



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes - Approved TASK FORCE ON STRUCTURE OF CITY GOVERNMENT

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

6:30 PM

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Madison Municipal Building, Room 215

POSSIBLE QUORUM OF THE COMMON COUNCIL EXISTS AT THIS MEETING

[50732](#)

Documents related to the Task Force on the Structure of City Government

THE TASK FORCE MAY SUSPEND THE RULES TO STAND INFORMALLY AND ALLOW FOR PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND ENGAGEMENT OF ANY AGENDA ITEM

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Present: 10 - Paul E. Skidmore; David Ahrens; Rebecca Kemble; Ronald M. Trachtenberg; John E. Rothschild; Roger Goodwin; Justice M. Castañeda; Maggie Northrop; Eric S. Upchurch and Eileen Harrington

Absent: 1 - Sheri Carter

Eileen Harrington and Ron Trachtenberg appeared by telephone.

Others present: Keith Furman, Karl van Lith, Peter Cannon, Nick Zavos, Michael May and John Strange

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Northrop and second by Kemble to approve the minutes of the March 12, 2019 meeting. Approved on a voice vote.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Peter Cannon, formerly of the Legislative Reference Bureau, made a presentation urging the Task Force not to decrease the size of the Common Council. His presentation will be part of the record.

4. DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

There were no disclosures or recusals at this meeting.

5. CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION TO INCLUDE IN TFOGS REPORT TO COMMON COUNCIL REGARDING THE STRUCTURE OF THE COMMON COUNCIL

Chair Harrington turned the conduct of the meeting over to vice-chair John Rothschild. On the issue under item A., Ahrens moved and Castañeda

seconded to recommend that the Council become a full-time body. There was no discussion. The motion failed on a vote of 6 noes and 3 abstentions.

At this point, Justice Castañeda raised a point of order on the procedure being followed. He objected to the process being used by the TFOGS, and to the lack of adequate representation by people of color on TFOGS. A lengthy discussion ensued on the process to be followed and the nature of the draft report to be prepared by the TFOGS. One suggestion was to use the Subcommittee reports as the Draft Report to take for public engagement and participation. Others suggested taking preliminary votes, but including the pros and cons as set out in the Subcommittee reports.

John Rothschild moved and Justice Castañeda seconded that the Task Force take up item 8, the Communications Subcommittee Report and to discuss the type of public participation that the TFOGS wished to engage in. That motion failed on a voice vote.

The Task Force engaged in further discussion on the nature of the draft report and whether it should include draft recommendations or not, before full public participation. Eventually, Eric Upchurch moved to defer voting on items 5, 6, and 7 of the Agenda until the Task Force conducted public engagement and participation. He modified the motion to allow discussion of those items, if desired, but defer any voting until after the public participation phase. The motion was seconded by Justice Castañeda. Motion approved on a vote of 6 Ayes, 3 Noes.

Rebecca Kemble asked the City Attorney about a Council with some or all at large alders. The City Attorney responded that it was possible but would take a charter ordinance, requiring a 2/3 vote.

The TFOGS moved back to a discussion of Item 5. There were no more comments on 5A. On 5B, the question of at large or a hybrid council, Justice Castañeda noted that this structural change might or might not increase representation of underrepresented communities. He then reiterated a point made in the Common Council Subcommittee Report that given the long history of Madison having an under-representative Common Council (compared to the history of the Madison School Board), there really may be no downside to trying an alternative form versus maintaining the status quo, which has historically not worked well for people of color and low income. There was further discussion on increasing such representation.

6. CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCLUDE IN TFOGS REPORT TO COMMON COUNCIL REGARDING THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES (BCCs)

There was no discussion of agenda item 6 other than to note a majority of the TFOGS looked positively on a BCC restructuring at the last meeting.

7. CONSIDERATION OF OTHER POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCLUDE IN THE TFOGS REPORT TO THE COMMON COUNCIL, INCLUDING:

The TFOGS noted that there was relative consensus on item B (4 year terms for alders), item C (no term limits needed for alders) and item I (alders should not

chair committees). There also had been a general consensus on item A (creation of the ORENS department) in theory, although not on the details.

Roger Goodwin asked if the ORENS would be a separate department and was advised it would. He also commented on item G (Mayoral appointment to BCCs) and warned that if the Council president were given the power to appoint members of BCCs, it might be an overwhelming task. He thought it should stay with the Mayor. Justice Castañeda agreed that most appointments should stay with the Mayor, but the President of the Council could do more. Rebecca Kemble said that she liked the idea of collaboration between the Mayor and the President on appointments.

Eric Upchurch noted that the ORENS proposal should have included the need to address the impacts on various communities when considering proposals. Rebecca Kemble said she had heard from city staff who were concerned with this proposal.

The TFOGS decided that if any of them had comments on the draft Staff Survey, they should be given to Mike May or John Strange by Friday. The survey would then either go out or be revisited at the next TFOGS meeting on April 9.

8. UPDATE FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

As its last order of business, the TFOGS decided that item 8, the Communications Subcommittee report and proposals for participation should be the first agenda item on April 9.

9. FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

Nothing to report on Agenda Item No. 9.

10. ADJOURNMENT

John Rothschild moved to adjourn. Justice Castañeda seconded the motion. It was approved on a voice vote and the TFOGS adjourned at 8:45 pm.