

Memo

TO: City Council and Commission Staff Liaisons
FROM: Kelly Madding, City Administrator
DATE: June 6, 2019
RE: Commission and Boards Annual Reports to Council

I would like to remind you all of the parameters for the annual reports.

According to AMC 2.10.105, the requirements for the reports are:

- Give at least one report per year
- Focus on the Commission's accomplishments, work in progress, and planned activities
- Contain objective information and represented the majority views of the Commission members

It is also important to note that all reports and recommendations from Commission, Boards, and Committees are advisory and the City Council is not bound to take action on the recommendations.

I understand that this was a difficult budget process and the Wildfire Safety Commission was trying to advocate for the Fire Department. However, it is never appropriate for an advisory body to use their annual report for advocacy. The emphasis on Commissioners advisory, not advocacy is also one of the Mayor's expectations outlined when he interviews applicants. Appointed members should have a clear understanding of what is their and the Commission's role.

Because of this, I am now requiring that all Commissions and Boards submit documentation of what will be presented in the annual report 12 calendar days before the presentation is scheduled, which is aligned with the regular Council Communication deadlines.

Feel free to share this memo and the enclosed materials with Commissioners.

Attached:

AMC 2.10.105 Commission Reports

Mayor's Expectations for All Interviewed Commission Candidates



AMC 2.10.105 Commission Reports

A. Each advisory body shall submit copies of its meeting minutes to the City Recorder for presentation to the City Council.

B. The chair of each advisory body is expected to give at least one report to the City Council each year on the advisory body's accomplishments, work in progress, and planned activities. In addition, the Mayor or City Council may from time to time ask chairs for information and recommendations on matters within the scope of their advisory bodies. Chairs' reports to the Council are to be objective and representative of the majority views of the memberships of their advisory bodies.

C. Council Liaisons may report to the entire Council on significant and important activities of any advisory body to which they have been assigned.

D. Staff Liaisons to the advisory bodies may assist in preparing such reports.

E. Unless otherwise expressly provided in the Ashland Municipal Code or State Law, all reports or recommendations of City advisory bodies committee shall be considered advisory in nature and shall not be binding on the Mayor or City Council. (Ord. 3100, amended, 2014; Ord. 3003, added, 02/18/2010)

Mayor's Expectations for All Interviewed Commission Candidates

1. Advisory, not Advocacy: Commissions' purpose is to act in an advisory role with respect to the Council, not to be a platform for advocacy. Advisory requires a balanced examination of all sides/implications of a particular issue or course of action. Advocacy involves putting forth all the arguments on one side of an issue or in favor of or opposed to a particular decision, and then mobilizing public support. Commissioners should not organize advocates to lobby the commission regarding any subject upon which the commission is working.
2. Personal Criticism: Commissioners are supposed to avoid all personal criticism, especially of City staff but also of anyone, in their role as Commissioners. If they have a problem with how any staff person is performing or behaving, they should discuss their concerns privately with the Council liaison to that Commission and/or with the Mayor.
3. "Conflict of Interest": Commissioners should declare a conflict of interest they have with the work of the Commission. This is not just in the narrow definition of financial conflict but in the sense of prejudice, bias or presuppositions regarding any matter before the commission - and the Commissioner should refrain from trying to influence the commission's process in any way. This requires recusing her/himself from the commission's discussions. The Commissioner retains the right to communicate with City government, and in particular the Council, regarding this subject but as a private citizen, not in his/her official role as a Commissioner.

Also the Commissioner should not identify or use his/her official position in any public communications.
4. Checking First: The Commissioner and the commission, should, when it is considering working on a particular issue, come to the Council and find out first whether the Council wants the Commission to pursue this direction.
5. Chairpersonship: Being Chair or Vice Chair of a commission is not a possession that belongs to a Commissioner. It is a role of service to the commission as a group, on the part of the Chair, who subordinates her/his opinions and desires in the interests of facilitating the process of the group. If the Chair loses the confidence of the group he/she should voluntarily resign and allow the group to choose a new member to fulfill this role.