

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: April 4, 2005

Reviewed by_____

SUBJECT: Resolution #05-15, A Resolution of the Albany City Council establishing a Social Policy Commission

FROM: Beth Pollard, City Administrator

RECOMMENDATION

That Council consider approval of Resolution #05-15 establishing a Social Policy Commission.

BACKGROUND

The 2005-06 goals established by the City Council included an objective to agendize for Council consideration the establishment of a commission to advise the City Council on social policy matters and related issues.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Staff contacted the League of California Cities for suggestions and guidance establishment and operation of a commission to address social policy, justice, and related concerns. The League referred staff to the cities of Berkeley, Chico, Davis, and Santa Monica. Attached is some information from those cities.

Staff has drafted the attached resolution establishing a Social Policy Commission. The term "Social Policy" was selected in order to encompass the range and type of issues that Council Members have indicated they wish to have the Commission consider. The specific issues Council Members have mentioned to date include the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, the Kyoto Accord for environmental protection, and the City's financial investments.

The recommended charge for the Commission is as follows:

The charge of the Commission shall be to research, analyze, discuss, and evaluate a broad range of data and opinions on social and environmental issues affecting the welfare of the residents of Albany as inhabitants of both a local and a global community, and to make recommendations to the City Council on positions and/or actions to take to address these issues. Recommendations to the City Council shall

state the relevance, importance, and/or particular impact that the issue has on the welfare of the residents of Albany.

The recommended charge is based on the idea that the Commission will conduct research, perform analysis on data and ideas, have public discussions, and evaluate the information and opinions before forwarding a recommendation to the City Council, and that the relevance, importance, or impact of the issue in Albany is considered in the recommendation. For example, on the issue of the *Roe v. Wade* decision, the Commission might invite members of the Albany community with personal or professional experience on the matter of abortion, or with knowledge about Albany-related experiences and issues, to provide input in addition to reviewing broader data and opinion on the issue.

The recommended composition of the Commission is one appointee from each Council Member, and two appointees from the Albany Board of Education, with one of these two appointees being a teen member. The purpose of including the School District is to provide a perspective from the parent or education community; the purpose of including a youth member, who must be at least a junior in high school, is to have a younger generation perspective and to provide an Albany teenager with local government and social policy experience. In soliciting applications for Council Member and the at-large School District appointment, an outreach could be made to University Village graduate students who may have an interest and/or expertise in social policy matters.

Lastly, the Commission is scheduled to sunset in eight years, unless extended by the City Council. The purpose for the duration of time is to provide the Council with a scheduled means of evaluating the effectiveness of the Commission, in order to make changes or determine that it has completed its charge.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Typically, Albany Boards, Committees, and Commissions have a staff liaison assigned for purposes of attending the meetings and being a resource for process, content, or both. However, unless another Board, Committee, or Commission is disbanded, assigning a staff liaison to a new Commission will have cost to the City in staff time. Due to the broad nature of the Commission, the expectations of a staff liaison could rise over time. In order to minimize the cost to the City in establishing a new Commission, I recommend that the Commission typically meet without a staff representative, and that the Commission be responsible for preparing its own agendas, minutes, resolutions, reports, correspondence, and other documentation. However, I recommend that staff attend at least the first meeting to facilitate Commission procedures and selection of a Chair.

With no attending staff liaison, the financial impact to the City will be in the staff time to process appointments to the Commission, post agendas, distribute and archive minutes, Council meeting time and minutes preparation from the Council meeting for the agenda items recommended by the Commission, coordinating, filing and mailing letters and resolutions stating the Council position or action, and other administrative matters. The City will also be providing the meeting room space for the Commission.

NEXT STEPS

If the Council approves the establishment of the Commission, the next step would be to announce the opportunity to apply for Council Member appointment, and to contact the School District requesting appointment of its two members. Staff estimates that the process would take approximately 45 days before all the seats are filled and the first meeting of the Commission is scheduled.

Attachments

Resolution #05-15

Information from other cities