



**CITY COUNCIL  
COMMUNICATION:**

**ITEM \_\_\_\_\_**

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER  
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

**00-132**

**SYNOPSIS -**

**AGENDA:**

Recommendation to consolidate several City of Des Moines boards and commissions to increase their efficiency and effectiveness and that of the staff that supports them.

APRIL 3, 2000

**SUBJECT:**

Recommendation to amend the membership and appointment process of some boards and commissions to assure that each Council member has, whenever possible under state law, at least one appointment on each board and commission.

BOARDS AND  
COMMISSIONS  
RESTRUCTURING

**FISCAL IMPACT -**

**TYPE:**

None.

RESOLUTION  
ORDINANCE

**RECOMMENDATION -**

**RECEIVE/FILE**

**Approval.**

**SUBMITTED BY:**

**BACKGROUND -**

ERIC A. ANDERSON  
CITY MANAGER

When a board or commission has 7 members, each member of the City Council will appoint 1. When a board or commission has 15 members, each member of the City Council will appoint 2 with the Mayor appointing the 15th member.

The following boards and commissions already have 7 or 15 members and will not require any modification:

1. Airport Board (7)
2. Architectural Advisory Committee (7)
3. Civil Service Commission (7)
4. Housing Appeals Board (7)
5. Public Housing Board (7)
6. Skywalk Commission (7)

7. Enterprise Community (15)
8. Sister City Commission (15)
9. Youth Advisory Coordinating Board (15)

The following boards and commissions will require modification:

1. Access Advisory Board (11)
2. Building Code Board of Appeals (8)
3. Citizen Odor Board (25)
4. Historic District Commission (8)
5. Human Rights Commission (9)
6. Neighborhood Revitalization Board (23)
7. Park and Recreation Board (10)
8. City Plan Commission (15)
9. Strategic Planning Commission (19)
10. Traffic Safety Committee (10)
11. Urban Renewal Board (5)
12. Zoning Board of Adjustment (5)
13. Mechanical Board of Examiners (4)
14. Plumbing Board of Examiners (4)
15. Electrical Board of Examiners (4)

For the boards and commissions which require modification, the following is recommended:

1. Access Advisory Board: expand from 11 members (6 persons with disability, 3 handicapped service providers, and 2 architects) to 15 by adding 4 community representatives. Each Council Member will appoint 2 members with the Mayor appointing the 15th.
2. Citizen Odor Board: reduce from no less than 9 and no more than 25 to no less than 7 nor more than 21 keeping the requirement that no less than 75% reside in area of the City generally acknowledged to experience odor problems. Each Council member will appoint up to 3 members.
3. Historic District Commission: reduce from 8 members to 7 keeping the restriction that no more than 1/3 of the commission may be members of the Plan Commission. Each Council Member will appoint 1 member.
4. Human Rights Commission: reduce from 9 members to 7. Each Council Member will appoint 1 member.
5. Neighborhood Revitalization Board (NRB) will remain

- the same. Each Council Member will appoint 3 members with the remaining being 1 from the Neighborhood Finance Corporation (NFC) and 1 from Des Moines Development Corporation (DMDC).
6. Park and Recreation Board: reduce from 10 to 8. Each Council Member will appoint 1 member (1 additional member must be a member of the Des Moines Board of Education).
  7. City Plan Commission: keep the number of members the same with each Council Member appointing 2 members with the Mayor appointing the 15th.
  8. Strategic Planning Commission will remain the same. Each Council Member will appoint 1 member, and each of the following organizations will recommend 1 member: Airport Board, City Plan Commission, Park Board, Urban Renewal Board, Library Trustees, Downtown Partnership, Des Moines Neighbors, Polk-Des Moines Taxpayers Association, Des Moines Schools, and the County Board of Supervisors. The NRB will recommend two members.
  9. Traffic Safety Committee: reduce from 10 to 7 members. Each Council Member will appoint 1 member.
  10. Zoning Board of Adjustment: increase from 5 to 7 members. Each Council Member will appoint 1 member.

It is further recommended that two board consolidations be considered. These consolidations are outlined in the attached Appendices A and B.

The Library Board (5) and the Water Works Board of Trustees (5) are created by state statute and cannot be modified by action of the City Council.

In cases in which boards or commissions are reduced, the reduction shall take place upon the next expiration of the terms of sufficient number of members to accomplish the purpose.

In any case in which the appointment of members to a board or commission by Council is not assigned to individual Council seats, assignments shall be made by random, using a random number generator for the purpose.

If these recommendations are adopted, this matter shall be

referred to Corporation Counsel for preparation of the required ordinance changes.

At the present time, Council members make appointments to boards and commissions in a variety of ways. For some, appointments are made in sequence, beginning anew each January 1st. Each Council Member fills a vacancy in turn, regardless of the board or commission for which the vacancy exists. This process is intended to (and does) give each Council Member an equal number of appointments across all boards and commissions. It makes their collective membership reflective of the Council, but it also allows a disproportionate appointment pattern within individual boards and commissions such as the Airport Board.

In other cases, Council Members are assigned a specific number of seats upon a board or commission to which they are to appoint citizens whenever a vacancy exists. This is the case with the Plan Commission.

This latter pattern seems to be more appropriate. The boards and commissions should each be reflective of the composition of the Council.

Attachments