

## Summary of Report Recommendations, Advisory Body Comments, and Alternatives

### PRIORITY ISSUES

#### Social & Economic Justice Commission

Report recommendation: Merge with the Sustainability Committee to form the Social, Economic & Environmental Justice Commission.

Social & Economic Justice Commission comments: Acceptable to merge

Sustainability Committee comments: Opposed to merge

#### Staff alternatives:

- a) Reframe as the Social & Economic Justice Forum that conducts periodic community forums to solicit and discuss a range of viewpoints on social & economic justice issues relevant to Albany; provide informational reports to City Council
- b) Meet upon referral of items from Council or staff
- c) Council provide direction on areas of focus or interest
- d) Commission develop recommended work program to present to Council for referral back with initial direction and timeline
- e) Meet only as needed
- f) Staff attend only as needed for information or advice
- g) Disband commission and appoint task forces on issues that arise

#### Sustainability Committee

Report recommendation: Merge with the Social & Economic Justice Commission

Sustainability Committee comments: Do not merge

Staff alternatives: As contained in the Climate Action Plan (CAP) Implementation Plan, designate the Sustainability Committee as the CAP Implementation Task Force to work on climate action projects and programs. This would reinforce the committee as a working group that augments staff and other community group activities and support Council Climate Action Plan goals.

## Waterfront Committee

Report recommendation: Assign advisory role on publicly owned property to the Parks & Recreation Commission and on privately owned land to the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Waterfront Committee comments: Retain committee

Parks & Recreation Commission: Support merger

Staff alternatives:

- a) Merge with a reorganized Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Commission. This Commission would provide policy advice on publicly owned parkland in the waterfront zone (present or future). The Commission would have the ability to appoint task forces on issues of special interest comprised of stakeholders or other persons with expertise on the subject matter. Council appointments would reflect the wider commission scope.
  
- b) Retain committee and consider:
  - o Council provide direction on areas of focus and interest
  - o Committee develop recommended work plan for initial Council direction and timeline
  - o Staff attend as needed for information, advice, or inter-agency coordination
  - o Reinforce as a committee-style working group; video broadcast upon special request like other advisory bodies rather than every meeting
  
- c) Council appoint a task force(s) to work on issues related to the Albany Bulb, Eastshore State Park, and/or privately owned waterfront lands. For example, a task force comprised of stakeholders and subject matter experts to advise City Council about the various issues present on the Albany Bulb; or a task force to recommend a public process to address the various issues.

## CHARTER ISSUES

### Civil Service Board

Report recommendation: Dissolve the Board.

Board comments: Retain the Board as an overseer to city management on police & fire hiring and promotional practices, as a precaution in the event of an applicant or employee challenge or related issues

Staff alternatives:

- a) Retain the Board to continue to meet as needed
- b) Ask the Board and staff to review applicable policies and practices for potential updates and streamlining
- c) Refer the issue to the Charter Review Committee to advise the City Council on reasons to retain, modify, or disband the Board, or any other changes to consider for a charter amendment

### **Police & Fire Pension Board**

**Report recommendation:** Move towards meetings less frequently than monthly.

**Board comments:** Retain monthly meetings to allow the Board to review and revise any errors in pension payments in a timely manner. The Board agreed with changing to action minutes by Board members

**Staff alternatives:**

- a) Retain the monthly Board meetings and review in two to four years.
- b) Refer the issue to the Charter Review Committee to advise the City Council on a future charter amendment that would give the Board discretion from its requirement to meet on the fourth Tuesday of every month, if the circumstances warranted that relief.

### **Charter Review Committee**

**Report recommendation:** Eliminate the two seats appointed by the City Council as a whole (aka at-large seats) on the basis that it can have the effect of amplifying the perspective of the majority of the City Council. There are currently at-large seats not only on the Charter Review Committee, but also on the Waterfront Committee (2) and Sustainability Committee (1).

**Committee comments:** Retain at-large seats to have sufficient members to perform the work and to attend/vote at meetings. Select the two at-large seats through a cumulative voting method in an effort to broaden the representation of the at-large appointments

**Staff alternatives:**

- a) Try the cumulative voting method for two at-large seats as a pilot project
- b) Retain at-large seats with the current appointment method, while giving priority to skills, knowledge, and ability in governance, management or other related expertise when making the appointments

## **OTHER ADVISORY BODIES**

### **Arts Committee**

#### **Focus and Composition:**

Report recommendation: : Council to provide more direction on scope of duties and oversight of programs and activities. Some members believe the Committee should operate more as an advisory board that directs funds and makes recommendations while others believe it should also be a working group. If advisory only, reduce to five members.

Committee comments: Retain committee size, and ask Council and School Board to fill all the seats

Staff alternatives: Retain committee size, fill the vacancies, and appoint a wide range of artistic and administrative skills, knowledge and abilities to the committee to be an effective working group that provides both advice and hands-on project and program work.

#### **Minutes:**

Report recommendation: Action minutes and/or minutes by members

Committee comments: Summary minutes by staff

Staff alternatives:

- a) Seek an appointee to one of the vacancies who would be willing to take/prepare minutes; or
- b) Designate staff time spent on minute preparation to time allotted to committee support for the month/year

## **COMMUNITY MEDIA ACCESS COMMITTEE**

Report recommendation: Expand the committee to include School Board appointees

Committee comments: Satisfaction with current composition.

Staff alternatives: Allow the School Board to appoint up to two members, with no more than one being a youth member, if there is particular interest or expertise that would add value to the group

## **LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD**

### **Composition:**

**Report recommendation:** Designate the Council Member seat as non-voting, ex-officio; eliminate the Friends of the Library seat.

**Board comments:** Designate Council Member (who serves as the representative to the County Library Advisory Commission) as a non-voting ex-officio member. Continue to have the Friends of the Albany Library to have a voting member of the Board.

**Friends of the Albany Library comments:** Retain Friends seat as a voting member of the Board.

### **Staff alternatives:**

- Explore whether the County Library Advisory Commission would consider allowing a representative from the Board other than a Council Member
- If retain Friends seat as voting member, follow the procedure to ask for a nomination from the Friends for appointment by the City Council

### **Appointee qualifications:**

**Report recommendation:** Because much of the Library Board's focus of late has been on budget and finance, Council should consider skills in these areas when making appointments.

**Board comments:** Skills are also needed in library operations, community relations, and other non-financial areas.

**Staff comments:** A range of interests and skills will provide balance on the span of issues considered by the Board

### **Staff Liaison**

**Report and Board recommendation:** Designate a City staff liaison

**Staff alternative:** Allow for targeted attendance for agenda items, such as budget, governance and policy, but not necessarily community programs

### **Minutes:**

**Report recommendation:** Action minutes by Board members

**Board comments:** Summary minutes by staff

### **Staff alternatives:**

- 1) As long as minute preparation is funded from the Library special tax revenue and not the General Fund, authorize the Board to be assigned a staff minute taker to prepare brief summary minutes
- 2) Ask the Board to try the digital audio recording system, which is posted on the City website, for an archive and a means of reducing length of minutes

## **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION**

Report recommendations: Utilize staff for technical expertise and subcommittees for prolonged and detailed matters; Limit public comments to three minutes during hearings

Commission comments: The Commission felt the use of subcommittees may be helpful in selected situations where there are technical issues, but felt that policy issues should be discussed as a full Commission; Exceeding 3 minute limit is useful when people have meaningful things to add to the discussion

## **TRAFFIC & SAFETY COMMISSION**

Commission comments: There was concern about how responsible a Commission member would be in writing the minutes. Recommended adding the evaluation of a project impacts on cyclist and pedestrians in reports to City Council.

### Staff alternatives:

- Summarize actions and key comments as much as possible to reduce staff time spent on preparing minutes that can be used to implement projects and programs.
- Try use of digital audio MP3 recording on City website to document meetings.
- Project impacts on cyclist and pedestrian safety can be included in the sustainability impact section of the City Council staff report where applicable.

## **YOUTH TASK FORCE**

Task Force recommendation: 1) Dissolve the Youth Task Force as it is currently configured; 2) Council, School Board, or City/School Administration appoint task forces or ad hoc groups comprised of stakeholders or subject matter experts to work on specific topics; e.g. Childcare; updated/new Youth Master Plan.

### Staff alternatives:

- Dissolve current Youth Task Force and assign youth advisory responsibilities to the Parks & Recreation Commission
- Dissolve current Youth Task Force and authorize the City Manager to work with the Schools Superintendent to appoint ad hoc groups or task forces to develop recommendations to the Commission, Council, and/or staff.

## **GENERAL ISSUES**

### **Agendas:**

**Report recommendation:** Since the legislative body is responsible for assignment of city resources, provide for Council direction to advisory bodies on their work programs and agenda items.

**Advisory body comments:** Want flexibility to schedule items of interest to member(s), with suggestions from public.

### **Staff alternatives:**

- Council periodically provide direction to advisory bodies on areas or items of Council interest
- Advisory bodies periodically present recommended areas or items of interest to determine Council interest or direction
- Advisory bodies perform initial review and discussion on items to present to Council to determine its interest and/or direction

### **Neighborhood Outreach:**

**Report recommendation:** Drawing on the Voices to Vision experience, conduct community meetings in neighborhoods, such as by the five-zone street sweeping map.

**Advisory body comments:** Some interest, some concern, some uncertainty; generally lukewarm

### **Staff alternatives:**

- In 2011, try a pilot project of a community meeting in at least one of the neighborhood zones involving one or more commissions and/or committees.

### **Minutes:**

**Report recommendation:** Minimize staff time to prepare minutes, especially in light of improved technology in making meeting audio and visual recordings available on the City's website and KALB. Specifically, ask members rather than staff to take minutes; use action minutes format, especially if taken by staff

**Advisory body comments:** Mixed reaction; some bodies were fine with members taking minutes (Charter Review, Pension Board), some were fine with action minutes with the digital/MP3 audio streaming (Parks & Recreation Commission), while others want staff minute taking with more than a record of action (Arts, Library)

### **Staff alternatives:**

- Ask Commissions and Committees to reduce expectations n length of meeting minutes, encourage action, summary and brevity;
- Try the use of the City's audio digital MP3 web streaming to retain an audio record of the meeting on the City's website, for reference when needed

## **Visibility and Accessibility:**

### **Public Introduction:**

Report recommendation: Swear in new members at City Council meetings

Advisory body comments: Arts Committee wants all members sworn in or none at all.

Staff comments: Only Commissioners and Board Members are required to be sworn in and it must be done before start of service. This could create an inconvenience to committee appointees and staff if swearing-in is extended to all committee appointments

### **Staff alternatives:**

- Provide an opportunity for appointees to be introduced at City Council meetings; this need not be done in a swearing-in format
- Conduct one public swearing-in ceremony at a Council meeting towards the start of the appointment cycle to which all appointees to Commissions, Committees, and Boards would be invited, but do not require swearing-in of committee members

## **E-mail access:**

Report recommendation: Provide an email address for each advisory body

Advisory body comments: No disagreement

Staff comments: An email address for each advisory body can be established, with instructions to not use it as a meeting tool in violation of the Brown Act.

## **Training & Evaluation:**

### **Training:**

Report recommendation: Provide bi-annual training for appointees

Advisory body comments: Supportive of training; suggested two opportunities and a session for just chairs

Staff alternatives: Conduct a training session in early 2011 (tentatively January 31), which could be recorded for appointees who cannot attend. Training to include Brown Act, parliamentary procedure, engaging with the public, decision making, etc. Format of training to be interactive so that members can learn from one another and help develop best practices.

### **Evaluation:**

Report recommendation: Conduct a review of the purpose, composition, and protocols for advisory bodies every two years; provide Council members with any pertinent feedback on appointees

Advisory body comments: There is some concern and sensitivity about criteria and how this would be handled. Commented that appointees should be able to provide feedback on staff liaisons.

Staff alternatives: Any pertinent feedback on appointees can be handled informally between Council members and staff and need not be established as an official process; similarly with feedback from advisory bodies to the city manager about staff liaisons.



**Advisory Body Reports To Council:**

Report recommendation: Council to provide timelines for items it refers to bodies for a report back; Reports should use a pro/con analysis format with alternatives

Advisory body comments: No opposition

Staff comments: Currently advisory body reports are transmitted to City Council members, and are placed on the City Council agenda at the discretion of/by a Council Member or City Manager. Items referred by Council to advisory bodies are aided by the inclusion of any initial direction, areas of focus, and reasonable timeline for either an initial report back or completion.