



**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

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Thursday, March 27, 2008

4:00 p.m.

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

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**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m. A quorum was noted, and the meeting was properly noticed.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**Present:** 4 – Ald. Satya Rhodes-Conway (chair), Ald. Brenda Konkel, Ald. Joe Clausius, Ald. Michael Schumacher.

**Absent:** None.

**Others:** 7 – City Attorney Michael May, Ariel Ford (Department of Civil Rights), Dana Warren (Office of Real Estate Services and member, Minority Affairs Committee), Christie Hill (Department of Civil Rights and member, Minority Affairs Committee and Women’s Issues Committee), Glen Clark (member, Minority Affairs Committee), Nancy McCulley (member, Women’s Issues Committee), Debbie Fields (staff to the subcommittee).

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Since all the persons in attendance were at this meeting for the first discussion item, their comments were deferred until that time.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Konkel moved approval of the March 13, 2008, minutes, seconded by Schumacher. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**5. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- a. Legislative File ID #08992: Creating Section 33.27 of the Madison General Ordinances to codify the existence of the Minority Affairs Committee and the Women’s Issues Committee.

Rhodes-Conway said the most relevant connection between the subcommittee’s work and the proposed ordinance change is the subcommittee’s discussion of what sub-units should be included in MGO Chapter 33 and how they should operate.

May said he thinks the instances where a City staff committee should be formalized would be rare. In this case, he thinks there are two reasons to do it for the Minority Affairs Committee (MAC) and the Women’s Issues Committee (WIC):

- Both committees have been in existence for many years, continuing to meet and do the work they’ve been doing. In line with this subcommittee’s recommendations, if MAC and WIC want to be “real” committees, they should be in the Ordinances.
- The members of MAC and WIC feel they are unique in the City: They’ve been together a long time, take up very specific issues, and have done very specific things over time within the City. They think it’s important to be formalized but in such a way that gives them more freedom than a regular standing committee would have.

The following issues and concerns were raised and discussed:

- Appointments: May said this is also a unique situation. Potential members “self-volunteer,” start attending meetings, and if they express interest in becoming a permanent member, their name goes to the head of the Department of Civil Rights who then recommends them to the Mayor, and then the Mayor makes the appointment without going to the Council for confirmation.
- Number of members/quorum: May said the number of members would be set by rule, not by ordinance. MAC and WIC would have to have quorum in order to meet, but quorum would be variable, dependent upon the membership at the time.
- “Slippage”: Konkel said she understands and supports what MAC and WIC want to do, but she would like to see them get a special designation that clearly says they are different and can operate by certain different rules. She said she is concerned with avoiding “slippage” on other formally-created committees.
- Referrals: Konkel asked if the Council could refer items to MAC and WIC if they were formalized. May said no, adding that referrals are one way to differentiate MAC and WIC from other standing bodies. Issues would be referred to the Equal Opportunities Commission or the Affirmative Action Commission, and those bodies could then ask MAC or WIC to attend their meetings and give information.
- Downside(s) to formalizing MAC and WIC: May said he thinks the main downsides are that it has never been done that way, and that it may take longer to get people on the committee with a formal process than with the current, simpler process. Warren said MAC and WIC are volunteer groups – it may be hard to get people to come if they have to be approved, and making it so formal defeats the original intent of the committees. Hill agreed, adding that both MAC and WIC are networking committees.
- Committee applications/Statements of Interest: May said applications would not be necessary but thinks Statements of Interest might be.
- Common Council interaction with MAC and WIC: Konkel wondered what rules should be set for interaction between the Council and MAC and WIC. Ford said that MAC and WIC, in their current forms, take their feedback to the Department of Civil Rights, which conveys it to the Council. She thought taking it directly to the Council might make it too politicized.

Rhodes-Conway brought up the possibility of adding a separate category for staff committees. May observed that these bodies are examples of executive branch committees and, as such, should be pulled out of the rules the subcommittee has talked about and have only a few apply to them or have their own set of different rules. Konkel asked the guests present if what May was proposing would give them the level of formality they wanted. Hill replied that it would, adding that she was very appreciative of how supportive May and the Mayor had been. McCulley agreed. May also said that bringing MAC and WIC into the ordinances provides them with some protection from being disbanded by executive order.

May said he could re-draft the proposed ordinance as follows:

- Rename Sec. 33.27 as “Executive Branch Committees”
- Create 33.27(1), Minority Affairs Committee
- Create 33.27(2), Women’s Issues Committee
- Based on the subcommittee’s recommendations, the subsection on each committee would specify which rules it would or would not be subject to:
  - No requirement for term limits; reporting attendance; Statements of Interest; or ex-officio alder members.
  - No referrals from the Common Council.
  - Abide by certain of the rules all committees are subject to: Open meeting law requirements; terms for members; limits on meeting dates; public comment; and the filing of minutes.

- Members shall be recommended by the Director of the Department of Civil Rights (DCR) and appointed by the Mayor. Common Council confirmation would not be required.
- Number of members shall be determined by each body and may be variable.
- May adopt other operating rules or bylaws.

The chair and members of the subcommittee thanked the guests for attending and for their participation in the discussion.

- b. Review template/list of questions (as drafted by the City Attorney) to guide the formation of sub-units.

The subcommittee decided to revise the draft template as follows:

- Add language about whether there are any exceptions to the standard rules (e.g., does the chair vote?)
- Change "Number of Members" to "Number of **Voting** Members" with a recommendation that it be an odd number
- Change "Alternates" to "Alternates **and Non-Voting**"
- Change "Term of Appointment" to "Term of **Non-Alder** Appointment"
- Add something about confirming staff availability for staffing the committee
- Add an instruction/explanation page

The members agreed that the template is a work in progress and that they may want to come back to it at a later date. Rhodes-Conway asked May if could work on fleshing it out based on today's discussion, and he said he would.

- c. Work plan item #2: Subcommittees.

Rhodes-Conway asked if the power to dissolve a subcommittee, like the power to create it, should be given to the parent body or if that was explicit. May said the legal explanation is that it's implied. Rhodes-Conway suggested adding (e) under subsection (4) to talk about dissolution. May said it might be easier to just add the dissolution language to the existing (b), (c) and (d). Schumacher suggested changing the title of subsection (4) to Creation and Dissolution and making the members' terms of appointment coterminous with the dissolution date.

- d. Work plan item #3: Limited term bodies.

Rhodes-Conway said she thinks the members ought to stay focused on the bodies that are inconsistent with the work the subcommittee has done thus far or that need to be specifically identified as being exempt from certain rules, having a special power, etc., as opposed to looking at the technical details of their actual functioning. Due to the lateness of the hour, the members agreed to have this discussion at their next meeting.

## 6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Limited term bodies becoming standing bodies.
- Revisit the template for creating sub-units.
- Staff committees.

## 7. ADJOURNMENT

Schumacher moved, seconded by Konkel, to adjourn. The motion passed by acclamation, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:32 p.m.