

Memo

To: City Manager Joe Lessard
Title: Ordinance Change-Historic Commission Membership and Quorum number
Date: January 6, 2022
Submitted By: Brandon Goldman, Planning Manager

At the December 8, 2021, and the January 5, 2022 regular meetings of the Historic Commission, commissioners discussed the Commission's membership number and quorum requirements.

Under [Ashland Municipal Code \(AMC\) chapter 2.24](#), the number of voting members on the Historic Commission is set at nine (9). Over the course of the last two years the Historic Commission has experienced resignations and unfilled vacancies. During this period of reduced membership, the Commission has found that the smaller commission size resulted in cases where, due to absences of seated members, a quorum was not met and regular meetings were thus canceled. Efforts to recruit additional members to fill vacant seats have been unsuccessful over the last two years.

The uniform policies and operating procedures for advisory commissions in [AMC 2.10.040](#) state that a meeting quorum shall consist of more than one-half of the total number of authorized members of the body, including any vacant positions.

Due to limited number of seated members on the Historic Commission presently it is anticipated the Commission will continue to have difficulties in obtaining a quorum necessary for carrying out their functions unless the number of authorized members is reduced, the two vacant positions are filled, or an adjustment to the quorum requirements is authorized by the City Council through an ordinance amendment.

Given these circumstances the Historic Commission has requested the City Council consider initiating a code amendment which would allow the Historic Commission membership to consist of no fewer than seven (7) and no more than nine (9) voting members. And further, that a quorum of the Historic Commission be defined as being more than one-half (½) of the total number of its current Council-confirmed voting members, but in no case fewer than four (4).

This approach of allowing for flexibility in a commission's membership number, and correlating the quorum number requirement to relate to seated members exclusive of unfilled vacancies, has been implemented for both the Tree Commission, and the recently formed Social Justice and Equity Commission.

Should the City Council be amenable to a change in the Historic Commissions membership and quorum requirements, Community Development Staff would work with the Legal Department staff to draft an ordinance amending AMC Ch. 2.24 to reflect the proposed changes, and to present the draft ordinance to the City Council for consideration.

