



City of Madison
Minutes – Approved

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

**Task Force on Structure of City Government
Boards, Commissions and Committees
Subcommittee**

Monday, December 3, 2018

5:00 p.m.

Madison Municipal Building, Room 110
215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

**NOTE: POSSIBLE QUORUM OF THE TASK FORCE ON THE
STRUCTURE OF CITY GOVERNMENT OR THE COMMON COUNCIL
MAY BE PRESENT AT THIS MEETING**

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Yog hais tias koj xav tau ib tug neeg txhais lus, ib tug neeg txhais ntawv, cov ntawv ua lwm hom ntawv los sis lwm cov kev pab kom siv tau cov kev pab, cov kev ua ub no (activity) los sis qhov kev pab cuam, thov hu rau tus xov tooj hauv qab yam tsawg peb hnub ua hauj lwm ua ntej yuav tuaj sib tham.

Office of the City Attorney (608) 266-4511

[Legislative File No. 50732](#) - DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE TASK FORCE

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Meeting Called to Order at 5:00 p.m.

Present: John Rothschild, Justice Castañeda, Alder Rebecca Kemble and Maggie Northrop

Absent: Eric Upchurch

Also Present: Alder Paul Skidmore, Deputy Mayor Anne Monks, Assistant City Attorney John Strange

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Rothschild, seconded by Kemble to approve minutes from November 19, 2018 meeting. Motion approved on a voice vote.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at this meeting.

4. DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

There were no disclosures or recusals from the members present.

5. DISCUSSION OF THE CURRENT STRUCTURE OF THE CITY’S BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

The subcommittee discussed the current structure of the city’s boards, committees, and commissions and identified pros and cons associated with it:

PROS	CONS
High number of BCCs provide avenue for resident participation in city government.	High number of BCCs is cumbersome and promotes intellectual constipation, slowing decision points down and leading to infinite numbers of studies and workgroups.
Alders serving on each BCC provides avenue for residents to interface with alders.	High number of BCCs only appear to provide avenue of resident participation when, in fact, they create a veneer of representation.
High number of BCCs creates possibility that CC will get input from multiple bodies.	Composition of BCCs shows a significant lack of diversity. Less than 25% of members are people of color. 30% of members come from only 5 of the city’s 20 aldermanic districts. This results in unelected people who don’t represent all of the people and who are accountable to no one.
High number of BCCs supports part-time council members by providing a venue for discussion and development of detailed analysis.	Unevenness in BCCs. Upper tier BCCs tend to know their role, stick to their role, and operate according to rules and procedures; lower tier BCCs tend not to and can be problematic.
Opportunities to serve helps residents develop knowledge and expertise in particular subject areas, or to share their already established expertise as it relates to issues facing the city.	High number of BCCs suck staff and alder time that could be used to do something more meaningful.
Allows residents to get a better understanding of the city and how it works in a way that may inspire further civic participation.	A majority of government officials surveyed think that there are too many BCCs and that the structure should be changed.
High number of BCCs could serve to limit ability of one alder to dominate multiple committees.	Relatively large number of vacancies; reluctance of people to serve because they think it is a waste of time; inability to serve because of time commitment involved.
Mandatory alder representation on each BCC keeps check on BCCs and provides liaison to the CC	Time, place, and manner of how and where BCCs meet is a barrier to service.
	Many BCCs lack a clarity of purpose.
	Lack of training of members and chairs leads to members not knowing what they are supposed to do and how to do it.
	Staffing issues related to which city staff are required to attend BCC meetings
	BCCs largely do not produce a good product, especially lower tier BCCs.
	1 item can go to multiple BCCs
	Many standing BCCs have outlived usefulness
	Some view running for office or serving on BCCs as a way to work for the city and tell staff what to do and how to do it.

In developing this list, the subcommittee noted that these pros and cons could also be looked at as a comparison of the way the structure was intended to work versus how it actually appears to work. For example, the high number of BCCs and member positions would appear to provide for a highly participatory democracy when, perhaps, in fact, the lack of diversity on the BCCs reveals that only certain portions of the city are truly getting an opportunity to participate in government. In this way, perhaps, the BCC system creates a veneer of citizen participation.

The subcommittee also discussed how many of these items and the potential solutions to them are intertwined with issues being discussed by the TFOGS Common Council Subcommittee.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The subcommittee will meet again on December 12, 2018 to discuss possible strategies for addressing some of the challenges noted above in the current structure of the City's BCCs.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Kemble, second by Rothschild to adjourn. Motion approved on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.