

## **AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

December 11, 2006

The Ad-Hoc Committee on Council Committees met at the Mesa City Plaza Building, 20 East Main Street, Suite 870, on December 11, 2006 at 3:46 p.m.

**COMMITTEE PRESENT**

Claudia Walters, Chairman  
Tom Rawles  
Scott Somers

**COMMITTEE ABSENT**

None

**STAFF PRESENT**

Debbie Spinner  
Rodney Ross

1. Discuss and take action on parliamentary procedures and/or guidelines for Council Committees.

Chairman Walters stated that she would prefer that Robert's Rules of Order not be adopted for Council Committee meetings.

Committeemembers Rawles and Somers concurred with Chairman Walters' comment.

Committeemember Rawles indicated that the focus of the Ad Hoc Committee should be to consider, among other things, the method by which items are placed on Council Committee agendas and also what topics should or should not be heard by a particular Committee. He suggested that any non-emergency policy issues that the Council would be asked to consider be presented to a Council Committee for the purpose of refining such issues and also providing the Committeemembers with an opportunity to gain expertise concerning those policies.

Councilmember Rawles offered additional comments including, but not limited to, the following: that the Mayor, the City Manager or the Council Chairman should have the ability to refer items to the agenda; that with the concurrence of the Chairman of the Council Committee, a Committeemember should also be allowed to bring issues forward; and that even if it is not part of an ordinance, he would recommend that there be a guideline in place which indicates that a Committeemember would initially ask the Committee Chairman that an item be placed on an agenda.

Chairman Walters referred Committeemember Rawles to a December 5, 2006 Memo authored by City Attorney Debbie Spinner that suggested that the Chairperson, the City Manager, two Committeemembers or the Mayor could place items on an agenda. She questioned whether he would be agreeable with such a proposal.

Committeemember Rawles expressed support for Ms. Spinner's suggestion.

Chairman Walters commented that it might be helpful for staff to generate a one to two-page handbook (not adopted in the ordinance) that would be distributed to each Council Committee Chairman and the respective Committeemembers to outline their duties and responsibilities while serving on the various Committees.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the ordinance could identify the names of the Council Committees proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee; that a more binding structure of the Council Committees could be included in the ordinance if the Council chose to do so; and that currently, the ordinance identifies the names of the Council Committees, the manner in which the members are appointed, and the fact that the members are responsible for such matters referred to them by the Mayor.

Committeemember Rawles stated that if Ms. Spinner's proposal that other individuals beside the Mayor (with the exception of the Chairman) be permitted to refer items to a Council Committee agenda, then that information should also be reflected in the ordinance.

Chairman Walters agreed with Committeemember Rawles' comment and said that she believed Mayor Hawker would be agreeable to modifying the process and giving more responsibility to the Council Committee Chairmen.

Committeemember Somers noted that as the newest member of the Council, it is his impression that staff often sets the agenda for Council Committee meetings. He also stated that at the limited number of Council Committee meetings he has attended, staff has provided various updates, but the Committeemembers have set little, if any, policy direction for the City.

Chairman Walters indicated that in certain instances, efforts have been made to refine the Council's position on a particular issue and stated that a Council Committee may give a recommendation as opposed to necessarily setting policy (i.e., the new Municipal Court Building, the City Auditor position). She added that she views such action as "an evolving role of the Committees," which she believes has been absent in the past.

Committeemember Rawles concurred with Committeemember Somers' comments. He also noted that the Council Committees often receive updates of items that are intended to be presented to the Council at upcoming Study Sessions, and said that in his opinion, that is not necessarily the best use of the Committees' time.

Chairman Walters stated that Council Committees can be useful if staff is unsure relative to the manner in which the Council may react to a certain issue and first seek feedback from the Committeemembers in that regard. She added that it is appropriate for a Council Committee to hear issues related to a new policy or change in direction.

Committeemember Rawles further suggested that he would like to see every public policy, whether new or a change in direction, "funneled through" a Council Committee.

Ms. Spinner stated that she perceived some difficulty in defining "policy" and inquired what type of policies the Ad Hoc Committee believes the Council Committees should be involved in.

Chairman Walters suggested that with regard to a Management policy, perhaps staff or a Committeemember could bring those items forward to the Council Committee for input that would then be forwarded on to the full Council.

Extensive discussion ensued among the Ad Hoc Committee regarding the differences between public policy and public objectives; the possibility of the Council establishing a list of objectives at the beginning of each year that they wish to address during that calendar year; the fact that the City Charter contains a provision which states that an ordinance can be introduced by a Councilmember at any Regular or Special meeting; and the mechanism by which that ordinance could be placed on the agenda.

Chairman Walters briefly highlighted the Ad Hoc Committee's direction regarding Council Committees: the Committees would have the ability to address public policy, whether new or a change in direction (i.e., changing/lowering fees), except in the case of an emergency; that items could be placed on an agenda per the approval of the Committee Chairman, the City Manager, two Committeemembers or the Mayor; and that the Mayor may refer an item to a Study Session as opposed to a Council Committee agenda.

Committeemember Rawles acknowledged that the additional duties and responsibilities of the Council Committees would create more work for its members, but stated the opinion that it is the kind of work that he believes the Council was elected to perform.

Chairman Walters further stated that the Council Committee meetings may not always require the attendance of an excessive number of staff members and stressed that the Council should "be sensitive to not overburden staff."

Chairman Walters expressed concern relative to the lack of a "feedback loop" regarding issues discussed during the Council Committee meetings and whether there is follow-up concerning those items. She suggested that it may be appropriate for the Council Assistant who is assigned to a particular Council Committee Chairman to facilitate that follow-up process.

Council Assistant Rodney Ross concurred with Chairman Walters' suggestion and said that it would ultimately be the decision of City Manager Christopher Brady whether the Council Assistants should assume that role.

Committeemember Rawles suggested that at the conclusion of a Council Committee meeting, the Chairman could confer with the staff liaison assigned to that particular Committee to follow-up on the Committee's direction. He commented that at a later time, the Council Assistant could then informally contact the staff liaison to ensure that those efforts have been accomplished.

2. Discuss and take action on changing committee names and defining areas of responsibilities.

Chairman Walters stated that there are certain areas of the organization, such as the Parks and Recreation Division, which have not been assigned to a specific Council Committee in order to address issues and bring forward items for Council consideration. She requested that Mr. Ross read the list of existing and possible new Council Committee names that the two of them have recently compiled.

The list includes the following: Police; Fire; Audit & Finance; Transportation/Infrastructure (combining Utilities and Transportation); General & Economic Development (replacing General Development Committee); and Community & Neighborhood Services.

Mr. Ross reported that in speaking with a representative of the City of Phoenix, he learned that each Deputy City Manager is assigned to one of the Council Committees and works with the Chairman of that Committee to set agendas and follow-up on issues presented to the Committeemembers.

Further discussion ensued relative to the importance of determining which issues should be presented to a specific Council Committee (i.e., would fees be heard by the Utility or the Audit & Finance Committee); the most appropriate Council Committee to hear topics related to Falcon Field and Williams Gateway Airports; and that the Land Use and Economic Development Committee may be a more appropriate name for the proposed General & Economic Development Committee as it would provide a venue in which zoning and building permit issues could be addressed.

Committeemember Somers commented that the City's current organizational chart is somewhat in flux and questioned whether, when the reorganization has been completed, it would be appropriate for the Deputy City Managers to be assigned to specific Council Committees. He added that if his suggestion has merit, perhaps it could be used by the City Manager to determine how best to restructure the organization.

In response to Committeemember Somers' comments, Ms. Spinner explained that she could envision conflicts, for example, with the Engineering Department being placed under the supervision of a different Deputy City Manager than Building Safety, Planning and Transportation. She stated that there may be certain issues that could impact two different departments under the supervision of different deputies and noted that a determination would have to be made as to which Deputy City Manager would address those matters.

Chairman Walters indicated that she would not be inclined to compel the City Manager to organize the Deputy City Managers based on the Council Committees that have been renamed and placed in an ordinance.

Committeemember Rawles expressed support for staff researching Committeemember Somers' suggestion. He added that it is imperative that the Committee obtains input from City Manager Christopher Brady as to whether, in fact, it is possible to align the City departments with the Council Committees.

Further discussion ensued relative to the fact that under Phoenix's model, the assignment of the Deputy City Managers to Council Committees attempts to link the Committees with the Deputies' areas of responsibility.

Committeemember Rawles suggested that the Ad Hoc Committee revisit this issue after each member has an opportunity to review the City's organizational chart. He also stated that it would be appropriate to invite Mr. Brady to the next meeting to solicit his input in this regard. He commented that Mr. Brady might have compelling management reasons why he structured the organizational chart in the manner he did. Committeemember Rawles added that the work of the Ad Hoc Committee would create significant long-term ramifications with regard to the Council Committee process and said he would prefer to not rush the model's adoption.

Additional discussion ensued relative to the fact that if a motion dies in the Council Committee, it would not prevent the Mayor or the City Manager from bringing the item forward to the full Council.

Committeemember Rawles stated the opinion that if an item is not supported by a majority of the Committee, it should not move forward to the full Council. He added that there is a mechanism available via the City Charter that would enable an issue to be referred to the full Council.

Chairman Walters expressed support for the ordinance containing language that would require an affirmative vote of the Council Committee to send an issue forward to the Council unless such action would violate another City ordinance such as Ordinance 3880 (Note: Ordinance 3880 states that a project will be moved forward to the full Council only if an affirmative vote is obtained at the Committee level.). She suggested that such language would apply only to utility fees and commented that setting utility rates is a policy of the Council. Chairman Walters added that the action would be brought forward to the Council whether a Council Committee recommended approval or denial.

Extensive discussion ensued among the Committeemembers regarding Chairman Walters' suggestion; and that the guidelines should include a notation that the issues addressed by a particular Committee are, in fact, germane to that Committee's area of responsibilities.

The Ad Hoc Committee requested that staff provide the following information prior to the next Committee meeting: a report compiling the Committee's ideas and comments thus far; a copy of the organizational chart that Mr. Brady is proposing to be effective in March 2007; Council Committee models from Tempe, Scottsdale, Chandler and Glendale; that further research be conducted with regard to Phoenix's model as it relates to the duties/responsibilities of the Deputy City Managers; the process of a "Call to the Audience;" and the procedure by which an Ad Hoc Committee is formed.

Mr. Ross further informed the Committee that the Phoenix model allows, at the conclusion of a Council Committee meeting, for a Committeemember to bring forward an item that he or she would like included on a future agenda. He stated that although a second is not required to place the item on the agenda, he believes that the Committee Chairman could deny such a request.

3. Discuss and take action on the creation of new committees and/or the elimination of existing committees.

See Item 2.

4. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Ad Hoc Committee on Council Committees adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Ad Hoc Committee on Council Committees meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of December 2006. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

---

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

pag