



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – March 3, 2021 Agenda Item 7

Work Session

Continued Conversation on Committees – Purpose and Charges of Committees

Recommended Council Action

Further discuss the purpose and charges of Council-appointed committees.

Context with Key Issues

The Council has identified a priority of reviewing the existing structure, appointment processes, and practices for Council-appointed committees to increase efficiency and effectiveness, attract new members, and explore innovative ways to engage residents who tend to be harder to reach. The desired outcome is to enable more diverse, engaged, productive, and rewarding committee membership.

The Council received an update and proposed process and timeline for reviewing and making changes to committees on Feb. 17, 2021. This work session is a continuation of the work during that session and will focus on building on the discussions the Council had regarding the purpose and charge of Council-appointed committees.

Currently, the City has 16 standing committees, boards and commissions, as distinct from short-term task forces.

Other work to-date on this has included:

- A brief overview of this work at the Council Priorities Retreat in January 2021
- Council adopted a Code of Conduct for committee members (Resolution 20-22, October 7 2020)
- Council extended existing committee appointments to June 30, 2021, to allow time to implement recommendations and providing for new interim appointments only when necessary for a committee to function, or to broaden its representation (ordinance adopted July 29 2020)
- Committees had the opportunity over the summer to give feedback on preliminary recommendations
- An informal working group of staff and council members reported in June 2020 to Council on preliminary recommendations and results of a survey of committee members past and present
- City staff participating in a GARE cohort worked on identifying ways to increase diversity in committee membership as their project, which resulted in recommendations that could be utilized as part of this review and restructuring

Council Priority

Engaged, Responsive & Service-oriented Government: Improve and Formalize Systems for Council-Appointed Committees.

Goal: Improve and formalize systems for Council-appointed committees.

Strategy: Review existing structure, appointment processes, and practices for Council-appointed committees, and make changes to increase efficiency and effectiveness and attract new members; explore innovative ways to engage residents who tend to be harder to reach.

Desired outcome: Diverse, engaged, productive, and rewarding committee membership.

Prepared by: Councilmembers Dyballa, Kostiuk, and Searcy and Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk

Approved by: Suzanne R. Ludlow, City Manager

Posted 2021-02-26

Environmental Considerations

There is no direct environmental impact from the review of the Council-appointed committees. A Council action related to the Committee on the Environment or other committees focused on climate-change initiatives could have a positive or negative impact on environmental initiatives in the future, but specific changes are not proposed at this time.

Fiscal Considerations

There is no fiscal impact from the review of the Council-appointed committees. Some of the recommendations, particularly those to engage residents, such as stipends or childcare services, have possible staff and budget impacts in the future.

Racial Equity Considerations

Council-appointed committees do not generally reflect the diversity of the population of Takoma Park, as shown by the committee members survey. Improvements in recruitment, training, operations and support of committees may create more diverse and representative Council-appointed committees and bolster their capacity to incorporate racial equity considerations in all their committee work.

Links to Background Information

- Feb. 17, 2021 work session [information](#) and [presentation](#)
- June 2020 Review and [Draft Recommendations](#) for Structure and Operations (prepared by the working group)
- [Link to](#) Board, Commission, and Committee Membership Information
- [Link to Committee Survey Results](#)