

# ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP POLICY AMENDMENTS FEEDBACK

On October 29, 2018, Communications and Public Affairs sent an email to the Advisory Board members and staff liaisons requesting feedback on the Council Committee on Boards and Commissions recommendation to amend the Advisory Board Membership Policy and the related sections of the Town Code of Ordinances.

This document is a compilation of feedback for each proposed amendment as well as a table that lists each members name, board, term, role, and attendance.

1. Amend the Attendance Clause to clarify when a member is in good standing and simplify the process for removal of a member who is not actively participating

Maripat Metcalf:

- Yes, but I think it really depends on how this is defined - missing 1 meeting is not the same as missing 4. Also, we don't want to discourage those with small children from serving. Would this change impact board members from other areas - such as the non-CH members of the ESAB?

11/1/18 BOA Comment:

- The Board of Adjustment has alternate members. Accommodation for those members would need to be considered within the rule.

11/6/18 Joint Advisory Board Meeting Comments:

- Observation that the Planning Commission meets twice a month, so if someone is out for six weeks they could meet the threshold, while other boards who meet quarterly wouldn't meet the threshold for missing 3 consecutive meetings in a year.
- Proposal to exclude special meetings because that is not a part of the expectation when applying to be an advisory board member.
- Proposal to amend the language to reflect three regular meetings and half of all meetings in a year.
- Proposal to add broad language for excused absences, such as acute illnesses, but maybe not absence for work related activities.
- Observation that excessive vacant seats may cause quorum issues, and likely voting issues where there is a higher threshold of affirmative votes for certain types of approvals.
- Observation that if a volunteer finds themselves unable to attend, then they should resign to allow someone who else to fill the role.

- Proposal to add language that clarifies communication with the member by the Chair or staff, after the second consecutive absence and notification of third consecutive absences triggering the automatic removal from the board.

2. Amend the Length of Term Clause to remove the option to continue to serve until a successor has been appointed

11/6/18 Joint Advisory Board Meeting Comments:

- Observation that the Board of Adjustment has additional attendance requirements for certain types of decisions. This may outweigh the value to terminate this rule for this board. Quorum equals 6, Variance decisions require 8 affirmative votes, with 10 members present the odds increase that an affirmative decision can be reached.
- Observation that delays have occurred due to the low attendance.
- No problem with the change.
- Like the change because it is a driver to fill positions.
- Question: Look at the Board of Adjustment to see if they have frequently had members who are held over the summer to be able to continue its work until fall appointments can be made.

3. Remove the Historic District resident designated seat from the Community Design Commission and make all nine seats the same

Maripat Metcalf:

- Makes sense.

4. Add a Stormwater Advocate seat to the Environmental Stewardship Advisory Board

Maripat Metcalf:

- I'm not sure why this is the first we on the ESAB have heard of this... I'd like to hear more of the reasoning behind this? Also, we are at 9 currently, so adding another member would increase the membership to 10.
- I think it would be useful to clarify the roles/responsibilities of the "Advocates" - the ESAB has an "advocate" on the Planning Committee, but this person does not always attend ESAB meetings, and seems to serve more to tell the ESAB about the Planning Committee than the other way around. The Greenways advocate has not historically seemed to be alert to the Parks/Greenways/Rec board doings - and why are they just an advocate for greenways and not the other issues?

## 5. Add a Cemeteries Champion seat to the Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission

Maripat Metcalf:

- These two makes sense w/o knowing anything about the details.

Steve Moore

- I received a copy of the proposal from the "Council Committee" to terminate the Cemeteries Advisory Board (CAB) and must strongly disagree with the proposal. By way of background, I worked with Rebecca Clark to establish the CAB and have been involved with it since its inception until I resigned in disgust this summer over the mismanagement of the CAB. Many achievements were made by the Board but these apparently are discounted with this decision.
- The first comment I would make is the apparent failure of the CC to talk with the CAB prior to announcing its death. This seems highly inappropriate to show such disregard for its citizen volunteer members.
- I must say that the recent membership problems are in a large part due to the poor way that the CAB has been run for the last few years. Without exception, every departure from the membership was highly influenced by the shabby treatment as a member of the Board and its inability to accomplish even the most minor action. For the limited pool of possible interested parties, this word gets out.
- The town liaison (TL) structure failed to communicate with board members, was slow to develop agendas, was exceptional in the inability to undertake and complete action items and tended to miscommunicate with the CAB on many issues. Even the most minor action items could easily take over a year to complete and periodic status requests were often met with hostility, obfuscation and even mistruths. The TL remained removed from most items which came before the Board and perhaps the most blatant example of this failure was the statement that he thought that the town did not own the Old Chapel Hill Cemetery but merely maintained it for the University who still owned it! Many meetings were openly hostile to even the most minor requests for clarification or disagreement with statements being made. Agendas were manipulated to prevent discussion of pending topics and requests for additional information were usually without follow-through.
- The town policy that minutes of the board meetings were not maintained added further to repeated surfacing of issues that had not been completed, but were resurrected only through memory of board members.
- The Council Liaison (CL) status was nonexistent and the CAB had no contact with any member of the current council membership with this status, adding further to the problems of the TL being the conduit of any information between members and town hierarchy. This lack of interest by the Council and Mayor now manifests itself with the termination proposal, by blaming the victim.
- The CAB also was the only advisory board to be publicly ridiculed by the Mayor. The board undertook a citizen request for a marker, acted in open meetings and publicly installed the marker. The Mayor was appraised of the marker, was shown the actual diagrammatic plans and verbally encouraged to action, only to later turn on the board and publicly berate them over their action!

- Due to "retirements", the cemeteries have perhaps the poorest structure and personnel in place to manage, maintain and control the cemeteries within recent years. As a personal example, I recently agreed to a substantial insurance settlement from the town insurer for 6 separate actions damaging my cemetery property by grounds personnel. Despite continued assurances that this would not reoccur, the words were meaningless. I wish I held out some assurance that this series of actions will not occur again! When the town personnel and management structure for its cemeteries are at its weakest, abolishing the only oversight group related to cemetery issues seems hardly prudent, unless this outcome is readily planned and being brutally executed!
- I remain dismayed at both the total lack of interest and actions on the towns cemeteries by its officials but can only see that bringing this to public issue status with the next town elections may be the only way to work on its resolution. Simply abolishing the public input on cemeteries will not make the issues go away!

11/6/18 Joint Advisory Board Meeting Comments:

- Inquiry about how a Cemeteries Champion position would work for this board. Like Champions on other advisory boards this position would advocate for board actions that broadly pertain to cemeteries. This position would be an equal member on the Parks, Greenways and Recreation Commission, and would participate in other decisions that may not have a cemetery aspect.
- Observation that there has been no Council member participation in the Cemeteries Advisory Board meetings, while there has been on the Parks, Greenways and Recreation Commission. Having a Council connection would be an improvement.
- Proposal to broaden the term in the ordinance to focus on Cemetery issues rather than just beautification.

6. Conclude the Cemeteries Advisory Board effective June 30, 2019 due to minimal membership

Maripat Metcalf:

- These two makes sense w/o knowing anything about the details.

7. Reduce the Historic District Commission Membership to nine members, as requested

Maripat Metcalf:

- Yes
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8. Simplify the process to amend the rules as it pertains to the advisory board membership, it requests, where possible that the staff consolidate this information in the advisory board membership policy and remove it from the Town Code of Ordinances

Maripat Metcalf:

- I would also suggest trying to standardize board size at 9 unless there is a compelling reason to have more or fewer members.

## 9. Other Feedback

- Ruchir Vora
  - The Council Committee's recommendations make sense to me.
- S. Baldwin, JAIC
  - I can be in attendance regarding the Advisory Board Membership Policy Amendments, 6pm, November 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Elinor Landess
  - After reviewing the changes, they all make sense to me and seem like good steps for greater inclusion. Best of luck moving forward.
- Andy Orbich
  - No comments – thank you for the update!
- Maripat Metcalf:
  - If this doesn't exist, I would clarify when a partial term counts as a full-term for purposes of term limits/term designation.
- 11/6/18 Joint Advisory Board Meeting Comments:
  - Follow up on email from Volker Muller to Cory Liles regarding roster information, and link to rules of procedure.
  - Include information when making a call for volunteers, so that doesn't become a surprise later.
- Jackie Thompson
  - The HSAB met on last night and reviewed the Advisory Board Membership Policy. They didn't have any recommendations in relations to the attendance and length of terms changes, but the board would like to offer the following recommendation to revise paragraph 3 for Sec 2-121, Membership terms.
    - "Members of the human services advisory board may serve as a board member or as paid staff or paid consultant of a human services agency only if they recuse themselves from any and all hearings and deliberations about that agency."
  - Rationale: Many people who serve on the HSAB do so after becoming interested by serving in various roles on nonprofit agencies. They bring a wealth of knowledge and experience about how nonprofit agencies work to the role of HSAB member. Past consultations with the Town of Chapel Hill attorney about these situations have resulted in HSAB members being advised that recusal is a sufficient measure to avoid conflicts of

interest. (Note: The town attorney has also advised that being an unpaid volunteer is not grounds for recusal).

## 10. Member Information

Name	Board	Term	Role
<b>Ruchir Vora</b>	OWASA	1 <sup>st</sup> 7/1/17 - 6/30/20 Partial 8/28/14 – 6/30/17	Town Resident
<b>Shiala Baldwin</b>	JAIC	Partial 9/27/17 – 6/30/20	Chapel Hill or Carrboro Planning Jurisdiction
<b>Elinor Landess</b>	Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership	1 <sup>st</sup> N/A – N/A	Interim Executive Director
<b>Andy Orbich</b>	OWASA	NA	Clerk to the Board
<b>Mary Metcalf</b>	ESAB	1 <sup>st</sup> 7/1/18 – 6/3/21 Partial 6/27/17 – 6/30/18	Vice Chair Category: Chapel Hill Business Owner/Manager
<b>Steve Moore</b>	Cemeteries Advisory Board	Term completed 9/22/2008 – 6/30/2016	Town Resident
<b>Volker Mueller</b>	Community Design Commission	1 <sup>st</sup> Term 7/1/18 – 6/30/21 Completed Partial Term 1/23/17 – 6/30/18	Chapel Hill Resident
<b>Neal Bench</b>	Planning Commission	1 <sup>st</sup> Term 7/1/16 – 6/30/19 Completed Partial Term 7/1/14 – 6/30/16	Town Resident
<b>Amy Ryan</b>	Planning Commission	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term 7/1/17 – 6/30/20 Completed 1 <sup>st</sup> Term 7/1/15 – 6/30/17 Completed Partial Term 7/1/14 – 6/30/15	Community Design Commission Champion
<b>Jane Slater</b>	Cemeteries Advisory Board	1 st Term 7/1/15 – 6/30/18	Town Resident
<b>Jackie Thompson</b>	Human Services Advisory Board	NA	Staff Liaison