

**From:** [Brenda Konkel](#)  
**To:** [All Alders](#); [Mayor](#)  
**Subject:** Eliminating PSRC eliminates council oversight and shirks responsibilities  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 25, 2025 7:59:25 AM

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While I generally disagree with eliminating the voices of the people appointed to committees and giving residents a chance to participate at a deeper level in their local government, the recommendation to eliminate the Public Safety Review Committee seems especially detrimental to the council itself.

As you know, the fire department (\$76M) and the police department (\$96M) are the two largest departments and have the two largest budgets in the city. Together they make up 40% of the city budget. The Public Safety Review Committee is charged with looking at services priorities, annual work plans and long-range goals of the department as well as making recommendations to the City Council and Mayor on the budgets. It is specifically created to assist the council with its statutory duties. The legistar description of the committee is as follows:

The board may review and make recommendations concerning departmental budgets; review service priorities and capital budget priorities of the Police and Fire Departments; serve as liaison between the community and the city on public safety issues; and review annually and make recommendations to the Common Council regarding the annual work plans and long-range goals of the departments.

These are a unique functions separate from the HR responsibilities of the Police and Fire Commission and the role of the Police Civilian Oversight Board. While I was on the the PSRC and chairing it, it was a struggle to do this work for a variety of reasons, I don't believe that is a reason to eliminate its role. In fact, I think you need to put more resources in the budget to support this committee so it can thrive and function properly.

More importantly for you, the alders have no seats on either the Police and Fire Commission or the Police Civilian Oversight Board. If you eliminate the PSRC the alders will have no monthly oversight of issues that arise from the Police and Fire Departments. Practically speaking, who will sponsor legislation from these departments, where will referrals from the City Council go, where will new policies be developed, who will get reports and a heads up on upcoming issues? Who will hear and deliberate on public input on things like police in schools or body cameras, the need for additional fire stations, the CARES program and other controversial topics?

Eliminating the PSRC without a plan for how the Council will have oversight over the Police and Fire Departments in the same manner you do for every other department, especially when it represents 40% of of the budget, is not just shocking, but it's negligent and shows a serious disregard for your responsibilities as alders.

You need to rethink this. I'm happy to talk to anyone who wants to listen about the struggles I had as chair of the committee and what other "fixes" might assist you in fulfilling your oversight responsibilities as alders. Eliminating the committee is not the answer and will cause you more headaches in the long run. Instead, you need to find ways to help that

committee be more effective.

Sincerely  
Brenda Konkel  
30 N Hancock St. (District 2)

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Yes, be kind. AND assume good intentions.

Questions are not criticisms, they are simply requests for information in a world where information is in short supply and often incorrect.

**From:** [Common Council Executive Committee](#)  
**To:** [Baumel, Christie](#); [Matthias, Isaac L](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Comments regarding Committee Reorganization  
**Date:** Monday, February 24, 2025 9:35:27 AM

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-----Original Message-----

From: Dipesh Navsaria <[dipesh@navsaria.com](mailto:dipesh@navsaria.com)>  
Sent: Sunday, February 23, 2025 9:04 PM  
To: Common Council Executive Committee <[ccec@cityofmadison.com](mailto:ccec@cityofmadison.com)>  
Subject: Comments regarding Committee Reorganization

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To the City of Madison's Common Council Executive Committee —

I am writing regarding items 4 & 5 of the 25 February meeting, regarding the proposed reorganization of the City Boards, Commissions, and Committees. I am opposed to this proposal as it relates to the Early Child Care and Education Committee, which I have served on for a number of years as a pediatrician. I am out of town in DC doing advocacy for home visiting programs on the date of the meeting, so am unable to comment during the meeting itself, hence my written comments.

First, I understand and value the desire to reduce the workload on City staff and alders, who indeed have a lot on their plate. However, I am concerned that a merging of committees that are vaguely thematically related will instead result in that successor committee becoming log-jammed with members spending a great deal of time explaining to others about their area of expertise, and being educated on other topics on which they have no connection. There is a high risk that otherwise qualified committee members will depart or not choose to spend their time serving if there is a higher proportion of time spent on topics which do not relate to their area of interest of expertise.

Speaking about Early Childhood, I can easily see a great number of programs, systems, and elements that are specific to early childhood that do matter and that I have no expectation that someone from, say, the Committee on Aging would know about. The YoungStar program, NAEYC accreditation, DCF licensing requirements alone are key to this area and would take extraordinary amounts of time to explain to others not in this world. Likewise, the funding sources and programs relevant to the current Committee on Aging are unfamiliar to me, and to assume that I would wish to take on the additional overhead of learning about those programs is an incorrect assumption. I would be rather anxious about making decisions or recommendations based on very little knowledge or information about

the subject at hand.

Interestingly, I have informally suggested to staff that our committee actually should have a broader remit — not only about care and education, but should become a broader Committee on Early Childhood, looking at other elements relevant to the world of children birth to age 5 years and their families. Rather than diluting Early Childhood — as this proposal does — we should be asking how Madison can better address the key first 2000 days of life for all children. As a community which continues to suffer great racial and ethnic disparities in infant morbidity and mortality, we should be focusing on early childhood, not hiding it within our committee structures.

I urge the Executive Committee to remove this portion of the proposal and perhaps consider instead broadening the remit of the committee to cover Early Childhood more broadly.

Peace and Prosperity,  
Dipesh

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Dipesh Navsaria, MPH, MS(LIS), MD

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