

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

Agenda Date: March 2, 2009

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Review of composition and purpose of City commissions and committees

REPORT BY: Beth Pollard, City Administrator

COMMISSION AND COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Arts Committee: Authorize one of the two appointees from the Albany Unified School District Board of Trustees to be a youth member

Social & Economic Justice Commission and Sustainability Committee: Retain the separation of the two bodies for the present time.

Waterfront Committee: Rename the Waterfront Committee to be the Waterfront Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- 1) Authorize a youth (teen) member to serve as one of the two School Board appointees on the Arts Committee.
- 2) Revisit in Fall, 2010 the issue of possible merger of the Social & Economic Justice Commission and the Sustainability Committee.
- 3) Ask staff to return with recommended guidelines on what constitutes a commission, committee, and other appointed bodies

BACKGROUND

City commissions and committees were recently given the opportunity to make recommendations for changes in their composition and charges. The Social & Economic Justice Commission and the Sustainability Committee were specifically asked to comment on the possibility of merging those two groups.

DISCUSSION

Arts Committee

The Albany Unified School District Board of Trustees has two appointees to the Arts Committee. The District inquired about one of the appointees being a youth member. The Committee recommends that the Council authorize one of the appointees to be a teen/youth member. This appointment would strengthen the involvement of youth in City arts efforts.

Social & Economic Justice Commission and the Sustainability Committee

Each of the groups discussed the advantages and disadvantages of merging to form one body. The general consensus was that while they recognized there was some overlap and common goals, there are distinct areas of separate focus. Furthermore, both groups currently have a significant workload to accomplish that would be compromised by a merger.

The Social & Economic Justice Commission noted that they had issues they are working on that do not directly relate to the charge of the Sustainability Committee, and were concerned about having sufficient attention to those items if their agenda was broadened. Members suggested that they occasionally attend each others' meetings, and that the idea might be revisited in a couple of years.

The Sustainability Committee noted that it takes both social equity and economic justice into consideration on all items under its review, when relevant to environmental sustainability, and will continue to do so as there is clearly a co-benefit to realizing all three of these principles. However, the Committee would be concerned with taking on items of social/economic justice that are not related to environmental sustainability as this would detract from its focus.

Waterfront Committee

The Waterfront Committee recommended its name be changed to Waterfront Commission. The discussion leading to this recommendation included an inquiry about the City's policy on the distinction between a committee and a commission, and the apparent lack of clear differentiation in the city.

Staff recommends that the City Council establish guidelines on what constitutes a commission and committee, as well as other advisory and working group definitions. Attached is a sample guideline from another city. If Council concurs with the idea of guidelines, staff will review and draft a recommendation for the City Council.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

None.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

None.

Attachments:

Sample guidelines for commissions, committees, boards, ad hoc groups, and task forces