

09-20-2023 Town Council Meeting

Responses to Council Questions

ITEM #2: Boards & Commissions Assessment/Staff Response to Council Petition

Council Question:

Can we have access to the survey results referenced in the packet?

Staff Response:

Staff promised anonymity to the respondents of both the staff liaison and board and commission member surveys. Attached is a spreadsheet that has responses without any identifying information.

Council Question:

Do we have - or can we get - information on the number of advisory boards a sampling of comparable NC and/or college towns have?

Staff Response:

The staff team looked at two examples of peer cities that are rethinking their boards and commissions system, [Asheville](#)¹ and [Lawrence, KS](#)². In addition, some quick research was done on some peer cities in North Carolina regarding their total boards and commissions:

Town	Number of Boards
<i>Davidson</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Hendersonville</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Apex</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Holly Springs</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Cary</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Boone</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Wilmington</i>	<i>8</i>

Note that the above counts do not include public utilities, county functions, unique interests (such as boards to administer specific community grants), and/or boards such as Downtown Partnership, which in these communities are under the direct authority of the local government, rather than a stand-alone organization.

¹ <https://www.ashevillenc.gov/projects/boards-and-commissions-restructure/>

² <https://lawrenceks.org/community-engagement/board-and-commissions-realignment/>

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Council Question:

While reducing the frequency of meetings will help, I am still concerned about the amount of staff time devoted to supporting boards. Looking at both board categories, I would like to have recommendations from staff about options to further combine scopes or otherwise reduce the overall number of boards. For instance, several boards seem to have some overlap in scope.

Staff Response:

Staff can consider additional opportunities to combine boards and commissions based on Town Council's discussion at the Work Session.

Council Question:

Before moving forward with establishing a new public housing board, could staff conduct a review of the history of the HAB, as it used to also play a public housing oversight role which was then removed from its scope and re-purposed? I want to make sure we learn from the past and apply any lessons learned from that history.

Staff Response:

Staff will review the history of the Housing Advisory Board as we continue to evaluate alternative governance options.