



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – July 13, 2022

Agenda Item 5

Work Session

City Committees, Commissions and Boards: Appointments and Reappointments

Recommended Council Action

Hear recommended list or appointments and reappointments to several city committees, commissions and boards, as a result of this spring's semi-annual recruitment for new and continuing members.

Context with Key Issues

Last summer the Council made numerous changes to the system for Council-appointed volunteer boards, commissions and committees, and adopted code changes in Sept. 2021, both 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 made appointments last fall to 9 boards, commissions and committees after an intensive recruiting process that yielded over 100 applications, as well as one-year appointments to the Youth Council. One process change was to move to a semi-annual recruitment system for new and continuing members, in place of the previous one-at-a-time appointments.

In the current semi-annual recruitment process, over 30 applications for appointment and reappointment have been received. Some groups have no current vacancies, assuming reapplications of current members in good standing are approved. Arts and Humanities and COLTA have several vacancies at this time. Annual recruitment for the Youth Council will continue till September appointments for the upcoming school year. The next semi-annual recruitment will be in the winter.

On June 1, 2021, the City Council discussed the current semi-annual recruitment for new and continuing members, including a recruitment for the 6 vacancies on the Nuclear Free Committee and a focusing of the Committee's scope to outreach and education. Council also considered a few issues that had not been finalized, pending additional information, experience, and/or review of task force recommendations. A future Council meeting will focus on adopting any code changes needed to implement Council decisions.

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 Nuclear Free Committee or other committees focused on climate-change or sustainability initiatives could have a positive or negative impact on environmental initiatives in the future, depending on final direction in this area and the future work of the committee and other committees.

Fiscal Considerations

Providing stipends to committee members, and some of the updated recruitment, administrative and operational procedures, have modest staff and budget impacts. Estimated costs were considered in decisions about adopting changes.

Racial Equity Considerations

Creating and supporting more diverse and representative Council-appointed committees is at the forefront of this initiative. Previous Council-appointed committees did not generally reflect the diversity of the population of Takoma Park. The implemented changes address this issue in a number of ways. For example, the fresh approach to recruitment and appointment of Committee members resulted in appointments that more closely reflect the diversity of our community. This includes member stipends to address financial and social barriers to committee participation that residents of color face more often than white residents. Improvements in training and operations of committees are critical to ensuring that committees and their members function in a way that is welcoming to all residents and to bolstering committees' capacity to apply race equity considerations to their work. Council adopted a code of conduct for committee members (Resolution 2020-22, October 7, 2020) in part to clearly state that discrimination by any committee member will not be tolerated.

Attachments and Links

October 6, 2021 – [City Council Discussion of Committee Member Appointment and Selection Process](#)

[Takoma Park Code, Chapter 2.16 Advisory Committees](#)

[Takoma Park Code, Chapter 2.17 Boards and Commissions](#)