

Effective Public Service for Policymakers

Airport Community Advisory Team

Tahoe Truckee Airport

May 7, 2019

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ACAT's Job

- Advise the Board on reducing impacts on neighbors and enhancing the community benefit of the airport
- Listen and work collaboratively to find solutions
- Act by consensus – 3:3 appointment structure and even-numbered Team emphasize this
- Effectively, you are in permanent dialog between two perspectives: airport users and airport neighbors

Goals of Meeting Management

- Comply with the law
- Balance efficiency w/ public input
- Make meetings shorter
- Relieve “meeting anxiety”
- Deal w/ disruptive people
- Avoid parliamentary paralysis
- Present a public face of competence, civility and efficiency

Public Participation Requirements

- Brown Act: off-agenda, on-agenda, and special meeting comment
- Public Hearing Requirements
- Due Process
- First Amendment – no content-specific regulation other than to preserve purpose of the meeting

Be Prepared

- Ask questions at meetings the public needs to hear; get your own information needs met “off-line”
- Give staff a heads-up about your questions
- Read the agenda packet and write down your questions and comments where you can find them

Don't Be Too Efficient

- Don't violate the Brown Act by deciding matters outside of meetings
 - Daisy chain and serial meetings
 - Email
- Don't give the impression you aren't listening
- Be careful in using electronic devices during meetings

Manage Conflict

- Manage debates and prevent repeated debates on a single issue
- Chair should remain above the fray
- Cooperate to create a positive image for ACAT and the District
- Rotate the Chair
- Team-building, retreats, study sessions, and social contacts to foster cooperation and trust

Manage Conflict

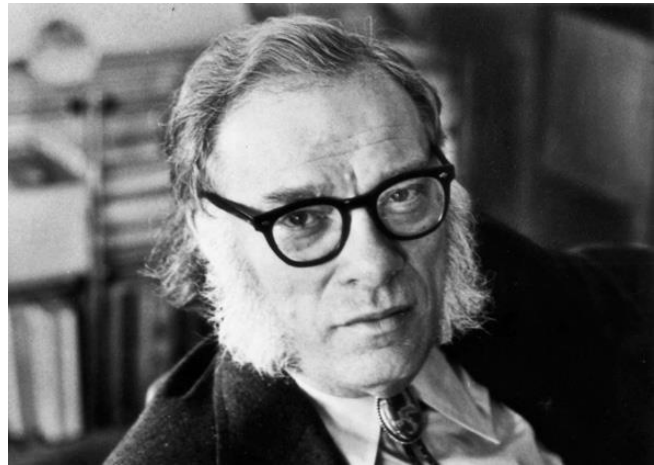
- Disagreement is inevitable; mistrust is not
- An ethos of teamwork is necessary to protect the organization's public credibility and ability to function effectively; it takes work
- Don't send people home angry if you can avoid it

Don't Attack Staff

- You look like a bully because staff cannot defend themselves
- Doing so makes the District look incompetent
 - (You hired these people, didn't you?)
- Questions about staff performance belong in Board closed session or the GM's office

Common Law Bias/Due Process

“Never let your sense of morals get in the way of doing what is right.”



–Isaac Asimov

Common Law Bias/Due Process

- Public officials cannot use their official position for private benefit.
- Due process in an administrative hearing demands an appearance of fairness and the absence of even a **probability** of outside influence on the adjudication.
- Doesn't preclude holding opinions; just participation in a quasi-judicial decision by someone with a closed mind.

The Appearance of Bias

How it may look to others ...



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Due Process

Constitutional guarantee that residents and property owners may not be deprived of:

- Life
- Liberty (good reputation, incarceration)
- Property (civil service job, real or personal property)
- **Without “due process of law.”**

Due Process

Administrative hearing requirement

- Quasi-judicial proceedings
- E.g., development issues, permits, etc.



Due Process

Requires:

- Notice of the intended action;
- Opportunity to prepare;
- Opportunity to be heard; and
- Fair and impartial hearing by an unbiased decision-maker.

Ethical Decision-Making

“Whenever two good people argue over principles, they are both right.”

Marie Ebner von Eschenbach



Goff

General Thoughts on Ethical Decision-Making

- Is the action legal?
- Does it meet your own sense of right and wrong?
- Is it good public policy? Is it safe?
- Is it consistent with the agency's or the community's values?
- Does it comply with the Golden Rule?

Ethical Decision-making (Cont.)

- Don't be afraid to invite ethics into the room
- There is often more than one "right" answer and it is okay to disagree about what is right or wrong

Advocates vs. Policymakers

- Advocates & Activists
 - Commitment to goals, ideals, beliefs
 - Speak for themselves
 - Can be goads to change
 - Can be irresponsible to all but their conscience
- Policymakers
 - Commitment to listening and avoiding prejudgment
 - Seek to represent the community as a whole
 - Must act collectively & collaboratively
 - Have responsibility to lead institutions on which many depend for livelihoods and more

Spending Public Money

- The Board has delegated ACAT spending authority
- But expenditures must
 - Be legal
 - Comply with internal controls to provide accountability and transparency
- Legal constraints
 - Public purpose of the District
 - No political advocacy
 - No self-dealing
 - Within budget
 - Complaint with other agency policies

Conclusion

“Management is doing things right;
leadership is doing the right things.”

Peter Drucker





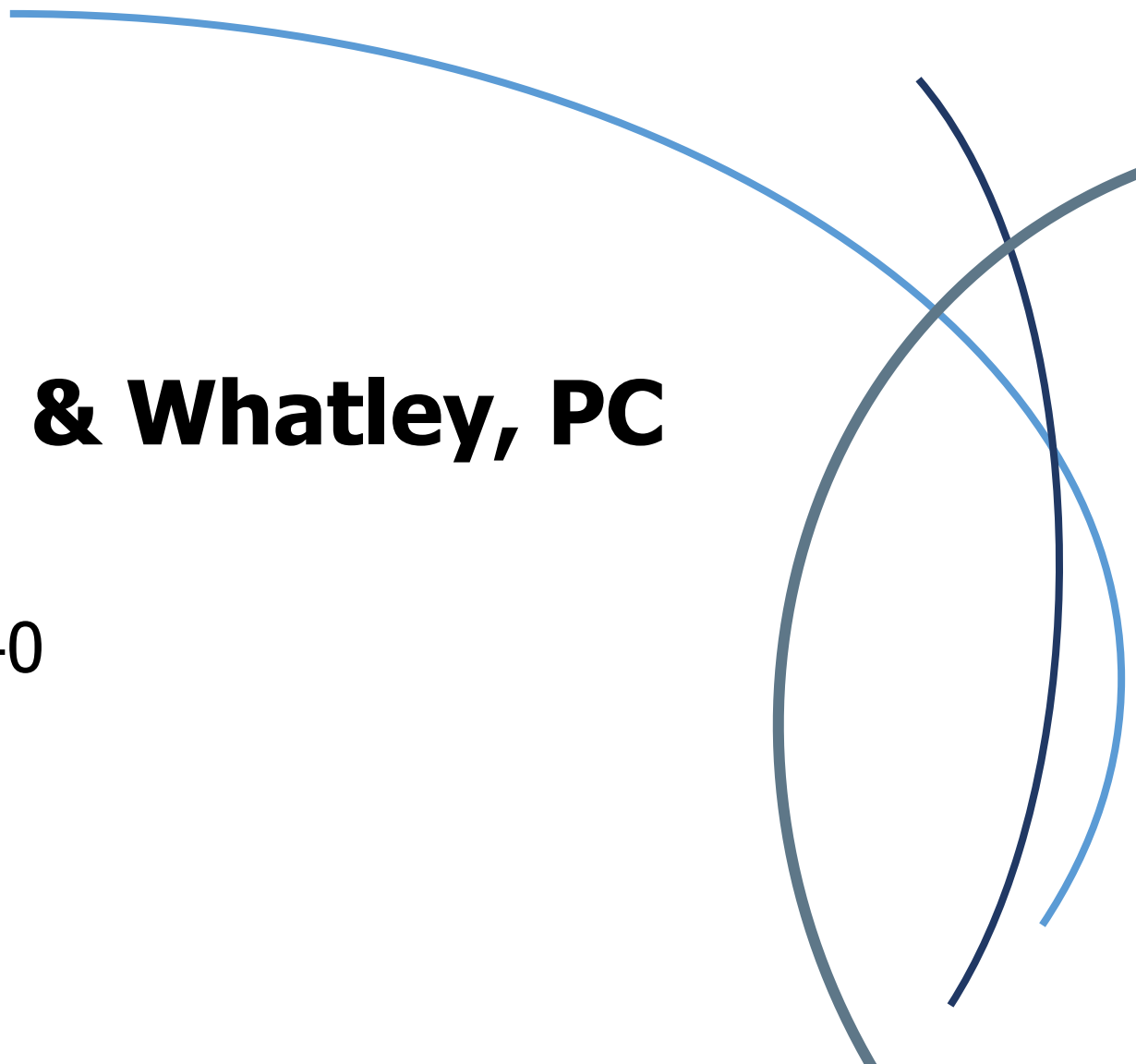
Questions?

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