



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: August 2, 2011
To: Honorable Mayor & City Council
From: James Latta, L.C.S.W., Human Services Administrator *JL*
Subject: Consideration of Reducing the Human Relations Commission
from Seven to Five Members

INTRODUCTION

Council liaisons Brucker and Bosse met with staff on July 28, 2011 for consideration of reducing the Human Relations Commission from seven to five members. Over time, and from various sources, the subject of reducing seven-member commissions to five members has been raised in order to achieve cost-saving and efficiency goals. In the event City Council supports such a measure, the following time-sensitive information relevant to the status of the seven-member Human Relations Commission is provided for the Council's consideration.

DISCUSSION

The Human Relations Commission currently has six seated commissioners due to the unexpected and unplanned vacancy created when Commissioner Cheri Yousem resigned her appointment when she moved out of town. The application process to fill Yousem's vacancy is currently active and is scheduled to close on August 19, 2011. To date, three applications have been received.

If the Commission were changed to a five member board, staff would recommend that the objective be achieved through attrition as commissioners go off term and are ineligible for reappointment as that would have no adverse impact to any currently seated Commissioner. Additionally, staff would further recommend that Council not appoint a member from the community to fill the vacancy created by Commissioner Yousef's resignation.

Two commissioners' terms will expire in 2012 (Pease 1/21/12 and Meshkaty 9/8/12). Commissioner Pease is eligible for consideration and reappointment to a four year term in January while Commissioner Meshkaty is termed out. Staff recommends the reappointment of Commissioner Pease at the appropriate time and not filling Commissioner Meshkaty's vacant seat subsequent to his departure in September, 2012.

Additionally, due to unique circumstances, Commissioner Sherman is subject to reappointment for the balance of her four year term effective on or before August 31, 2011. Staff likewise recommends that Commissioner Sherman be appointed to serve the balance of her four year term.

The aforementioned actions would achieve the objective of reducing the Commission from 7 to 5 members within a reasonable timeframe and have no adverse impacts to any current commissioners. Terms of the three remaining commissioners (Nazarian, Linder, Ginsburg) expire in 2014 and allows for continuity, experience and stability on the Commission until such time that three new members would be brought on at various times in 2014.

During discussion, the liaisons expressed interest to have City Council consider the opportunity to decrease all current Commissions having seven members to eventually, through similar actions of attrition, be brought down to five members for purposes of consistency.

Other Commissions that currently have seven members include the Architectural, Traffic and Parking, Fine Arts, and Health and Safety.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff and Council liaisons Brucker and Bosse recommend the reduction of the Human Relations Commission from seven to five members through attrition. To attain this goal with minimal impact the Commission's current vacancy is recommended to not be filled, allowing the Commission to continue its service with six commissioners, and not appoint a new commissioner to the vacancy that will be created by the expiration of Commissioner Meshkaty's term in September, 2012 at which time the Commission would be reduced to five.

Per the expressed wishes of the liaison, staff further recommends that City Council discuss their interests to reduce all Commissions to five members through attrition and provide direction to the City Manager accordingly. The attrition scenario is different for each Commission but in all cases current commissioners would be allowed to complete their expected terms. In most cases, attrition would allow the affected Commissions to reduce to five members no later than the end of 2012.

It should be noted that the Fine Arts Commission currently has a vacancy for which recruitment is open and active. Should it be the interest of Council to effect a reduction of all Commissions to five members, staff recommend that this vacancy not be filled and that the next vacancy created by term limitations (11/15/12) likewise also not be filled.

Staff seeks final direction from City Council on this matter.



Nancy Hunt-Coffey

Approved By