



City of Madison
Meeting Minutes - Approved
Common Council Organizational Committee
Subcommittee on Committee Creation and
Committee Rules

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
www.cityofmadison.com

Thursday, June 5, 2008

4:00 p.m.

Room 417, City-County Building
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. A quorum was noted, and the meeting was properly noticed.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: 3 – Ald. Satya Rhodes-Conway (chair), Ald. Joe Clausius, Ald. Michael Schumacher.

Absent: 1 – Ald. Brenda Konkel (notified).

Others: 6 – Mike May (City Attorney), Dave Faust (Information Services), Sarah Edgerton (Information Services), Maribeth Witzel-Behl (City Clerk), Pam Williamson (Mayor's Office), Debbie Fields (staff to the subcommittee).

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Clausius moved approval of the May 1, 2008, minutes, seconded by Schumacher. The motion passed unanimously.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Legistar and website issues.

Rhodes-Conway outlined the Legistar and website issues the subcommittee has discussed so far:

- How can the public find out about committees? Who is on them, when do they meet, what is on the agendas, etc.? How can a clearer distinction between standing bodies and ad hocs be drawn?
- How does the public find out there about committee vacancies?

She asked Clausius and Schumacher if they had anything to add. Nothing was mentioned. She said she thought an open discussion would be the most productive way to approach this topic.

Williamson explained that staff is guided by Administrative Procedure Memorandum (APM) 3-1 in terms of which bodies go into Legistar. According to the APM, the criteria are as follows:

- The board/committee/commission is created by Common Council legislation (ordinance, resolution or report). The purpose of the body shall be outlined in the adopted City legislation, and in some cases, may even be mandated by federal and/or state laws.
- The members are appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council.
- The body shall meet on a regular basis or as prescribed in the adopted legislation, and shall produce agendas and minutes as dictated by Legistar guidelines and shall report back to the Council any legislation referred to its board, committee or commission.

Rhodes-Conway said it sounds like Williamson deals mainly with standing committees. Williamson said yes, adding that she also has the subcommittees and ad hocs that are created by the Common Council. Rhodes-Conway asked if creation by Common Council legislation is the difference between Legistar committees and the Notice of Additional Public Meetings committees. Williamson said that it is.

Rhodes-Conway said it seems to her that people are likely to go to the "Committees" page to find information about a committee, so she would like to see more information linked to that page. Edgerton said that the Committees page could be linked back to the main page, but because of the way the Legistar database runs, it's not possible to go straight to the agenda and minutes. She added that she and Williamson are currently reworking that whole section of the Committees page. She characterized it as a "basic overhaul" to make it more user-friendly and more pleasing to look at. Rhodes-Conway asked her to elaborate on what they're doing. Edgerton said they are creating separate categories:

- Standing Boards, Commissions and Committees
- Mayoral/Council Appointments to Non-City Committees
- Ad Hoc Committees/Subcommittees/Task Forces
- Training and Support
- "Get Involved"
- Vacancies
- Forms

Edgerton also said that current practice is to put the home addresses and phone numbers of committee members on the committee's roster. In the case of some committees, seats are designated for members meeting specific criteria, such as using a wheelchair, and this information has also been published on the Web. With the redesigned Committees page, home addresses, phone numbers and other personal information will no longer be made public.

Schumacher asked if the City's online committee forms would accept an electronic signature. In his opinion, it defeats the purpose to fill in a form online and then have to print it out to sign it. Edgerton said the forms do not accept an electronic signature, and she expressed a concern that electronic signatures could be stolen.

May asked about the timeline for completion of the overhaul of the Committees page. Edgerton said they are almost done, adding that the vacancy report will come a little later. Rhodes-Conway said she's pleased to have noticed more ad hocs showing up on the vacancy report. Williamson explained that she adds that information in the Progress report but, as of right now, it can't be shown on the Web, adding that they're working on that. She went on to say that several years ago, former Common Council President Gary Poulson had requested that a vacancy list be produced, showing vacancies on standing committees. Previously, there had not been a vacancy list at all. She also mentioned that some committees, like the EOC Employment Committee, always have vacancies, but they are vacancies that don't always have to be filled. She wondered if such situations might skew the public's perception of how diligently the City is working to fill vacancies. Schumacher said he doesn't think citizens will follow the vacancy list that closely.

Faust identified one of the challenges as the sheer number of committees, commissions, boards, subcommittees, ad hocs, task forces, work groups, etc. Specifically, displaying the information for so many bodies in a meaningful way can be problematic, as just the list of bodies can rapidly become unwieldy. Rhodes-Conway agreed, but said that from the open government and public participation points of view, you want something that is user-friendly, but you don't want to obscure the important work that is done in subcommittees. For example, a citizen who is interested in transportation may identify

the Long Range Transportation Planning Committee and the Transit and Parking Commission from the drop-down list as being of potential interest, but he or she would have no idea that the Long Range Metro Transit Planning Ad Hoc Committee even exists.

Witzel-Behl pointed out that subcommittees should be reporting back to their parent committees. A subcommittee's report should be noted on the parent committee's agenda as a discussion item, and each item the subcommittee had discussed should be noted below that. The minutes of the subcommittee's meeting(s) should be scanned and attached to the legislative file for the parent committee's discussion item, and all would then be searchable on the Web. Rhodes-Conway observed that this might not be happening in all committees now.

Rhodes-Conway stated that she is sympathetic to the desire to make things user-friendly from both the staff and the public perspectives. However, she said she has a concern that citizens aren't able to know when an issue in which they're interested is being discussed. For example, if people were interested in long range planning for Warner Park, it might not be apparent to them from looking at the Board of Park Commissioners agenda that a subcommittee would be discussing that issue. The question for her is how to make it clear where the public should go to get that information. She wondered if IT could put language on the Committees page directing people to other pages (Weekly Meeting Schedule, Notice of Additional Public Meetings, etc.) if they can't find what they're looking for on the Committees page. Edgerton said that could be done.

Edgerton said she thinks a lot of these issues can be resolved through relabeling, rebranding and rethinking. She explained that when Madison got Legistar, the City basically followed what Daystar had done for their other customers on the Committees page, and when the upgrade came out, the City just copied everything that had been done the first time around. She mentioned that they've been struggling with the "Notice of Additional Public Meetings" label. They don't like that label, but they haven't been able to come up with anything else. She invited the subcommittee to submit suggestions for a new name.

Rhodes-Conway noted that, in contrast to the relatively constant standing committees and subcommittees, there are ad hocs, task forces and short-term subcommittees that are changing all the time. She wondered if there is a way to organize that information in Legistar and on the Committees page to make it easier to deal with the turnover. Edgerton invited the subcommittee to recommend new labels for the main page and the Committee Information Center that, but she cautioned that the Legistar database can't be changed and that care needs to be taken in how many lists are created because there is no staff to support them. Rhodes-Conway said she really likes the idea of renaming and relabeling to make it more obvious to the public where they need to go to get the information they want.

Rhodes-Conway summarized which bodies do/do not go into Legistar:

- If a standing body is created by ordinance or resolution, with members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council, it goes into Legistar.
- If an ad hoc body is created by Common Council legislation, with members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Council, it goes into Legistar.
- If a body is created by order of the Mayor, it does not go into Legistar.
- If a body is created by order of the Council President, it does not go into Legistar.
- Staff committees do not go into Legistar.
- Non-City committees with mayoral/Council appointments do not go into Legistar.

Edgerton noted that once a body is entered into Legistar, it can never be deleted because all its history lines would be deleted, too, and other committees' work depend on the retention of that history. Rhodes-Conway asked if an ad hoc committee that is in Legistar could be transferred to the Notice of Additional Public Meetings archive after its work was done. Edgerton replied that it could not because it could affect the workflow of other committees.

Schumacher asked about erroneous meeting listings and multiple listings for one meeting appearing on the Legislative Calendar. Witzel-Behl explained that is user error and volunteered to send out a "Legistar Tip of the Day" addressing the issue.

Williamson mentioned that in addition to Legistar, she also works with a program called "My Commit." Faust explained that this program was written in-house, many years ago, long before Legistar. It had been hoped that Legistar would swallow this function, but it didn't. In fact, according to Edgerton, it has regressed. Faust said the City talked to Daystar about getting more involved in creating a better "Officers and People" function, but they weren't interested. He said they're looking at how much it would cost to have someone come in, start from scratch, clean up the system Williamson currently uses, and build something that leverages what's in Legistar (so there isn't double data entry) and gives her the ability to maintain the rest of the information that Legistar doesn't have.

Rhodes-Conway brought up the issue of attachments to the agendas and/or minutes of non-Legistar committees. These attachments cannot be hyperlinked to the agenda or minutes because they are not part of the Legistar database. Some committees, including this one, get around the problem by tacking all the attachments at the end of the agenda, but the majority of non-Legistar committees do not do so, thus the public does not get to see those materials. She wondered if there is any standard for handling this situation and if staff receives any instructions on how to handle it.

Witzel-Behl replied that when the non-Legistar committee reports back to the parent committee, all of the non-Legistar committee's attachments should then be attached in Legistar. Rhodes-Conway asked what is supposed to happen if the non-Legistar committee doesn't report to any other Legistar committees. Edgerton said they don't have an answer for that, and Faust said they would have to think about it. Rhodes-Conway said that whether the attachments get tacked onto the agenda, added to the minutes, or get hosted somewhere else, she would like to see a solution to this problem. She said that if the staffperson for the non-Legistar committee is creating all these attachments, there ought to be some place to put them so they're available to the public. Faust agreed with that statement. Edgerton added that she's noticed in scrolling through the Notice of Additional Public Meetings calendar that many committees are not posting their minutes. She said if they aren't doing that, there's no way they're going to put all that additional material on there. She reiterated that it's up to the staffperson to do that, and that's going to have to be one of those things where a message is sent out, adding that it's very hard to enforce compliance.

Rhodes-Conway said she understands that Legistar has all sorts of internal functions that are important, but the whole point of it is to manage the process of making Madison's government open and accessible. So, if this other parallel system exists to make all the non-Legistar committees open and accessible, that needs to be folded into the training that staff gets on using Legistar. Specifically, staff needs to be instructed to post the agenda attachments and the meeting minutes. She said she is looking for IT and the Legistar Team to come up with a standard they're comfortable with so the subcommittee can take it to the Mayor and ask for an APM that can be enforced.

Rhodes-Conway asked the other members if they had anything to add. There were no suggestions. She thanked Williamson, Edgerton, Faust and Witzel-Behl for attending.

b. Proposal on outstanding issues identified by the subcommittee.

The members discussed the following outstanding items:

- Committee terms.

The members recalled that they had discussed this at an earlier meeting and had suggested three-year term limits, but flagged the issue as something they wanted to come back to. They decided to leave the proposal at three years.

- Elevation of alternates to open full seats.

Rhodes-Conway relayed to the other members that George Twigg said the Mayor's Office is not interested in anything that would require or allow any alternates a "first crack" at open seats. Schumacher agreed with that as far as "standard" committees are concerned, but he said he sees neighborhood planning and steering committees as a special circumstance where alternates should get first consideration for full membership. Rhodes-Conway and Clausius agreed, with Clausius adding that it's an issue of fairness.

The members discussed whether there are any other types of committees where alternates should be elevated to open full seats. They agreed that this practice shouldn't be required across the board. Rhodes-Conway suggested two options: Adding it to the template or putting language into the MGOs stating that neighborhood steering committees shall follow the practice of elevating alternates to open full seats. Schumacher liked the second option because that way it won't be forgotten and it becomes more of a way of doing business. Clausius agreed, and emphasized the importance of specifying that the requirement apply to neighborhood steering committees only.

May said he thinks the subcommittee has identified a valid concern about a very specific type of grassroots committee, but he believes putting language in the resolutions forming such groups is preferable to adding it to the MGOs. He reasoned that in ten years there may not be any more such groups or they may be called something entirely different, rendering the ordinance obsolete. Schumacher countered that neighborhood steering committees have been around for a long time, that they're not a new phenomenon. Rhodes-Conway said either way, at the very minimum, instructions should go in the template. The members agreed to revisit the topic. Rhodes-Conway asked Fields to check with Jule Stroick to verify the correct name for such neighborhood groups and to get her input as to what would work best for Planning staff.

- Require sub-units with alternate seats to number them so it is clear who votes first.

The members agreed this is a good idea. May said he would add it to the definitions.

- Restriction on alders serving as chairs.

Rhodes-Conway reminded the other members that they'd wanted to come back to this and asked if they still wanted to revisit it. Schumacher said he didn't have an interest in revisiting it, adding that it had just been an intellectual question for him the first time it was discussed. Clausius asked if this is an across the board restriction with no exceptions. May said the only exception is if the chair and vice chair are not present and the other members of the body want the alder to serve as chair for that meeting only.

Schumacher asked what happens in the case of a non-Legistar, ad hoc committee. Rhodes-Conway said she thinks it's still covered. May read from the ordinance: "...no alderperson shall be the chairperson, co-chairperson, or vice-chairperson of any...subcommittee... authorized to have more than two citizen members appointed

by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council...In the event the citizen chair and vice-chair are absent from a meeting, an alder, upon consensus of the members present, may assume the chair. However, in no event shall an alder serve as chair of any such committee, commission or board for more than two consecutive meetings." May interpreted the ordinance as applicable to the situation Schumacher had described.

Schumacher asked about non-voting members participating in meetings, and he used the Alcohol License Review Committee (ALRC) as an example, where there are full members who don't vote and don't count towards quorum but who are part of the roll call. May said he thinks that should be cleaned up, that the non-voting full members could be advisors instead.

- 15-minute rule for quorum.
The members agreed to leave this in place without changes.
- Develop a list of criteria to guide the naming process/defined set of name choices from which to choose and add to template.
The members agreed to the following:
 - If a sub-unit is standing and has some independent authority, it shall be called a Board or Commission.
 - If a sub-unit is standing and is advisory only, it shall be called Committee or Subcommittee.
 - If a sub-unit is temporary, it can be called a Committee, Subcommittee or Task Force, but the name must contain the words "Ad Hoc."

Schumacher said that when he hears the word "sub-unit," he thinks of a subcommittee, ad hoc or work group, not a committee, commission or board. He wondered if May could come up with some other term. May said he took the word out of the Open Meeting Law but offered to try to come up with something else.

Schumacher asked if "work groups," such as the 311 group, will remain an option. May asked what he meant by work group. Rhodes-Conway said he means creating a group of staff and alders that meet multiple times on a particular issue but is not a formally constituted body. May said if such groups are going to make a recommendation when they're done, then they ought to be an ad hoc body created either by order of the Mayor, order of the Council President or resolution. However, if the Mayor makes a formal request of his staff to gather information on, for example, 311 and report back to him, then May said he doesn't think it's a formal committee because the Mayor can decide to pull people together for that purpose.

c. Sub-units with no alders.

Schumacher said he'd raised the issue because he was surprised that the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center Board has no alders, especially since the Board's work has potential budget implications. He said the Monona Terrace Board stuck out for him because it seemed to be somewhat equivalent to the Greater Madison Convention and Visitors Bureau Board, which does have an alder member. Rhodes-Conway said she thinks most of the committees with no alders are required to be such, with the exception of:

- Committee on Community Gardens
- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Award Committee
- Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center Board
- Parking Council for People with Disabilities

Schumacher asked May to find out why none of the six City seats on the Monona Terrace Board are filled by an alder. He said if there is no real reason, he thinks there should be

an alder member. May asked Schumacher if he is interested knowing why the other three committees (above) don't have an alder. Schumacher said he is not.

Rhodes-Conway wondered if, philosophically speaking, committees without alder members should be allowed for reasons other than a statutory requirement. In other words, could the Common Council create a committee with citizens only, no alders, and charge it to meet and perform some mission? Schumacher said he guesses so, adding that he has no philosophical issue with that.

Rhodes-Conway reminded the subcommittee of their intention to come back to the discussion about elevating alternates to open, full seats at a future meeting. And, in the interests of time, she said they would defer the discussion about naming to a future meeting also.

d. Continue discussion about naming: Subcommittees, staff committees, other/unknown. The subcommittee did not have time to discuss this item and agreed to put it on their next agenda.

e. Need for additional future meetings/possible future agenda items. The members reviewed their availability and tentatively decided on the following date:

- Thursday, June 12, 2008
4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
City-County Building, Room 417
210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

Rhodes-Conway asked Fields to double-check with the members via email about June 12 and also to survey them about their availability for the remainder of June and the first two weeks of July.

The members decided on the following items for their next agenda:

- Extra-majority vote requirement for appointment of non-residents, especially those who own a business in Madison.
- Continue discussion about naming: Subcommittees, staff committees, other/unknown.
- Continue discussion about elevation of alternates to open full seats.
- Ad hocs that should become standing and ad hocs that should be eliminated because their work is done.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Schumacher moved adjournment, seconded by Clausius. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.