The Captain’s Council is the governing body of Freeport. Councilors make and enforce the laws, defend Freeport’s interests at home and abroad, and generally ensure that the city continues to prosper. Since Freeport is a city based on mercantilism and enlightened self-interest, councilors also make sure that they profit from all of the above. The Captain’s Council isn’t only about prestige; it’s also about filthy lucre.

The council, like many aspects of the city, is a legacy of Freeport’s piratical past. In the rough and tumble early days, every pirate captain was considered an equal. Decisions were made by a simple majority, and duels were as common as debates. As the city grew, there were just too many captains to continue on as before. When Captain Drac became sole Sea Lord of Freeport, he knew it was time for change. He also knew he couldn’t simply disregard the captains of Freeport, or his lordship would be over in a matter of days. His compromise solution was the creation of the Captain’s Council. He chose six powerful captains to help him rule the city. They enforced Drac’s edicts and handled the day-to-day business of governing the city. These men became the first Captain’s Council of Freeport. Under their rule Freeport grew and prospered.

Changing of the Guard

As the city grew it changed in ways that the pirates could not have anticipated. The captains on the council began to settle down and consolidate their power within the city, becoming the de facto nobility of Freeport. Stability in the government improved prospects for trade and so a merchant class established itself. As the population increased so too did the demand for artisans and craftsmen. Soon a strong working class developed and settled in Freeport. It was a long time coming, but the city of rogues and buccaneers eventually grew into a powerful and independent city-state.

By the end of Drac’s life the council had gained much power in the city. They had influence with the other captains, the merchants and the tradesman. Although the Sea Lord’s word was still law, Drac knew that he could not blatantly defy their will. This as much as his son being unfit for the job convinced Drac to empower the council to approve anyone nominated for the title of Sea Lord. This was a defining moment for the Captain’s Council, as it gave them some control over who would govern the city.

The council elected Drac’s nominee, Captain Cromey, who proved an excellent choice. He treated the members of the Captain’s Council as equals and thought of them as trusted advisors rather than lackeys. At the end of his rule, Cromey followed in Drac’s footsteps by giving the council even more authority. Cromey issued an edict that the Captain’s Council would not only approve nominations for Sea Lord but also approve nominations for new council members. This would force the Sea Lord to work with the council to rule the city and provide a check to his absolute power.

The Council Grows Stronger

About thirty years after the death of Drac, the city, which had almost doubled in size, was facing a crisis. A war raged on the continent, disrupting trade and drawing away much of the city’s navy. Freeport was in turmoil as food and other essential supplies became scarce. Angry riots were common. The Sea Lord Corliss and the council could barely keep order in the streets. An ambitious and popular councilor named Antonio Grossette saw this as an opportunity to increase the power and influence of the council.

He proposed a plan to the Sea Lord to help him restore order. He asked for Corliss to declare martial law in the city. Since most of the military was off honoring treaties on the continent, private forces would have to be used. To keep peace on the streets, the size of the council have to be temporarily increased to twelve, Grossette argued. Each of the councilors would then be given an area of the city to control and use their own forces to calm the populace. Once order was restored, martial law would be lifted and the council returned to its former size.

At first Corliss resisted. He knew that the council would be a threat to his power if it grew too large. More importantly, endorsing private armies to roam the streets would become a problem itself if not watched carefully. The situation in the city was worsening, however. Many believe that Antonio and his fellow councilors allowed things to deteriorate intentionally to force the Sea Lord’s
hand. Whatever the truth, the city was in bad shape. Corliss
finally agreed to Antonio’s plan but he insisted on choosing
the men who would be added to the council himself.

Grossette’s plan worked. Order was restored in the city
within a few weeks. Food and supplies were rationed and the
forces of the council kept the peace. When the war ended six
months later the city was recovering nicely and looking
forward to a speedy recovery. Now Antonio could make his
final gambit.

Corliss wanted to restore the council to its former size
as per the original agreement with Antonio. The councilors
had other ideas. Grossette had convinced the councilors that
they did not have to give up their newfound power. Corliss
was outraged and threatened to use the military to remove the
councilors, making civil war was a very real possibility. Into
this impasse stepped Antonio Grossette. He offered Corliss a
choice. Face civil war to remove the councilors, or leave the
councilors in power and they would put their private military
forces under the Sea Lord’s control.

With his military tired from a bitter war on the continent,
Corliss agreed to this compromise and enacted a law that the
council would consist of twelve members henceforward. The
councilors then disbanded their forces and a new era in
Freeport began. Antonio had increased the size of the council
and at the same time diminished some of the powers of the
Sea Lord.

Anton’s Gift

Anton Drac assumed power in Freeport almost 30
years ago. Fortunately he was able to undo much of his
older brother Marten’s damage. During this time the
Captain’s Council put a lot of pressure on the Sea Lord,
hoping to capitalize on his efforts to change public opinion
about the Drac family. First and foremost they repeatedly
attempted to get Anton to repeal the succession law.
Marten Drac had passed the law to make certain that the
Sea Lord would be a descendent of the original Captain
Drac.

When the council realized that Anton would not
budge on the succession issue, they decided to change
t heir tactics. For decades the Sea Lord had the power to
nominate new members to the council. Although the
council voted to confirm these nominees they wanted to be
able to put up their own candidates as well.

Anton was initially against the idea. He knew that this
would further diminish the powers of the Sea Lord. He also
knew that the sting of Marten’s hideous regime was still in
everyone’s mind, so he settled on a compromise solution. The
council would have the power to nominate councilors. In

return for this power, the Sea Lord would cast two votes for
his nominee and break all ties. This meant that the council
would have to have at least seven members vote against the
Sea Lord to elect their own nominee.

The council initially was not pleased with Anton’s
suggestion. They held out for many years hoping that they
could get a more favorable result. They changed their
minds when Ant on decided to go to war on the continent.
The council feared that he might die and they would get no
deal at all. Shortly before Anton’s assassination they
accepted his offer and gained nominating power for the
council members. This has come to be known as “Anton’s
Gift”.

The Workings of the Council

Although the Sea Lord is able to enact laws, the
Captain’s Council limits his powers. In four important
areas the Sea Lord must gain the approval of the council
before proceeding. These are: declarations of war, enter-
ing into treaties with foreign powers, allocations of city
funds, and the levying of taxes.

Councilors hold their posts for life, with one excep-
tion (see Madness in Freeport for details on this), and
can only be removed otherwise by vote of the council. If a
councilor is murdered, a family member has the right to
assume his seat. Councilors are only removed if they
commit treason or other heinous crimes against the city.
Bribery, nepotism, and extortion are not considered
heinous crimes in Freeport.

Councilors are nominated by the Sea Lord or by the
council itself. A vote is then held with the councilors
placing one vote each and the Sea Lord placing two votes.
If there is a tie, the nominee of the Sea Lord is automati-
cally elected.

The citizens of Freeport have no direct vote to elect
councilors or the Sea Lord. This does not mean that their
opinions on the matter are ignored. Both the councilors
and the Sea Lord understand that electing unpopular
officials can only lead to bad business and an unruly
populace. For this reason most members of the Captains
Council have influence in important segments of Freeport’s
population.

The Current Council

Details on the current members of the Captain’s
Council can be found in Madness in Freeport, coming
soon to a game store near you. All of the councilors are
described, and the PCs will get the chance to meet and
greet the people who run Freeport.