

Agenda Report

February 27, 2012

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Legislative Policy Committee (January 25, 2012)

FROM: Office of the City Manager

SUBJECT: Review of City Advisory Boards, Commissions and Committees

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council:

- 1) Consider whether changes to the existing structure of advisory boards, commissions and committees would be appropriate to better meet the needs of the City;
- 2) Endorse the effort outlined under Suggestion #5 regarding possible restructuring of the Northwest Commission.

On January 25, 2012 this report was presented to the Legislative Policy Committee. Following discussion, the Committee voted unanimously to forward this item to the full City Council for consideration.

BACKGROUND

Pasadena boasts a well-informed and involved citizenry, and the City's system of advisory bodies provides a forum for the community to address areas of interest. Nevertheless, recent economic conditions have required the City to make unprecedented cost reductions over the past several years and to explore opportunities for increased efficiency. As part of this effort, staff believes it appropriate for the City Council to consider whether some changes to advisory boards, commissions and committees would be appropriate. This issue has been the subject of prior analysis and discussion, most recently by the Legislative Policy Committee, in June 2009. To facilitate the current discussion, staff has prepared this report, which is intended to provide some broad assessments from the staff perspective, as well as some suggestions for consideration.

This report focuses on those advisory bodies set forth in Pasadena Municipal Code Title 2, Section III, as well as the City's former Redevelopment Project Area Committees (PACs): the Fair Oaks PAC and the Lincoln PAC, and does not include ad hoc bodies such as the General Plan Update Advisory Committee or the Open Space Element Advisory Committee. Additionally, the Board of Zoning Appeals has not been included since it exists solely to hear appeals from decisions on applications for use permits, variances and exceptions in accordance with the provisions of the zoning code.

City Advisory Bodies:

- Arts and Culture Commission
- Accessibility and Disability Commission
- Code Enforcement Commission
- Commission on the Status of Women
- Community Development Committee
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Design Commission
 - Subcommittee: Urban Forestry Advisory Committee
- Human Relations Commission
- Human Services Commission
- Library Commission
- Northwest Commission
- Parking Meter Zones Advisory Commissions - The Old Pasadena Parking Meter Zone Advisory Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
 - Subcommittee: Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee
- Planning Commission
 - Subcommittee: Board of Zoning Appeals
- Relocation Appeals Board
- Senior Commission
- South Lake Avenue Parking Place Commission
- Transportation Advisory Commission

- Environmental Advisory Commission
- Fair Oaks PAC – discontinued as of February 1, per AB26
- Lincoln PAC – discontinued as of February 1, per AB26

In general, these advisory bodies (hereafter referred to as commissions) meet once or twice monthly and in most cases are staffed by professional management staff as well as clerical support. In addition, the City Attorney's Office provides support and attends a number of commission meetings as well.

Determining just how much staff time is devoted to supporting the commissions is difficult since no particular tracking system is in place. However, the analysis performed in 2009 estimated that in excess of 21 full-time equivalent staff positions were associated with commission support. Since then a number of commission assignments have been consolidated so the number is likely lower today.

It's worth noting that since most commission meetings occur in the evenings there is not a one-to-one relationship between staff hours and costs; management staff is exempt from overtime and City departments have worked to minimize overtime costs for clerical support by adjusting work hours to compensate for commission meetings. Nonetheless, it is clear that significant staff time is devoted to supporting commissions.

Although the conventional wisdom is that all the commissions are advisory to the City Council, some have specific mandates while the purpose and function of others appear more general in nature, often focusing on certain types of subjects. For example, the Code Enforcement Commission is responsible to hear and rule on cases and appeals regarding enforcement of particular provisions in Title 6, 14, 17, Chapter 8.48, and Chapter 9.58 of the municipal is code, and to order action on cases of noncompliance presented by city staff (P.M.C. 2.55.110). The Commission meets as needed to hear such cases and render decisions.

In contrast, the Environmental Advisory Commission's charge is broad and can be viewed to extend to any issue deemed to involve the environment, as Section 2.140.110 of the municipal code reads:

A. The purpose of the commission is to provide policy advice to the City Council for promoting environmental stewardship and urban sustainability in accordance with the City Council's endorsement of the "2005 United Nations Green Cities Declaration and Urban Environmental Accords," the City's adopted environmental charter, and such other related environmental policies as adopted by the city council.

B. The purpose of the commission is also to advise the City Council on environmental policy matters related to the following, excluding the daily operations of city departments:

1. Energy;
2. Waste reduction;
3. Urban design;
4. Preservation and enhancement of urban natural areas;
5. Transportation;
6. Environmental health; and
7. Water.

C. In addition to those matters set forth in subsections A and B of this section, the commission shall advise and make recommendations to the City Council as directed by the City Council.

D. The commission shall consider environmental matters which have citywide impacts but shall not, unless directed by the City Council, consider environmental matters relating to specific projects or developments, including without limitation, compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

E. The commission shall consult and cooperate with other commissions and public bodies on matters relevant to the commission's purposes consistent with provisions in Section 2.45.060

F. In carrying out its functions and duties, the commission may:

1. Request information, services, facilities and assistance of any City department or agency in furtherance of the objectives of the commission;
2. Study and examine through the conduct of meetings conferences, public hearings or other appropriate methods those matters it is charged with;
3. Conduct outreach and education to the public, business and industry regarding environmental matters of city-wide impact.

In staff's view, those commissions with a more clearly defined purpose and function operate best, in large measure because commissioners and staff have a clear understanding of roles and expectations. In other cases, where the vision is overly broad and the respective roles of commissioners and staff less clear, there is a greater likelihood that commissioners will feel they aren't able to fulfill their charge as they perceive it, and the staff left feeling they are engaged in busy work in response to requests from commissions.

In preparing this report staff sampled seven months of commission meetings covering the time period of December, 2010 through June, 2011 inclusive. Copies of the agenda for each commission are attached hereto as Exhibit A.

In addition to providing the Legislative Policy Committee a sense of what issues are being reviewed at the commission level, staff has prepared the following table which classifies commission agenda items during the review period into three categories: 1) Action Items – this category includes items the commission took an action on, however, the action item was not something subsequently forwarded to the City Council; 2) Action Items that went on to City Council – which includes items brought forward through the commission by staff as well as items originating with the commission; 3) Information items – which includes various reports and discussion items not requiring action. Because the various commissions categorize and format agendas differently, some judgments were made in determining the classification of items.

Commission	Review Period Dec '10 to June '11 Total Number of		
	Action Items Considered	Action Items that went on to City Council	Information Items
Accessibility and Disability Commission	3	-	47
Arts and Culture Commission	18	-	22
Code Enforcement Commission	48	-	11
Commission on the Status of Women	16	-	36
Community Development Committee	1	6	4
Design Commission	40	-	18
Environmental Advisory Commission	4	4	16
Fair Oaks PAC	2	1	23
Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee	3	-	15
Historic Preservation Commission	15	3	28
Human Relations Commission	1	-	63
Human Services Commission	8	-	27
Library Commission	2	-	37
Lincoln PAC	2	-	14
Northwest Commission	50	4	120
Parking Meter Zones Advisory Commissions - The Old Pasadena Parking Meter Zone Advisory Commission	1	-	11
Parks and Recreation Commission	6	-	36
Planning Commission	-	12	46
Senior Commission	-	-	37

South Lake Avenue Parking Place Commission	5	-	17
Transportation Advisory Commission	10	-	30
Urban Forestry Advisory Committee	7	-	6
Total	242	30	664
Percentage	26%	3%	71%

As indicated by the table, very few items find their way from the commissions to the City Council. In the case of certain commissions such as, Code Enforcement and Design, this is not surprising given the purpose and function of these commissions. Moreover, the vast majority of items considered by the commissions were informational in nature consisting almost exclusively of either reports from City staff or reports from commissioners to the commissions.

Another function of the commissions is to provide residents and other interested parties opportunities for participation in the public process. As part of the recent sampling, staff reviewed commission minutes to determine the number of speakers who provided testimony before the various bodies. The following table summarizes the results and provides information as to the duration of commission meetings.

Commission & Meeting Date	# of Public Speakers	Meeting Duration
Accessibility and Disability		
12/7/2010	3	1.48 hrs
1/11/2011	0	2 hrs
2/1/2011	0	2 hrs
3/1/2011	2	2 hrs
3/14/2011	0	5 hrs
4/5/2011	3	2 hrs
5/3/2011	3	2 hrs
6/7/2011	1	2 hrs
Arts and Culture		
12/8/2010	0	1 hr
1/12/2011	2	45 min
2/9/2011	0	1 hr
4/14/2011	0	1.50 hrs
5/11/2011	1	1.20 hrs
Code Enforcement		
1/6/2011	1	1.10 hrs
1/13/2011	3+	1 hr
2/3/2011	0	1.45 hrs
4/7/2011	0	2 hrs
4/14/2011	0	34 min

5/5/2011	0	1.45 hrs
6/2/2011	1	45 min
Commission on the Status of Women		
12/13/2010	*	Minutes not available
1/10/2011	*	Minutes not available
2/15/2011	0	1.30 hrs
3/14/2011	0	1.30 hrs
Community Development		
2/24/2011	0	2 hrs
5/26/2011	0	1.30 hrs
Design		
12/13/2010	18	5.15 hrs
1/10/2011	4	2 hrs
1/24/2011	6	3.30 hrs
2/14/2011	7	3 hrs
2/24/2011	0	3 hrs
3/28/2011	8	3.35 hrs
4/11/2011	3	2.30 hrs
4/25/2011	2	30 min
5/9/2011	3	4 hrs
5/23/2011	7	5.15 hrs
6/13/2011	0	2.30 hrs
6/27/2011	2	2 hrs
Environmental Advisory		
12/14/2010	5	2.30 hrs
1/18/2011	0	1 hr
2/15/2011	0	1.30 hrs
4/28/2011	11	1.30 hrs
5/17/2011	2	2.30 hrs
6/21/2011	1	45 min
Fair Oaks PAC		
1/25/2011	1	2 hrs
2/22/2011	3	2.15 hrs
3/22/2011	1	2.30 hrs
5/24/2011	0	2.15 hrs
6/28/2011	0	1.30 hrs
Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee		
1/25/2011	5	1.30 hrs
3/22/2011	8	3 hrs
5/24/2011	8	2.30 hrs

Historic Preservation		
12/6/2011	4	1 hr
2/7/2011	10	3.15 hrs
3/7/2011	3	2 hrs
4/4/2011	2	4 hrs
5/2/2011	1	1.30 hrs
6/6/2011	1	1.15 hrs
Human Relations		
12/7/2010	1	1.15 hrs
1/4/2011	4	1 hr
2/1/2011	0	1 hr
4/5/2011	0	1 hr
5/3/2011	0	1 hr
6/7/2011	0	45 min
Human Services		
2/9/2011	1	1.30 hrs
3/9/2011	0	1.10 hrs
4/5/2011	0	1 hr
5/3/2011	0	1 hr
6/8/2011	0	1.30 hrs
Library		
12/15/2010	0	1 hr
1/19/2011	0	1 hr
2/16/2011	0	45 min
3/16/2011	0	50 min
4/20/2011	1	1 hr
5/19/2011	0	1.30 hrs
6/15/2011	0	1.30 hrs
Lincoln Avenue PAC		
12/15/2011	0	1.30 hrs
2/23/2011	0	1.30 hrs
3/23/2011	0	1.30 hrs
4/27/2011	0	1.45 hrs
5/25/2011	2	1.45 hrs
6/29/2011	0	1.45 hrs
Northwest		
12/19/2010	4	3.15 hrs
12/15/2010	3	1.30 hrs
1/13/2011	1	3 hrs
1/15/2011	5	1 hr
1/27/2011	0	2.15 hrs

2/10/2011	0	1 hr
2/11/2011	0	5 hrs
2/18/2011	0	1 hr
2/24/2011	1	3 hrs
3/1/2011	0	2.30 hrs
3/10/2011	2	3.30 hrs
3/24/2011	0	2.30 hrs
4/14/2011	1	1.30 hrs
5/12/2011	4	2.30 hrs
6/9/2011	1	2 hrs
6/23/2011	0	1.45 hrs
Old Pasadena Parking Meter Zone Advisory		
1/20/2011	*	Minutes not available
3/17/2011	*	Minutes not available
Planning		
12/8/2010	11	4.30 hrs
1/12/2011	2	2 hrs
1/26/2011	0	2.15 hrs
2/9/2011	4	3 hrs
3/9/2011	2	1.30 hrs
3/23/2011	0	1.45 hrs
4/27/2011	1	3 hrs
Parks and Recreation		
12/7/2010	0	1.30 hrs
1/4/2011	28	3.30 hrs
2/1/2011	9	2.45 hrs
3/1/2011	2	2.15 hrs
4/5/2011	19	3.30 hrs
5/3/2011	0	1 hr
5/17/2011	33	4 hrs
6/7/2011	0	2.30 hrs
Senior		
12/14/2010	0	1.30 hrs
2/11/2011	0	1.30 hrs
2/8/2011	2	1.30 hrs
3/8/2011	1	2 hrs
4/12/2011	2	1.30 hrs
5/10/2011	1	1.30 hrs
6/14/2011	0	2 hrs
South Lake Parking Place		
1/27/2011	0	1 hr

3/31/2011	0	1 hr
4/28/2011	0	1 hr
Transportation Advisory		
12/2/2010	1	1.30 hrs
12/9/2010	0	2.20 hrs
1/27/2011	0	3 hrs
2/24/2011	0	2.30 hrs
3/24/2011	0	2 hrs
4/28/2011	3	3 hrs
5/26/2011	1	2 hrs
6/23/2011	0	2 hrs
Urban Forestry Advisory		
12/8/2010	4	2.15 hrs
2/9/2011	3	2 hrs
3/9/2011	3	1.45 hrs
4/13/2011	0	3.30 hrs
5/11/2011	0	2.30 hrs

From staff's perspective, the information provided above suggests that the City Council may wish to consider the purpose and function of the various commissions to ensure that the Council's intended purposes are being met in an efficient and effective manner and that the charge of each commission is relevant to issues facing the City today. For example, the stated purpose of the Northwest Commission (P.M.C. Section 2.95.10) is to among other things, to work with the City Manager and staff on updating and revising the Northwest Community Plan; Provide ongoing oversight of the implementation of the Plan, and present an annual review of the implementation of the Plan's projects and programs to the Council and the Community. While the Northwest Commission remains an important monitoring body for the Northwest community, consistent with its charge, there has not been a Council approved Northwest Community Plan since 1995.

To the extent the Council may wish to make changes to commissions, staff respectfully submits the following suggestions for consideration.

Suggestion #1 - Consider restructuring and consolidating the following commissions:

- Parks and Recreation
- Human Services
- Human Relations
- Senior Commission
- Status of Women
- Accessibility & Disability

- Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory
- Urban Forestry Advisory

Into:

- Human Services and Recreation with standing subcommittees of:
 - i. Accessibility & Disability
 - ii. Senior Issues
 - iii. Human Relations
 - iv. Status of Women
- Parks and Open Space with standing subcommittees of:
 - i. Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory
 - ii. Urban Forestry Advisory

Currently, the Parks and Recreation Commission is staffed by the Public Works Department and the Human Services and Recreation Department. Splitting the Commission into two would align the new commissions more closely to the operations of each department and improve the focus in each respective area.

As envisioned, the Human Services and Recreation Commission would serve as an umbrella for other commissions, which would become standing subcommittees, whose purpose and functions focus on human services to particular segments of the community. Within this structure the subcommittees would only meet when directed to by the Commission or as dictated by an adopted workplan instead of on a fixed schedule. Moreover, informational items of interest to multiple subcommittees would be heard by the entire commission instead of multiple times at each subcommittee. This would allow for a more complete dialogue involving possibly diverse interests.

The new Parks and Open Space Commission would continue to focus on the physical elements of the City's parks and in recognition of the growing importance of passive open space, would expand its charge to include this as well.

Suggestion #2 – Consider restructuring the Urban Forestry Advisory Committee (UFAC).

The Urban Forestry Advisory Committee (UFAC) is a subcommittee of the Design Commission and is composed of seven members as follows: two members of the design commission, two representatives of the Parks and Recreation commission, one representative from the Pasadena Beautiful Foundation, and two members of the public.

Pursuant to P.M.C. Section 2.80.135 the Design Commission may delegate to UFAC the authority to review, advise and make recommendations to the City Council relating to the City's master street tree plan and undertake such other

reviews pertaining to public trees as are specified in the City trees and tree protection ordinance, Section 8.52.050 of this code.

Staff wishes to raise for consideration the idea that the review of master street tree plans and any related amendments be conducted by the Design Commission, and that UFAC be repurposed to focus solely on tree removals. As such, a smaller UFAC consisting of three members possessing relevant professional experience should be sufficient.

Suggestion #3 - Consider modifications to the Design Commission.

The Design Commission is responsible to undertake design reviews and hear related matters as set forth in the City's zoning code. Membership on the Commission typically consists of architects and other design professionals. However, as currently organized the Commission also includes a member from the Arts and Culture Commission as well as the Transportation Advisory Commission. Given the charge of this Commission, the utility of having representatives from these other commissions is less than clear and reducing the size of the Commission from nine to seven is likely to make the body more efficient.

Also, the Design Commission currently, has authority to comment and make recommendations on all environmental impact reports (EIR). With the notable exception of the Planning Commission, this function is not included in the charge of other commissions, and is specifically excluded for the Environmental Advisory Commission. While no particular issues have arisen regarding this authority, to the extent the Council may make changes affecting commissions, it may want to consider limiting the review of EIRs to the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the side-letter in the IDS settlement agreement commits the City to re-evaluate the role of the Design Commission and Historic Preservation Commissions in project review with respect to historic buildings and historic districts in the Central District. It is anticipated that this will be the subject of discussion at an upcoming Planning Commission meeting with a report to City Council subsequent.

Suggestion #4 - Reconsider the role of the Environmental Advisory Commission pending the outcome of discussions regarding creation of a Utility Governing Committee/Commission.

The Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC) is the newest of the City's Commissions, brought into existence in 1987 as part of the City's policy commitment to the United Nations Urban Accords and sustainability in general. At roughly the same time, City staff the Planning Department were organized into

an office of Sustainability and a Citywide “green team” was created to further the City Council’s policy directives.

In relatively few short years Pasadena has shown itself to be a leader in environmental stewardship and sustainability, having adopted its Green City Action Plan, banning single-use carryout bags and committing to a power portfolio that includes 40% renewable energy by the year 2020 to name a few highlights. It’s clear that sustainability and environmental stewardship have become fully integrated in the City’s operations.

Recently, there has been discussion at the Municipal Services Committee regarding the potential creation of Utility Governing Committee/Commission. Pending the outcome of those discussions, the City Council may wish to consider changes to the charge of the EAC, which at present are broad and extend to matters involving water and energy.

Suggestion #5 – Consider restructuring the Northwest Commission in light of the dissolution of redevelopment and the Project Area Committees (PACs)

The Northwest Commission, Lincoln Avenue PAC and Fair Oaks PAC have each played an important role as an advisory body for Northwest Pasadena. As part of the dissolution of the redevelopment, as of February 1st the PACs no longer function as City advisory bodies.

In light of the loss of the PACs, staff is suggesting that it may make sense to restructure and reexamine the role the Northwest Commission. Several meetings have been held between City staff, the PACs and the Northwest Commission to discuss the issue. Through these discussions a consensus has emerged around the following concept: The former PAC chairs each appoint three former PAC members to work with the Northwest Commission and City staff to develop a proposal regarding restructuring the Northwest Commission. Staff recommends that the group have until April 30th to present any recommendation(s) to the City Council. Failure to reach a consensus recommendation by that time would result in continuance of the status quo, i.e., Northwest Commission would remain as currently constituted.

Additional Considerations

Staff wishes to raise the following additional considerations for discussion:

1. There are currently a number of commission vacancies and hold-overs. As of February 23rd there were 21 commission vacancies and 31 commission seats were filled by individuals whose term had expired, in some cases several years prior.

2. Commissioners, but particularly Commission chairs could probably benefit from annual training covering the Brown Act, the role of commissioners and City staff.
3. Staff should reinforce the City Council's policy, adopted in July 1997, on action minutes only for commission and advisory body meetings. Such action may further reduce the level of required staff support, i.e., it may not be necessary to assign a Staff Assistant to attend each meeting.
4. Council may wish to consider establishing a policy whereby standing subcommittees of commissions are permitted only where specifically set forth by the City Council in the municipal code and all other subcommittees would be ad hoc and not staffed by City staff.

FISCAL IMPACT

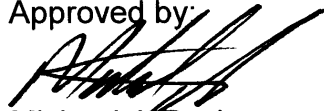
This report is being presented for discussion and possible further direction from City Council; there is no fiscal impact at this time.

Respectfully submitted,



Steve Mermell
Assistant City Manager

Approved by:



Michael J. Beck
City Manager

Exhibit A – Agenda for each commission Dec 2010 – June 2011