



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – March 17, 2021 Agenda Item 7

Work Session

Continued Conversation on Committees

Recommended Council Action

Hear an update and 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 is in the process of a series of work sessions that began Feb. 17 and will continue over the next several months to progress toward achieving these goals. Recent work sessions on Feb. 17 and March 3, 2021, have focused on identifying an updated overall purpose for committees and criteria for considering whether to create a committee on a particular issue.

At this work session, a Council subgroup (Councilmembers Dyballa, Searcy, and Kostiuk) will review the criteria for determining whether to create a committee on a certain issue based on the last Council discussion and will provide an update on ongoing consideration of the quasi-judicial committees.

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.

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.

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

Approved by: Suzanne R. Ludlow, City Manager

Posted: March 12, 2021

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

- March 3, 2021 [work session](#) and [presentation](#)
- 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](#)