



Update on Boards & Commissions Assessment Project

Susan Brown

Director of Strategic Communications & Marketing

Agenda

- Initial Staff Response & Engagement
- Recent Staff Response & Engagement
- Recommended Practices & Processes
- Consideration of Next Steps

Initial Staff Response & Engagement

Council Petition

- What are the Council's expectations? Are they being met?
- What's the cost/benefit of staff support for boards?
- What should the role and charge of boards and commissions be?
- Can we consolidate or phase out any existing boards?
- How can we ensure that boards reflect the Town's population? Does our current method of screening and appointing candidates support that?

Scope of Petition

- Community Policing Advisory Committee
- Cultural Arts Commission
- Environmental Sustainability Advisory Board
- Grievance Hearing Board
- Housing Advisory Board
- Human Services Advisory Board
- Justice in Action Committee
- Library Advisory Board
- Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission
- Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board
- Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board

Shared Interests

- Meaningful and diverse public input and community engagement
- Good stewardship of staff and community resources
- Clear, common understanding of roles and responsibilities

Process

- Researched best practices and current trends from peer municipalities
- Used a DEI lens and user experience (UX) perspective to assess application and appointment process
- Surveyed all staff liaisons and had follow up meetings with some
- Surveyed some Board/Commission members and having follow up discussions with all

Findings

- Meetings are long – and the hours staff spend on pre- and post- meeting work are even longer
- Staff highly value community input – and boards/commissions are only one way to get that input
- Board/Commission members want to contribute – and clarity about roles and responsibilities helps them do that

Findings

- Having some Boards is a common practice; very few are required by statute
- As the Town has made commitments and investments, the need for some Boards has changed
- Boards that focus on policy-level guidance to Council report having a higher sense of impact

Recent Staff Response & Engagement

Meetings & Discussions

- Mayor and Manager met with Board Chairs to discuss the assessment and recommendations
- Staff meeting with Boards and Commissions to discuss the assessment and recommendations
- Staff team continue to meet and discuss new application/appointment process with diversity, equity, and user experience in mind



What
We've
Heard

Mayor + Manager

- Boards want to align charges with Council priorities – and want to understand how Council incorporates their guidance
- Boards want clear explanation of roles and responsibilities – including clarity about the role of Council Liaisons
- Boards recognize that they are not very diverse – and are interested in ways to achieve more diversity



What
We've
Heard

Staff + Boards

- Some boards report already having fewer meetings due to light agendas and lack of discussion items.
- Some boards are already doing policy work and welcome this clarification, while others aren't clear on what policy work means.
- All boards share an interest in more diverse representation and perspectives.



What
We've
Heard

Staff + Boards

- Some board members believe this new approach will increase their impact, while others believe that Council will continue to not value/recognize their guidance and recommendations.
- Some board members believe that staff lack subject matter expertise, so they should not just advise Council on policy, but also advise staff and oversee projects.



What
We've
Heard

Applications + Appointments

- Current application process is not intuitive or easy to use for many applicants
- Current application process carries a high administrative burden for staff
- Current application and appointment processes were not designed to create a diverse field of candidates and Board members

Recommended Practices & Processes

Standard Practices

- _____ Advisory Board
- Charge is policy advice to Council
- 7 members
- Consistent membership practices
- Consistent terms of office
- Define Chair, Vice Chair, Liaison roles
- Consistent agenda structure and content
- Meet during Council session (Sept – June)
- Meet 4 times per Council session
- Board 101 training, including DEI

Equitable Processes

- Focus recruitment efforts to under-represented populations
- Modify application to learn more about skills, interests, and lived experiences
- Provide objective way for to evaluate applicants and make appointment recommendations
- Annual calendar for recruitment, selection, appointment, and training

Meaningful, diverse public input and engagement

- ✓ Expand recruitment efforts to under-represented populations
- ✓ Modify application to learn more about skills, interests, and lived experiences
- ✓ Provide objective way for Board members and staff to evaluate applicants and make appointment recommendations

Good stewardship of staff and community resources

- ✓ Meet four times during Council session (can call special meetings)
- ✓ Seven members
- ✓ Consistent terms of office
- ✓ Annual calendar for recruitment, selection, appointment, and training

Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities

- ✓ Standardize all Board names to clarify role and function
- ✓ Realign all Board charges to focus on policy
- ✓ Provide Board 101 training for all members that includes DEI and officer training.
- ✓ Provide enhanced training for Staff liaisons

Applicable Boards & Commissions

- Community Policing Advisory Committee
- Cultural Arts Commission
- Environmental Sustainability Advisory Board
- **Grievance Hearing Board**
- Housing Advisory Board
- Human Services Advisory Board
- **Justice in Action Committee**
- Library Advisory Board
- Parks, Greenways, and Recreation Commission
- Stormwater Management Utility Advisory Board
- **Transportation and Connectivity Advisory Board**

Keys to Success

- Thoughtful conversations throughout transition
- Training, training, training
- Accountability for all - Council, Board members, and staff
- Careful consideration of new Boards, Committees, Commissions, etc

Possible Next Steps

- Staff continue meeting with Boards and Commissions
- Council consider draft ordinance changes
- Implement new application and appointment process
- Implement Board member training
- Assess effectiveness after 1-2 cycles and report back to Council



**Are we heading in the
right direction to meet
your interests?**