

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
on Boards and Commissions
October 6, 2020
Virtual/electronic meeting

4:00 PM CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

The Charlottesville City Council met in an electronic work session on Monday, October 6, 2020, in accordance with a local ordinance approved July 27, 2020 to ensure continuity of government and prevent the spread of disease. Mayor Nikuyah Walker called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. with the following members present: Mayor Nikuyah Walker, Vice Mayor Sena Magill, Councilor Heather Hill, Councilor Michael Payne and Councilor Lloyd Snook.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss boards and commissions.

Councilor Hill advised that the scope of the meeting would be to discuss Council-appointed boards and committees, and not the statutorily required boards and committees or appointments to boards.

Whereas City Council appoints members to over thirty Council-established boards and Councilors serve on an additional thirty-plus boards, several Councilors expressed a desire to reduce redundancy, re-align board functions and evaluate boards and commissions to consider:

- whether the board purpose is still relevant to City goals and initiatives.
- whether Council participation on the board is necessary.
- whether the board serves to advise Council or staff.
- whether changes to board make-up would need to be considered.
- staff capacity to support board and commission meetings.
- ensuring transparency for benefit of the public.

Council agreed on the following actions:

Dissolve -

- Belmont Bridge Steering Committee
- Hydraulic Road Planning Advisory Panel
- Streets That Work/Code Audit Steering Committee

Table -

- Historic Resources Committee (potentially a staff advisory committee)
- Police Civilian Review Board (pending General Assembly conclusion)

Transition to staff-advisory -

- Parking Advisory Panel
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
- PLACE Design Task Force
- Water Resources Protection Program Advisory Committee

Staff and board liaisons were available to answer questions.

Charlottesville Area Transit (CAT) Director Garland Williams suggested enhancements to the composition and purpose of the CAT Advisory Board. He advised that CAT was in position to be able to hire a consultant with Council support. Council indicated support as a consultant could help with developing a baseline for CAT services and board composition prior to joint meetings with Albemarle County and the University of Virginia.

Todd Niemeier spoke on behalf of the Human Rights Commission.

Economic Development Director Chris Engel shared background on the Parking Advisory Panel.

Council discussed the composition and Council charge of each board and commission, as well as supporting boards and commissions through the Covid-19 pandemic. Mayor Walker advised of the need to be cognizant of diversity in the composition of boards and to review outreach efforts.

Alex Ikefuna, Deputy Director for Neighborhood Development Services, shared information about the Piedmont Housing Alliance – Friendship Court Committee, and the PLACE Design Task Force. Deputy City Manager Paul Oberdorfer added that the PLACE Design Task Force could be more project-driven, and that the new Director of Public Works should have a chance to weigh in.

Director of Communications Brian Wheeler advised that during the Covid-19 State of Emergency, one virtual meeting per month would be supported for all boards and commissions, and an additional six monthly slots for a maximum of three hours each could be accommodated for subcommittee meetings on a first-come, first-served basis.

Mayor Walker opened the floor for public comment and the following people spoke:

- Shantell Bingham - Human Rights Commission
- Rory Stolzenberg - Planning Commission, PLACE Design Task Force

Council discussed the number and composition of seats on some larger boards such as the Human Rights Commission and Housing Advisory Committee, whether to appoint to vacant positions or reduce the size of the boards, and the desire for certain boards to expand their scope.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

BY Order of City Council

BY Kyna Thomas, Clerk of Council