

Date: 10/18/19

CITY OF MADISON

Registration Statement - Task Force on the Structure of City Government

COMMITTEE

Please Print

Agenda No. _____

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name Susan Hoffenberg
Address 901 Drake St #501
Madison, WI

Please check the appropriate boxes:

- Support
- Oppose
- Neither Support Nor Oppose

- and
- Wish to speak
 - Do not wish to speak
 - Available to answer questions

At this meeting are you representing an organization or a person other than yourself: Yes No
(If you answered "no," STOP; you need not complete the rest of this form. If you answered "yes," provide the name of who you represent and go on to the next question.)

ne, address and telephone number of each person or organization you are representing:

Are you being paid for your representation? Yes No

Are you appearing as part of your other paid duties for this person or organization? Yes No
(If you answered "no," STOP; you need not complete the rest of this form. If you answered "yes," go on to the next question.)

Speaking Limits: Public Hearing (Common Council)5 minutes
Information Hearing3 minutes
Other Items3 minutes

(SEE BACK)

To the members of the task force on government structure,

I appreciate the description of your task force on the City website that is labeled "Task Force on Government Structure".

The part that speaks most to me is the section where it describes your mission as "...to examine whether changes to city government could help make the City work more effectively for all of its residents, and, particularly, for people of color and low income." As soon as I heard about your task force I began attending immediately. That was on August 13, 2019. I have attended 5 of your meetings in addition to the Open House you hosted at the Warner Park pavilion on September 3.

You have done a good job of gathering data on impediments the public faces when we try to effectively engage with Madison's boards, commissions and committees. Effective City engagement is especially difficult for people of color and low income.

Your Open House on August 28 at the Villager Mall gathered data from the public. One of your questions asked, "Do the BCCs adequately engage City residents?" In order to answer this question, first someone must know that BCC stands for Boards, Commissions and Committees. They also must understand the written purposes of the various BCCs and know how these BBCs actually function.

Responding to your question, "Do the BCCs adequately engage City residents?", two people's answers accurately describe my experiences at your task force meetings. One person wrote, "No! No awareness; no communication, no diversity". Another wrote, "The traditional hearing format for BCCs and Common Council are ineffective for allowing well-informed citizens to participate in discussion after their turn is done."

Another relevant question was, "Do the BCC's adequately represent and serve residents?"

These answers ring true for me.

- No-need more engagement and participation
- No
- No

The final relevant question asks, "Do you think that the City's BCCs create an effective way for city residents to engage with Madison's City Government?"

These points reflect what I experienced at your meetings.

- No-no transparency; no communication to the general community; no central location to get information. Another...
- Siloed departments make it difficult to know what to expect from public processes.
- Not enough diversity and representation of color at "city" meetings.

- **Need for improved trust and understanding**
- **Need to increase culture of openness to resident involvement.**

Finally, I did not attend the Open House on August 28, where this data was collected, but I read your data after you typed it up and distributed it.

Today, an article from Channel 27 states, “The task force’s goal is to evaluate the structure of government in Madison and figure out how to get more community engagement.” I look forward to the City writing an official policy stating that all of its BCCs are to address how they will equitably meet the needs of people of color and low income. This policy will apply to each of the City's group's specific projects. The new policy will have each group write how they will equitably meet the needs of people of color and low income by writing their own specific goals, benchmarks and dates to address these issues in each of their projects. These equity statements must be included, and approved, when the project is officially submitted.

Thank you for your consideration of this information.