

# High Performing Governance: Bridging the Gap between Political Acceptability and Administrative Sustainability

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# Outline

- A gap exists and is growing between what is politically acceptable and administratively sustainable
  - Bridging the gap requires political astuteness
- Understanding that politics involves choices among conflicting values—no value profile is best
- Politics and administration involve more than different behaviors; they are different ways of thinking
- Identify bridge building, translating and aligning roles for chief administrative officers and upper level staff (electeds value added)

Governing Body

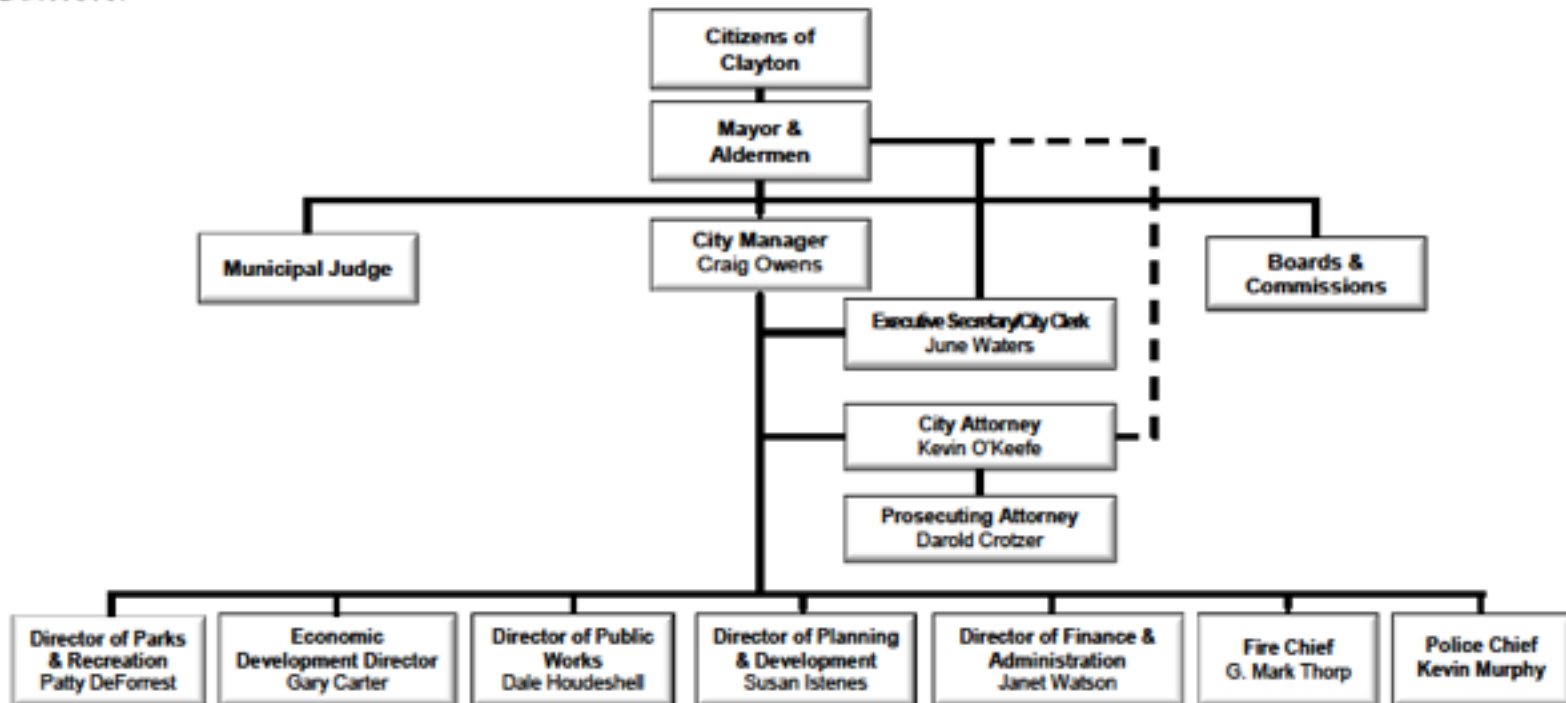
City  
Manager

Staff

Have you considered whether the length and width of the line might make a difference in the relationship between the two arenas?



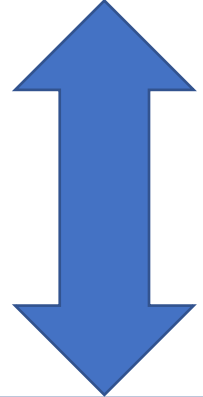
# City of Clayton Organization Chart



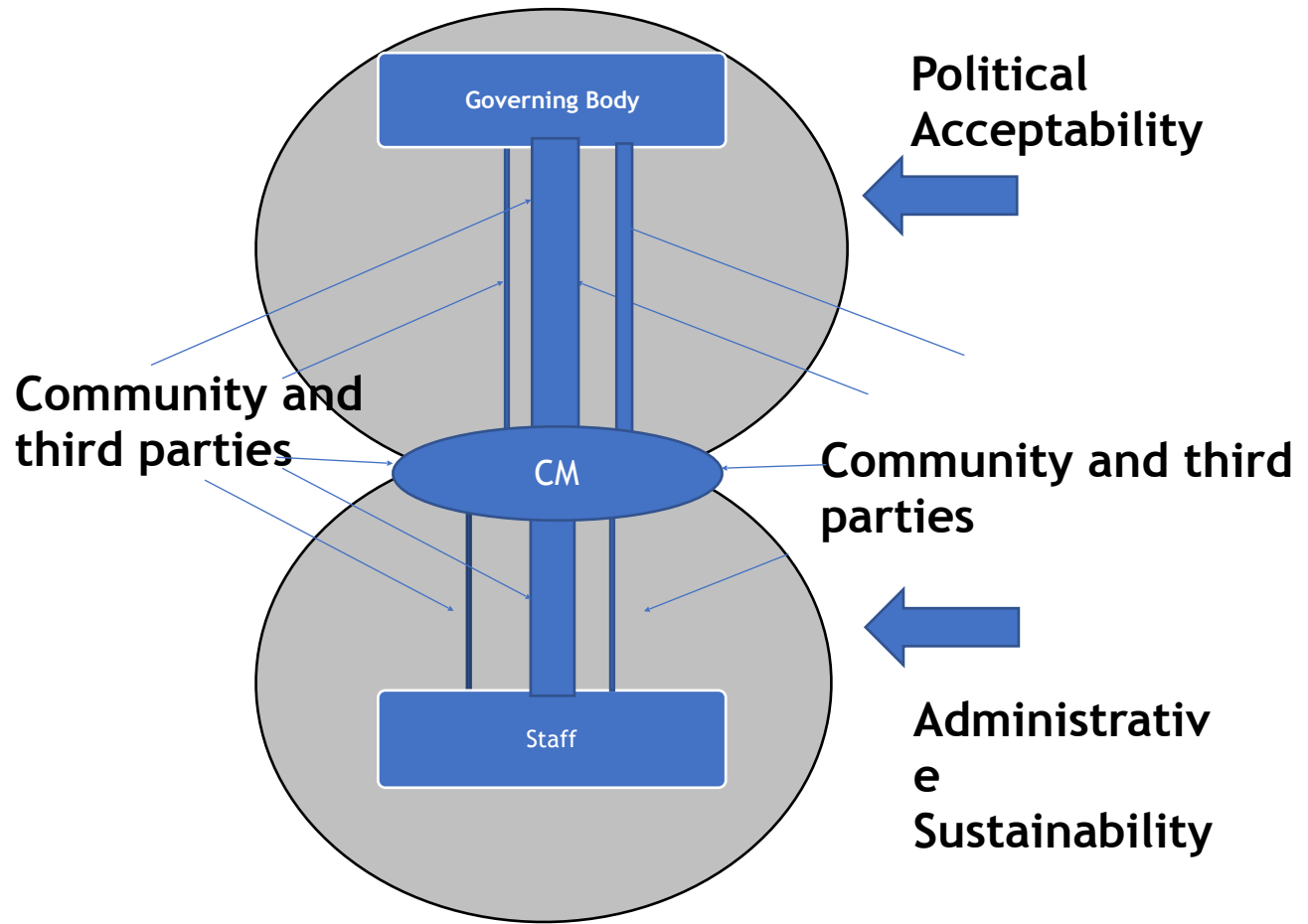
Governing Body



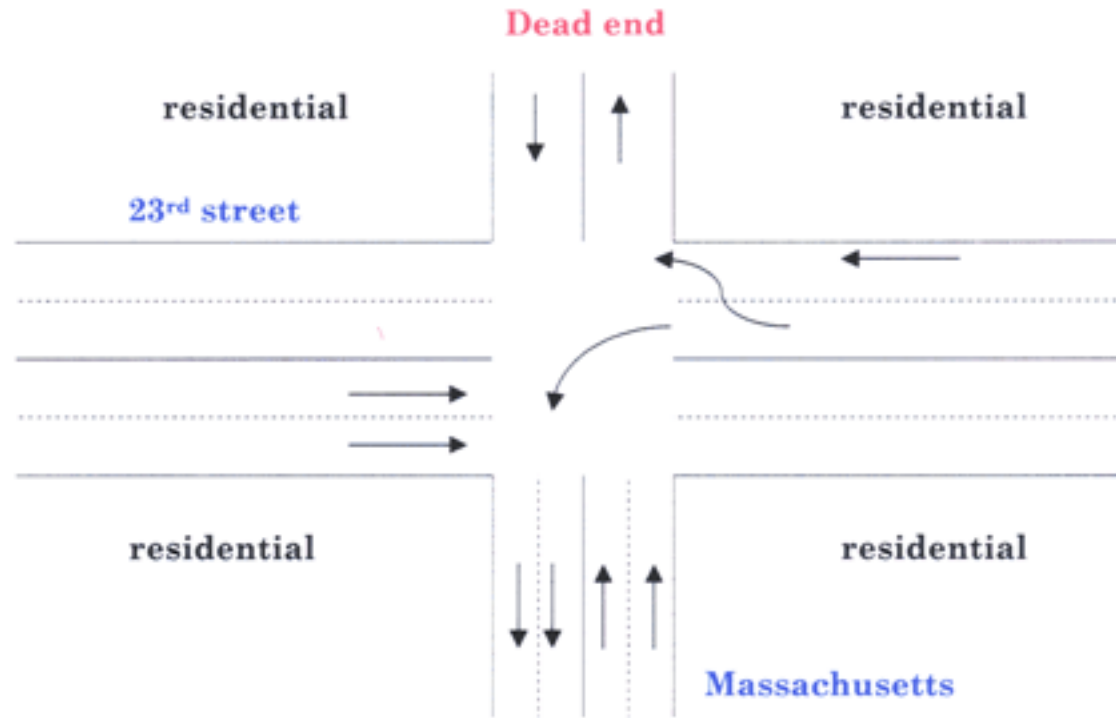
CM



Staff



## 23<sup>rd</sup> and Massachusetts



Toward downtown

# Values

- **RESPONSIVENESS =**
  - Representation/Participation +
  - Efficiency/Professionalism +
  - Social Equity +
  - Individual Rights



# Characteristics of Politics and Administration

Political acceptability → Administrative sustainability

Characteristics	Politics	Administration
Activity	Game/allocation of values	Problem Solving
Players	Representatives/trustees	Experts-trustees
Conversation	"What do you hear?" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Passion</li> <li>▪ Dreams</li> <li>▪ Stories</li> </ul>	"What do you know?" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data</li> <li>▪ Plans</li> <li>▪ Reports</li> </ul>
Pieces	Intangible: Interests and symbols	Tangible: Information; money, people, equipment
Currency	Power (stories), loyalty, trust	Knowledge (deeds)
Dynamics	Constructive conflict, compromise, change	Predictability, continuity

CAO and Senior Staff  
in the  
GAP  
←→  
Electeds\*

# Facilitating Roles

- Translate the logic of politics and administration
- Bridge the gap between what is politically acceptable and administratively sustainable
- Align
  - Staff priorities with governing body goals
  - Governing body and staff expectations

# Summary

- Bridging the gap is essential
- Cups matter
- Good politics is about values not right answers—stories matter (convey values)
- Do not ignore any value over time
- Democratic process is “messy”
- Politics/administration=ways of thinking
- Role of translator/bridge builder is critical
- Aligning governing body/staff expectations is crucial
- Difference between “representative” and “trustee”