

January 8, 2021

TO: City Council Member Gerri Harbison, Chair
Government Affairs Committee of City Council

FROM: Brian K. Riblet, City Manager *BKR*

SUBJECT: Government Affairs Committee Meeting of Monday, January 11, 2021

As a reminder, the Government Affairs Committee is scheduled to meet on Monday, January 11 at 3:30 p.m. as a hybrid meeting both at City Hall and via teleconference. To participate in this meeting by teleconference please use the following phone number: 1 (866) 228-9900 with Passcode: 204938. Items to be discussed include:

1. Discussion of 2021 Volunteer Dinner—Staff would like the opportunity to discuss the 2021 Volunteer Dinner with the Committee and to obtain feedback from the Committee.
2. Reappointment of City Board & Commission Members—Staff will be present to discuss with the Committee the general process for Council liaisons to recommend reappointment of City Board & Commission Members to ensure a consistent approach is in place and receive any feedback the Committee may have.
3. Other Business—The purpose of this agenda item is to provide an opportunity to discuss any issue or ask questions that may be on your mind.

Also, attached are the minutes from the December 14, 2020 meeting of the Government Affairs Committee for review and approval at Monday's meeting.

Should you have questions or concerns pertaining to these topics or have additional items to be discussed at Monday's meeting, please do not hesitate to contact me.

C: Mayor and City Council Members (4)
Connie Gaylor, Administrative Coordinator
Department Heads
File



GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE OF CITY COUNCIL
10101 Montgomery Road • Montgomery, Ohio 45242
(513) 891-2424 • Fax (513) 891-2498

Agenda
January 11, 2021
3:30 P.M.

The meeting will be offered both in place at City Hall and by teleconference for those who cannot attend in person or feel safer sheltering at home.

To participate in this meeting by teleconference please use the following phone number:
1 (866) 228-9900
Passcode: 204938

1. Call to Order
2. Guests and Residents
3. New Business
 - a. Discussion of the 2021 Volunteer Dinner
4. Old Business
 - a. Reappointment of City Board & Commission Members
5. Other Business
6. Approval of Minutes- December 14, 2020
7. Adjournment

THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEER BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS AND SOME TIPS FOR CITIZEN MEMBERS

Boards and Commissions are an important part of our democratic process. Volunteer members offer City government a diversity of talents, an important perspective, and a high-energy level for dealing with community concerns. Boards and Commissions are established to research and review City programs, projects and issues, and to advise and recommend action to City Council. Elected officials are ultimately the ones responsible to the community. Boards and Commissions enable citizens to have a voice on issues early in the decision cycle, provide greater community participation in local government, and facilitate quality decisions by the City Council.

Most Montgomery's Boards and Commissions are members of either standing committees or commissions. Members of these standing committees and commissions are appointed for several years and their areas of responsibility can be both broad and narrow in focus. For instance, the Planning Commission is expected to make recommendations on the overall development of the City including zoning and long-term planning in addition to the approval of specific development projects. Similarly, the Parks and Recreation Commission is expected to make recommendations on the overall development of City Parks as well as on the purchase of specific playground equipment.

Boards and Commissions were created by the City Council to advise and assist City Council in special issue areas. Each Board and Commission is empowered to make recommendations to the City Council. They make many decisions, but do not pass legislation, nor make the final determination of City policies or administrative direction.

Boards and Commissions benefit the City of Montgomery by:

- Focusing community attention on specific issues
- Encouraging citizen participation
- Providing a viewpoint from City neighborhoods
- Giving the community a forum for discussion in greater depth than is possible before the legislative body
- Making recommendations from a citizen perspective
- Planning and implementing City-wide programs
- Helping to ensure greater responsiveness on the part of City government

Volunteer members benefit from their service by:

- Becoming more familiar with the workings of local government
- Becoming informed on developing issues in their community
- Enhancing their abilities and interests in a variety of subject areas
- Developing leadership skills
- Meeting other concerned citizens
- Making a real difference in their community

Operating Procedures

Upon appointment, Board and/or Commission members will receive a brief orientation to the City of Montgomery by the City Council Liaison and Board or Commission Chair. Each year an organizational meeting will be held at which time each Board and/or Commission will select, at the minimum, a chairperson and secretary. A general job description for each is included in this handbook. Each Board and/or Commission may define other positions individually. Each Board and/or Commission has assigned to it a City Council member and a City staff member who attends meetings as needed. Annually training will be conducted for all standing Board and/or Commission to orient new members and to share ideas, materials, and future plans. Additionally, Boards and/or Commissions have an opportunity to collaborate on issues and projects of general interest at this meeting.

Boards and Commissions (particularly those groups who oversee programs or events) develop an annual plan of work commensurate with the Boards and Commissions mission and charge from City Council. The work plan should include the group's proposed budget, goals, objectives and strategies (activities designed to meet the group's goals). Advisory groups should review their goals regularly to determine if the group is "on track" and evaluate its accomplishments at the end of each year to determine which activities have been effective.

Members for Board and Commission members may utilize City properties, display boards, copy machines, supplies, etc. for board or commission related work. However, members should work with the staff person assigned to their Board or Commission to schedule equipment, buildings, or City staff time. Several Boards and Commissions have purchased items such as easels and display boards with City funds specified for that purpose. The items are stored in City buildings. The Chairperson of a Board and/or Commission needing to use an item should plan with the Staff Liaison of the respective Board or Commission that purchased the item.

Roles and Responsibilities.

Boards and Commissions have a primary role: to advise the City Council in the determination of City policies and procedures. Despite their differing tasks, all Boards and Commissions share some basic responsibilities.

Dress Guidelines

It is the City's desire to demonstrate by action and appearance that the City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Landmarks Commission and the Board of Tax Review are part of a competent and professional organization. Professional attire encourages civility among participants. Further, it demonstrates respect for members of the community that appear before a Board or Commission. Whether dealing with minor matters or multi-million-dollar construction projects, the City wishes to demonstrate that we are serious about our work. Those representing the City as members of the aforementioned bodies have an opportunity to reinforce this professionalism through their demeanor and attire when dealing with the public. The alternative is to run the risk of not being taken seriously and/or the loss of respect for themselves and the City.

- Guidelines for Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Landmarks Commission and Board of Tax Review – Business casual is required as a minimum standard. Business casual is simply a comfortably relaxed version of traditional business attire with no sacrifice of professionalism. Dress pants, shirts with collars, dress shoes/loafers and the equivalent attire for women are expected
- Guidelines for all other Board and Commissions – The other Boards and Commissions that do not deal with the public on a regular basis have more latitude regarding their attire. However, chairs of such groups may want to encourage a more professional look for special occasions such as an award ceremony or events involving special guests/visitors.

Members should:

- Stay informed on subjects of interest to the Board or Commission on which they serve.
- Attend meetings conscientiously.
- Arrive at meetings on time and devote full attention to the business of the meeting.
- Fulfill oral and written commitments.
- Participate in developing an annual budget and work plan within the scope of the Board's or Commission's job description and charge from City Council.
- Publicly present views and recommendations representing the Board or Commission as a body, not as an individual.
- Indicate in public statements that the Board's or Commission's actions are recommendations and that final action will be taken by the City Council.

4. Has the candidate demonstrated an understanding of the time involved in serving with an advisory group and expressed a willingness to make that commitment?

Applications remain on file for a period of one (1) year, unless the applicant requests withdrawal.

Reappointment

Although there are currently no term limitations regarding service on a Board or Commission, reappointment of outgoing members will not be automatic. Candidates for reappointment will be considered along with new applicants for vacant Board or Commission seats. Prior to reappointment the City Council Liaison will review/discuss with Board or Commission Chair and, if necessary, the Staff Liaison.

Resignation

If at any time during a Board or Commission member's term they choose to resign, it is requested that written notification be provided to the City Council Liaison. The City Council Liaison will provide the volunteer with a written acceptance letter.

A Copy of the City Council Appointment Responsibilities is attached hereinafter as "Exhibit "C"

A Copy of the Volunteer Profile is attached hereinafter as "Exhibit "D"

A Copy of the Board and Commission Member Resignation Letter is attached hereafter as Exhibit "F"

These Minutes are a draft of the proposed minutes from the Government Affairs Committee of City Council meeting. They do not represent the official record of proceedings until formally adopted by the Government Affairs Committee of City Council.

City of Montgomery
Government Affairs Committee Minutes
December 14, 2020

Present

Brian Riblet, City Manager
Tracy Henao, Asst. City Manager/Acting Community Dev. Dir.
Connie Gaylor, Clerk of Council
Matthew Vanderhorst, Community and Information Services Director

City Council Committee Members Present

Gerri Harbison, Chair
Craig Margolis
Lynda Roesch, Teleconference

The Government Affairs Committee of Council convened its meeting for December 14, 2020 at 3:30 p.m. in person and by telephone conference with Mrs. Harbison presiding. This remote access meeting was allowed by emergency legislation adopted last week by the Ohio General Assembly and approved by the Governor. The emergency legislation added language to RC Section 121.22 allowing public meetings by telephone conference during the current pandemic and declared State of Emergency. As required by the statute, notice of the telephonic meeting was publicized more than 24 hours in advance to allow public access through the same conference call in service. The public was also given a backup number to call in the event there were technical difficulties. This Notice was posted on the City's website and a similar Notice was sent to The Cincinnati Enquirer.

Discussion of the 2021 Community Leadership Forum

Mr. Vanderhorst explained to the Committee that normally at this time of the year staff would be finalizing the agenda for the annual Community Leadership Forum typically held the first Saturday in February. He stated that with the current State of Emergency restrictions for large gatherings it would not be feasible to hold this year but wanted to confirm this with the Committee.

Mr. Riblet added that while a vaccine for Covid-19 was anticipated to begin being distributed, he did not anticipate the restrictions being lifted before the forum would be held.

The Committee discussed the current restrictions and agreed that the Community Leadership Forum would be deferred to 2022.

Discussion of the 2021 Strategic Plan Process and Management Partners

Mr. Vanderhorst explained that as the current Strategic Plan would be completed by the end of 2021, preparations for a new 5-year plan would begin in January. He explained that communications with Management Partners would commence in order to plan for the environmental scan and resident survey that are both conducted at the beginning of each new plan. He explained that the process may look different for this new plan in order to accommodate gathering restrictions and the safety of those involved in the process. He explained that the resident survey typically goes out in April and discussed the best method of distributing the survey in order to reach the most residents. He also stated that the format of the retreat which is usually held in August may need to be changed if the gathering restrictions are not lifted by that time. He added that staff would follow up with the Committee with updates and suggestions of questions for the resident survey.

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Mr. Margolis stated that he felt the group sessions held at the retreat were critical to the success of the plan and asked if the retreat could be pushed back to October if needed.

Staff and the Committee discussed the timeline and determined to revisit the subject at the next Government Affairs meeting.

Discussion of the 2021 Service to Community Grant Program

Mr. Vanderhorst provided an update on the 2021 Service to Community Grant. He explained that as in the past, \$5,000 was programmed into the 2021 Budget for the grant. He explained that this amount was typically awarded to more than one applicant dependent on meeting the grant guidelines. He stated that he expected past recipients: Montgomery Farmers Market and Operation Give Back to both apply.

Mr. Margolis stated that he felt it may be difficult for new groups to form during this time in order to apply for the grant. He stated that many of the past groups were formed as a result of the Montgomery Citizen Leadership Academy (MCLA) and since it was cancelled for 2021, that may prevent new interest in the grant. He asked how the grant would be advertised.

Mr. Vanderhorst replied that through the Montgomery Bulletin as well as all social media outlets including press releases sent to the local news stations.

Reappointment of City Board & Commission Members

Mrs. Harbison stated that she thought it was important for the Committee to discuss the process of the reappointment of Board and Commission members. She explained that she felt that Council liaisons needed to have a consistent method of speaking with the Chairs of the boards and commissions when considering reappointment of members. She also explained that it was important to revisit the policy on residency, dress code and member conduct. She stated that all members, especially those serving on the boards or commissions that conduct meetings similar to public hearings, need to be conduct themselves in a professional manner.

Ms. Roesch stated that she felt it was important for Council liaisons to be on the same page as the Chairs of the boards and commissions. She stated that for members to be reappointed they needed to contribute, get along with other members, and be professional.

The Committee members discussed past practices of reappointing members and how to better support the process as Council liaisons.

Ms. Henao stated that she felt that under the current restrictions with most meetings being held virtually via Zoom, that the meetings were taking their toll on the members. She explained to the Committee members that in those meetings, the board and Commission members were on camera whereas the residents or participants were not which lent to the participants being harsher and less respectful in their statements. She feels these personal attacks have been hard for the members to deal with at times.

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Mr. Riblet agreed that these types of meetings can get emotional and have caused frustrations on both sides. He added that he felt it would also be consistent to include conversations with the staff liaisons to obtain their feedback. Mr. Riblet added that there was an opportunity to address these concerns at the annual Boards and Commission training coming in 2021.

Mrs. Harbison stated that she would like to create guidelines that include these topics for Council liaisons and boards and commission members.

Mrs. Harbison asked the Committee members to send her their thoughts and ideas on how to address these concerns by January 5 so they could be discussed at the January 11, 2021 Government Affairs meeting.

Other Business

Ms. Roesch stated that it was her understanding that anyone seeking to be appointed to a board or commission were required to attend three meetings. She stated that she understood that in special circumstances an exception could be made if there was other volunteer experience that was relevant.

Mrs. Harbison replied that she recalled that the three meeting is a guide not a requirement.

Guests and Residents

Mrs. Harbison asked if there were any guests or residents on the line that wished to speak. There was no response.

Minutes

Vice Mayor Margolis moved to approve the October 12, 2020 Government Affairs Committee minutes. Ms. Roesch seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed.

Adjournment

Vice Mayor Margolis moved for adjournment. Ms. Roesch seconded. The Committee unanimously agreed. The Governmental Affairs Committee of Council meeting was adjourned at 4:18 p.m.

Chair