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Sent: Tuesday, June 28, 2022 11:12 PM
To: Common Council Executive Committee
Cc: All Alders
Subject: Agenda Item #4 - Legistar #70667

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To the Members of the Common Council Executive Committee

After closely reviewing the proposed BCC Self-Evaluation Form and Instructions, my comments have been updated and expanded from the email I sent to you on 6/1/22 on this topic; and they focus on item #4 on the 6/29/22 CCEC agenda.

Although I am the current Chair of the Transportation Commission (TC), I am sharing my individual opinions from my personal experiences as Chair of several City Boards, Committees and Commissions (BCCs).

I urge you to postpone taking any action recommending adoption of the proposed BCC Self-Evaluation Form and Instructions to comply with the proposed amendment to MGO 33.01(9). While this evaluation form may serve a useful purpose for the Water Utility Board, I do not believe it will provide meaningful feedback or information to other BCCs in the format proposed, with details provided below.

I have spent more than 30 years devoted to helping others engage in self-evaluation and self-improvement through teaching and facilitating professional adult education courses and meetings. I have watched countless numerical self-evaluation forms be completed by participants; however, I have seen little value from the numerical rankings produced. Often the numerical ranking does not really reflect what that person thinks about the questions, as people approach filling out numerical ranking surveys or evaluations differently. Some people only ever give the highest rankings; some people never give the highest rankings; and some people allow their unhappiness to be reflected in very poor ratings (whether deserved or not).

Better information is obtained from participants in evaluations when they are asked to provide their specific, free-form comments and suggestions/recommendations in response to carefully crafted questions (rather than just completing numerical rankings). Because members can build on the comments of others, having verbal discussions regarding BCC self-evaluation and self-improvement could be more productive than written evaluations. It is worth noting that there is an additional challenge when considering what BCC members might recommend to improve their meetings, since we must operate according to and within the City's ordinances and meeting procedures. Involvement from the City Attorney's Office would be very beneficial.

During my career at the bank I was responsible for drafting certain Policies Guidelines and Procedures (PGPs) related to credit and risk topics, implementing the updated or new PGPs (including providing training), and responding to questions after the PGPs were adopted. This has given me an in-depth background in analyzing the details of proposed new procedures, as well as identifying potential issues regarding implementation of proposed new procedures. Following are some of my questions and comments regarding the proposed BCC Self-Evaluation Form and the Instructions.

Proposed BCC Self-Evaluation Form Questions do not include "uncertain" (or a similar category) as a potential choice for an answer. In addition, there is no place provided for any comments to be added in response to any of the questions. Many of the questions appear to be almost rhetorical in nature, as everyone would naturally want to say

they do participate, are prepared, do listen, are honest and respectful, do honor City procedures, policies and ordinances, do represent the collective interest of Madison residents, and do consider equity principles in all decision. In addition, you can be confident in terms of answering these questions about yourself; but I am not sure how certain you could be when trying to answer regarding other members. Here are other comments related to each of the proposed questions:

Question #1: I know from my experience (as an instructor, a meeting facilitator, and a BCC Chair), that some members are more extroverted and participate extensively, while other members are more introspective and may choose to participate more selectively. With regard to accessibility and inclusion, according to City meeting procedures and Robert's Rules, the BCC Chair should offer every member an opportunity to speak when they raise their hand and ask to be recognized (in the appropriate order). In addition, a good Chair checks back in with the members to ensure that all input is received on each topic. This also encourages participation.

Question #2: It is difficult to know if all members are prepared. If no questions are asked or comments made, members may just be comfortable with the information/recommendations provided.

Question #3: Interruptions are not allowed under our City meeting procedures or Robert's Rules except for very few reasons, and then only when the urgency justifies that interruption (Robert's Rules 11th Edition p. 383-384). It is up to each member to engage in active listening; and difficult to know what other members might be doing.

Question #4: How can one member know if other members are offering honest opinions and respecting the viewpoints of other members, unless disrespectful comments are made by a member? If disrespectful comments are made, it would be up to the Chair to restore order and remind members of the need to be respectful.

Question #5: While I closely follow changes in City procedures and policies related to any BCC on which I serve, I am not certain that is common practice for all BCC members. BCC Chair, with the assistance of staff and the City Attorney's Office, is responsible for making sure that the BCC follows relevant City policies, procedures and ordinances. Also, I would note that certain City policies are not outlined in the Madison General Ordinances (MGO), as indicated in question #5. For example, there are transportation policies which were approved by the Common Council via resolution that are not found in the MGO.

Question #6: How can a member really answer question #6? Nobody can definitively say they "represent the collective interest of current and future Madison resident." All we can do is try....

Question #7: This question is a very important. I believe every BCC should at least annually revisit its commitment to including Racial Equity and Social Justice in its work on a consistent basis. TC has included a similar item in its Work Plan on at least a semiannual basis. Questions included in question #7 in italics are shown at the top of every BCC agenda as a very important reminder to be considered during each meeting.

BCC Self-Evaluation Form Instructions indicate in the first paragraph of the proposed guidelines: "The self-evaluation is not a report card." However, any numerical evaluation form is used as a report card, since numerical answers are all that is provided in this format. Also, Option #3 talks about watching for scores that are 2 or lower as a warning sign for discussion, which certainly sounds like they are proposed to be used as a report card.

There appear to be some inconsistencies between the guidelines in the BCC Self-Evaluation Instructions and the proposed amendment to MGO 33.01(9).

- Proposed amendment to MGO 33.01(9) indicates: "At the end of each meeting, every Sub-unit shall complete and/or discuss a self-evaluation form as approved by the Common Council."
- Option #3 in the guidelines indicates that members can fill out the self-evaluation form after the meeting and send it to committee staff. Staff reviews them and notifies the Chair and Vice-Chair of any questions with a score of 2 or lower; and then that topic would be put as an item on the agenda for the next meeting to

discuss. So this appears to indicate that there would not be an agenda item at each BCC meeting for discussion unless there are consistently items that score 2 or lower. So, under this option, it appears that if all items consistently score 3 or higher, the Chair and Vice-Chair would receive no notifications, and there would be no items to add to the agenda for discussion.

- General comment at the end of the guidelines indicates that it is advisable to plan on a quarterly reflection of the self-evaluation results for the previous quarter. This appears to be inconsistent with the proposed amendment to 33.01 which references this being done at every meeting.

If BCC members no longer have confidence in their Chair, or if their Chair is not viewed by BCC members as doing a satisfactory job, procedures were added in 11/21 [MGO 33.01(7)(b)] that provide for removal of a Chair at the pleasure of the BCC (by an affirmative vote of 2/3 of the members) or by the Common Council for cause (by an affirmative vote of 3/4 of the members).

I urge you to recommend that no BCC Self-Evaluation Form be adopted for required use by all BCCs at this time. If certain BCCs wish to use a self-evaluation form, I believe the proposed BCC Self-Evaluation Form and Instructions could benefit from review and revision. I also recommend that significant additional study be conducted before any such change is considered.

Thanks,

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