 Directors should function as a part of the whole. Issues should be brought to the attention of the Board as a whole (and in compliance with the Ralph N. Brown Act), rather than to individual members selectively.
- 1.5.4 Directors are responsible for monitoring the District's progress in attaining its goals and objectives, while pursuing its mission.

## 1.6 Communication Between Board and District Staff

The Board of Directors recognizes that the District's operations are governed by the Board of Directors acting through a majority at lawfully held public meetings. Additionally, the District staff is employed to carry out the mission and direction of the District as set forth by the Board of Directors acting through a majority at lawfully held public meetings, in the manner specifically directed by the individual staff member's supervisor. It is therefore the policy of the District that individual Board Members shall not give any direction to a District staff member, nor shall a District staff member follow any direction given by an individual Board Member, except in the following circumstances:

- 1.6.1 An individual Board Member suggests direction to a staff member during a public Board meeting and there are no objections from the other Board Members present.
- 1.6.2 The President of the Board may direct the General Manager for the purpose of preparing for Board meetings and following up on actions taken by the Board at public meetings.
- 1.6.3 Individual Board Members may request information from staff by directing such requests to the General Manager only, or the General Manager's designee if unavailable. To the extent gathering the requested information substantially distracts District staff from otherwise performing their duties, authorization by a majority of the Board shall be required.
- 1.6.4 Requests by individual Board Members for information or a legal opinion from District Legal Counsel must be directed to the General Manager or the Board President. (Note: staff requests to District Legal Counsel must be directed to or authorized by the General Manager.)

For purposes of observation and information gathering, an individual Board Member may interact with staff on specified matters or projects when authorized to do so by the Board, but may not give specific direction to staff in such circumstances.