

CITY OF MADISON
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL
CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: August 31, 2006

TO: Council President Austin King

FROM: Tammy Peters

SUBJECT: **Council Business introduced from the Council floor**

Hi Austin. I wanted to bring to your attention an issue that is becoming a rather large problem with the legislative process. The items being introduced from the council floor have become rather problematic & they are increasing in number. Here are some examples of the problems that this process creates:

Items that are introduced from the floor & not entered in Legistar yet: It takes usually 2-3 days for the text file to get entered for these items & then another 1-2 days to get the fiscal note approved. I can't add the item to the council proceedings & issue the referrals until the text is entered & the fiscal note is approved. Entering the referrals before the fiscal note has been approved changes the file(s) status to 'items referred' & the comptroller's office checks for their outstanding items by search by the status of 'Fiscal Note Required'. Many items may come back to the Common Council without fiscal notes if I add the referrals or many items are delayed & can't be referred accordingly until the fiscal note is approved. I also can't finalize my proceedings or publish them until all of the outstanding issues are resolved for these items. This affects many people that rely on the proceedings being available so they can do their follow up work. For example, ID# 04391 was introduced at the 8/1 CC Meeting from the floor & the text was finally entered on 8/21. The fiscal note was approved on 8/23, so I was able to add it to my proceedings on 8/24 & issue the referrals. The history lines are also out of sync & are very difficult to understand. (I have attached ID# 04391 so you can see what I am referring to). I also have to check each file introduced from the floor once a day to see if the fiscal note has been approved, which is very cumbersome. Then I have to send an email to all the referral agencies to let them know that an item(s) has been referred to them, because it is well after the period where they would normally check for council referrals to the committee/commission/board they support.

Items that are introduced from the floor & are entered in Legistar & do not have fiscal notes: This is a little better, but still causes a delay in issuing referrals & completing the proceedings. Also, the history lines are also out of sync & are very difficult to understand. I can't issue the referrals or finalize the proceedings until the fiscal note is approved. I have to check each file introduced from the floor once a day to see if the fiscal note has been approved. Then I have to send an email to all the referral agencies to let them know that an item(s) has been referred to them, because it is well after the period where they would normally check for council referrals to the committee/commission/board they support.

Items that are introduced from the floor & are entered in Legistar & do have fiscal notes: This is by far the most efficient way of items being introduced from the floor. It ensures prompt referrals & does not delay the completion of the council proceedings. It also ensures that the history lines are in sync and it is easy to understand the flow of the legislation.

August 31, 2006

Page 2

In summary, there are council deadlines for a reason & I really think that introducing items from the floor allows people to not abide by the deadline. This practice really needs to be closely reviewed & some rules/guidelines need to be established. I believe that the only items that should be introduced from the council floor should be on an emergency basis or because they are truly time-sensitive. If items continue to be introduced from the floor, it really needs to be done so that the text file is complete & the fiscal note is approved. This is affecting many people & their ability to get their work done timely & efficiently. Thank you.