



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – April 14, 2021 Agenda Item 3

Work Session

Continued Conversation on Committees

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Recommended Council Action

Continue discussion of recommendations on 8 Council-appointed quasi-judicial 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, March 3, March 17 and April 7, 2021, have focused on defining an updated overall purpose for committees and factors for considering whether to create a committee on a particular issue.

At this work session, a Council subgroup (Councilmembers Dyballa, Searcy, and Kostiuk) will lead discussion of the city's 8 quasi-judicial or regulatory committees and issues. The city has 8 other standing committees that focus on a particular issue but do not have a regulatory or quasi-judicial function.

The group recommended, at the April 7 work session, continuing the Board of Elections, Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs, Ethics Commission, Police Pension Board and Tree Commission with their current regulatory roles, and addressing minor issues after reappointments. The group suggests continuing the Noise Control Board and more thoroughly considering its regulatory role within the context of the broader discussions about code enforcement and public safety in the future. The group recommends accepting the recommendation of the Façade Advisory Board to remove its regulatory function and will further consider the future of this board and the issues it covers when looking at non-regulatory/quasi-judicial committees. The group suggests replacing the Personnel Appeal Board with an alternative appeals process.

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: 2020-04-09

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 or sustainability 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 significant 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

- April 7, 2021 [work session](#) and [presentation](#)
- March 17, 2021 [work session](#) and [presentation](#)
- 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](#)