



## CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS STAFF REPORT

**Meeting Date:** August 2, 2011

**To:** Honorable Mayor & City Council

**From:** Susan Healy Keene, AICP, Director of Community Development

**Subject:** Extending Architectural Commission Chair Fran Cohen's Term and Reducing the Commission From Seven to Five Members

**Attachments:** None

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### **DISCUSSION**

A management audit of the Community Development Department in 2008 included a recommendation to merge the City's two design-related review commissions. This report was presented to the City Council on November 18, 2008. The recommendation to merge the commission was not supported by the City Council; however, there was support for amendments that would reduce the Architectural Commission's membership from seven members to five. This direction was reaffirmed in April 2010.

Provided that a majority of the City Council remains interested in reducing the Architectural Commission from seven to five members, this report identifies a couple of options to achieve that goal.

The recommended approach would allow all existing members to complete their initial and, if reappointed, second terms, before changes are implemented to the commission membership. Fran Cohen is the Commission Chair and her final term expires on August 2, 2011. Two other commissioner's terms expire on July 11, 2012 with no opportunity for reappointment. These individuals are Vice Chair Allen Rennett and Commissioner Richard Meyer. Commissioner Meyer is the required professional architect, which is a mandated position in the code.

#### **Option 1**

To achieve a five member commission staff recommends extending Commissioner Cohen's term to July 11, 2012 to match the terms of the two other retiring commissioners. This will result

in three positions being vacated. Two will be lost through attrition and the third will require a new (architect) appointment.

If this transition were to occur as described, three members (a majority) of the Commission would may have limited (architectural) commission experience, and there would be two experienced commissioners (Bernstein and Blakeley, provided they both are reappointed in September and February, respectively). While this represents a potential negative to the recommended approach, it is anticipated through updated processes to improve streamlining and more extensive commissioner training programs that this transition can be successfully achieved.

#### Option 2

If recommended approach is not preferred by the City Council, an alternative approach would be to extend Commissioner Cohen's term until a replacement has been selected. A recruitment should begin immediately and be filled by a licensed architect. An architect would be required due to Commissioner Meyer's term expiring next July. With this option, Chair Cohen would be replaced with an architect; and, in July 2012, when Commissioners Rennett and Meyer's terms expire, those positions would be eliminated at that time through attrition. The remaining five commissioners would all have a reasonable amount of experience when the transition is completed.

Implementing either option (or neither and retaining the seven members), requires the City Council to adopt an ordinance extending Commissioner Cohen's term until a replacement is appointed. If Option 1 or 2 is selected, an amendment to the municipal code reducing membership from seven to five would be forthcoming.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There are costs that relate to staff time, public notices and materials used to prepare the subject text amendments, which have been absorbed by the Community Development Department's operating budget. Once implemented, the reduction from a seven to five member Architectural Commission will result in 28% decrease in that commission's membership and, therefore, a corresponding reduction in the use office supplies preparing and delivering packets for two less commissioners, however, it does not reduce the largest expense associated with staff time supporting the commission. Accordingly, the savings is relatively minor to the overall costs.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the City Council direct staff to prepare an ordinance extending Commissioner Cohen's term to July 11, 2012 and to prepare and bring forth a text amendments to reduce Architectural Commission membership from seven to five (this would become effective on July 12, 2012).

Susan Healy Keene, AICP

Approved By

