

## **CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

### **BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE ON BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENT PROCESS**

May 7, 2007 – 6:00 p.m.

Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers

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City Council Present: Mayor Marchand (6:05 p.m.), Assistant Mayor Ferrini, Councilors Grasso, Dwyer, Raynolds, Pantelakos (6:40 p.m.), Whitehouse, Smith and Hynes

Officials Present: John P. Bohenko, City Manager; Robert P. Sullivan, City Attorney; and Kelli L. Barnaby, City Clerk

Committee Members: Eric Spear, Chair; Sheri Garrity, John Rice and Nancy Bach (6:40 p.m.)

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Assistant Mayor Ferrini called the work session to order at 6:00 p.m. and advised that this meeting was brought about by questions of the City Council on how our Board and Commission process works. He advised the City Council that the Committee met on April 30, 2007 to discuss some of these issues.

Eric Spear, Chair, said that the Committee discussed what they have accomplished and reviewed the original charge of the City Council for the creation of the Committee. He spoke to the additional information that is being supplied to the City Council regarding appointments and lengths of service. Mr. Spear informed the City Council that every board and commission has their own needs. He advised the City Council that the Committee is not in favor of the 10 year term limit but, would have rather seen the Council adopt the recommended term limits as presented by the Committee. He said that the Committee is supportive of a review after an individual reaches 10 years of service prior to any reappointment.

Assistant Mayor Ferrini said that some members of the Council have expressed the need to look at things differently, or again. He said that the Committee has done a great deal of work. He discussed conducting a job fair in order to gain additional interest to the boards and commissions and the need to continue to reach out to residents for service to boards and commissions.

Councilor Dwyer provided the City Council and Committee members with a memorandum she prepared regarding Committee Issues for Discussion. She said that the following is a list of potential topics for the Committee:

1. Operationalizing the 10 Year Rule
  - What circumstances would warrant Council exception?
    - e.g. person in leadership role?
    - Majority of members rotating off at same time?

2. Recruitment of committee members
  - Information fair
  - Schedule/process for announcing and posting vacancy
  - Council role in recruitment
3. Council deliberation on potential appointments
  - Option for executive session?
  - Information about mix of expertise on committee?
4. Appointment authority
  - Broaden to executive committee of councilors?
5. Consolidation of committees
6. Clarification of types of committees and their respective procedures, e.g.:
  - Mission?
  - Membership, including #s and types of expertise to be represented?
  - Specific statement of expectations/responsibilities?
  - End date/terms?
  - Nature of orientation?
  - Obtaining expertise/consultation as needed? Standing expertise?
  - Role of non-committee members?
  - Processes for public comment?
  - Removal procedures?

Mr. Spear said that the residents need to understand how the committee works. He said you need input and output; you cannot look at these in isolation.

Councilor Grasso said that we have too many committees in the City. She said that the City Council can make some decisions rather than establish a committee. She advised the City Council that she would like to see the creation of a minimum residency requirement of 2 years before a resident can serve on a board or commission. She urged the City Council to consider where they would like to see this Committee go. Councilor Grasso also expressed concern with the term limit and feels it should be expanded beyond 10 years for some of the boards and commissions.

Councilor Dwyer said that she is not in favor of the 10 year limit but, feels we need to specify where exceptions would be given and how they are warranted.

John Rice highlighted some of the discussion by the Committee. He said that the 10 year term limit should institute a review process. He advised the City Council that the Committee spent many months to arrive at the limits recommended. Mr. Rice also addressed selective retention and the review of individuals when they arrive at the 10 year limit. He said he also agrees with comments made earlier relative to each board and commission having their own circumstances.

Councilor Smith suggested reviewing the establishment of standard terms for boards and commissions. He advised the City Council that he feels the 10 year term limit should be increased. Councilor Smith also discussed the possibility of combining some boards and commissions to reduce the number of committees. He also addressed the need to establish a sunset date when Blue Ribbon Committees are created for the dissolution of the committee. Councilor Smith spoke to the need to create a process for the removal of a person from a board or commission.

Councilor Whitehouse said he has reviewed the boards and commissions and he only found 3 or 4 that he would eliminate. He spoke in favor of selective retention as suggested by John Rice. Councilor Whitehouse also spoke opposed to radical changes.

Councilor Reynolds said it is important to recall the origin of the discussion of the Council when this Blue Ribbon Committee was created. It is the strength of a community to have tradition and civic involvement. He advised the City Council that he does not feel we have too many boards and commissions and that we need to create a balance of experience and new blood in membership.

Assistant Mayor Ferrini said that the Committee needs to obtain a charge from the City Council that is clear and focused. He said based on the discussion this evening the Committee could address the following items:

- Term Limits
- Consideration of the Number of Boards and Commissions
- Creation of Sunset Date for the Dissolution of Blue Ribbon Committees
- Residence Requirements

Assistant Mayor Ferrini said that we may need to know if members of the Committee want to continue to serve and focus on these 4 items with a deadline to report back to the City Council. He advised the City Council that the Committee could create a charge and bring that back to the City Council for consideration.

Councilor Dwyer said she agrees with the review but, it should take place at the end of the term. She said that we need to create a reason that would warrant someone staying beyond the 10 year term limit.

Mr. Spear suggested including the recommended term limits of the Committee on the bottom of each application.

Councilor Hynes said he feels that the City Council should become more involved with boards and commissions when problems arise. He said that the City Council can inform boards and commission that the City Council is making changes to the balance of the committee by the appointments.

Councilor Smith requested that Assistant Mayor Ferrini add the creation of standard terms to the items for discussion.

Discussion followed regarding the removal of a member from a board or commission. City Attorney Sullivan advised the City Council that the removal of an individual from a board or commission is the decision of the City Council.

Sheri Garrity asked the City Council to review the original two goals of the Committee and advise the Committee if the City Council feels that the goals have been met.

Councilor Smith said that we have created more visibility to boards and commission and suggested holding a job fair.

Councilor Hynes said that it is important to remember that the City Council changes every 2 years and the rules and orders for the City Council can change as well.

Councilor Dwyer said that we have residents that want to be asked to be involved. She said that she agrees with the earlier comments of Councilor Hynes that the City Council needs to be more involved with boards and commissions if problems arise. Councilor Dwyer also suggested that the City Council hold a meeting with the various chairs of the boards and commissions to discuss issues.

Councilor Raynolds said he feels that the Committee has made a great deal of progress and he enjoyed serving on the Committee.

Councilor Grasso urged residents to come forward if they have a desire to serve on boards and commissions.

Assistant Mayor Ferrini suggested the creation of an executive committee of the City Council to further consider the issues and suggestions that have been discussed for boards and commissions and provide a report back to the City Council.

Mayor Marchand advised the City Council that the executive committee would comprise of 3 City Council members and they would provide a report back to the City Council with recommendations.

At 7:00 p.m., Mayor Marchand closed the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

Kelli L. Barnaby, CMC  
City Clerk