



TO: Michael Van Milligen, City Manager

FROM: Cori Burbach, Sustainable Community Coordinator

SUBJECT: Recommendation to Form Resilient Community Advisory Commission Engagement Process

DATE: May 30, 2016

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memo is to provide a recommendation regarding the formation of a Resilient Community Advisory Commission, based on a community engagement process initiated during the 2016 City Council goal-setting process.

BACKGROUND

During their Fiscal Year 2016 annual goal-setting process, the City Council added the creation of a Community Resilience Advisory Commission to their Top Priorities list. Since then, Public Health Specialist Mary Rose Corrigan, who is the staff person for the existing Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission (ESAC), Community Engagement Coordinator Nikola Pavelic, and I developed a work plan to complete the two actions identified for completion in 2015-2017:

- City Council approval of process to transition to new commission format.
- Comprehensive community engagement effort to define purpose and role of commission and to recruit candidates.

Staff researched best practices in resiliency and citizen commissions from communities across the country. From March to May, staff facilitated over twenty community engagement sessions to gather the following information:

1. During community engagement, stakeholders will define “resilience” for the ordinance.
2. During community engagement, staff will gather stakeholder perspectives on the purpose, reasons and structure of the commission.

DISCUSSION

As outlined in a February recommendation (Attachment A), staff completed a community engagement process that included reaching out to targeted stakeholders, an online survey, and hosting a community dialogue to gather feedback regarding a draft

recommendation. Key issues that were addressed in the development of the Resilient Community Advisory Commission (RCAC) include the following: purpose and role of the commission, size and diverse representation on the commission, determination of staff support and funding needed to assist the commission in fulfilling their purpose, and relationship of the commission to other existing commissions and key partners.

A summary of the engagement process is attached (Attachment B). Notably, staff were able to analyze data collected during the community input sessions, and from the online survey, to draft the recommendation.

Approximately 200 individuals provided input to create the following **definition of resiliency**:

The ability of individuals and systems to prevent, prepare for, and recover from adverse vulnerabilities while adapting to long-term changes.

The majority of individuals supported the development of a Resilient Community Advisory Commission. Many individuals recommended reviewing existing commission responsibilities to make sure that any recommendation for a new commission was not duplicative. The Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission (ESAC) was created in 1991 to review the environmental impact of City programs and projects. In reviewing their current work, we are recommending that the ESAC be dissolved, and its responsibilities rolled into a new RCAC which considers all three pillars of the Sustainable Dubuque model. Although ESAC did not formally vote on approving the RCAC ordinance being recommended (due to lack of quorum for their last meeting,) members provided input and concurred with the recommendation. Current ESAC members also support the recommendation of dissolving the existing commission and are aware they are welcome to apply for positions on the new RCAC.

The purpose of the new RCAC, as defined through the community engagement process, would be:

To advise on city policies and practices to assure resilient outcomes; facilitate the ability to adapt to factors influencing the social/cultural, economic and environmental wellbeing of the community; prevent, prepare for, and recover from adverse vulnerabilities and change through coordination, data analysis, evaluation and citizen engagement.

The responsibilities of the RCAC would include:

- A. To review research and data in order to provide input on identification, prevention, and plans for potential economic, environmental, and social/cultural vulnerabilities.
- B. To review plans for long-term prevention, preparedness, and recovery efforts.
- C. To review policy and program recommendations to the City Council in order to influence resilient outcomes for the community
- D. To provide comment to the city council on the allocation of budgeted city funding to achieve adopted resiliency goals
- E. To educate and engage the public on commission priorities
- F. To provide input on and review strategies to address identified vulnerabilities in collaboration with city staff, other city commissions and community partners.

- G. To review and make recommendations regarding Sustainable Dubuque Community Grant allocations.
- H. To respect the policy making authority of the City Council, the City Manager's responsibilities to implement the goals and priorities the Council establishes (council manager form of government) and the responsibility of City staff to report to the City Manager.
- I. To ensure coordination and communication with other commissions.

The commission comprises nine (9) residents of the city, appointed by the city council. Efforts should be taken to balance the composition of the commission:

- A. Members must be able to think systemically and analyze data in order to meet the stated purpose of the commission.
- B. Members' interest and/or expertise should represent the three pillars of the Sustainable Dubuque model: economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and social/cultural vibrancy.
- C. Members should represent a wide range of sectors within the community, such as business, neighborhoods, non-profit, and educational institutions.
- D. Three (3) or more members should also hold positions on one of the following commissions: Arts & Culture Advisory Commission, Catfish Creek Watershed Management Authority, Community Development Advisory Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Housing Commission, Human Rights Commission, Long Range Planning Advisory Commission, Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission, Transit Advisory Commission, and/or Zoning Advisory Commission.

A number of individuals expressed interest during the community engagement process in becoming commissioners on the RCAC. Provided the Council adopts the recommended ordinance, the ordinance will take place July 1, with an anticipated first meeting of the RCAC in fall 2016. City Clerk Kevin Firnstahl will advertise for the open positions as he typically does for all commission opportunities, and staff will assist in strategic recruitment if it is the will of the Council.

Staffing & Support

We recommend that the primary staff support for the RCAC be the Sustainable Community Coordinator. It is anticipated that providing support will require 25% of the Coordinator's time, in addition to secretarial support not currently available due to the hiring freeze. In addition, during their goal setting, the Commission will identify specific areas of focus on an annual basis. It is highly likely that it would be beneficial for other key City staff to work with the Commission on an ongoing basis. This is currently the case with the ESAC, as the Public Works Director, Water & Resource Recovery Center Manager, and Sustainable Community Coordinator regularly attend ESAC meetings, in addition to the Public Health Specialist, who is the designated staff support. The responsibilities of the Commission, as outlined above, will also likely require coordination from other City staff to provide data and information regarding programs and policies in order for them to make informed decisions and coordinate with other commissions, at the discretion of the City Manager.

BUDGET IMPACT

There are no funds budgeted in FY2017 to support the RCAC. The primary impact would be on staff time necessary to support the Commission. Any funding request for items such as community engagement and outreach, educational trainings on resiliency for commissioners, and/or creation and printing of outreach materials would appear in a future budget request.

Operations & Focus of Work in First Year

We recommend that once commissioners are appointed, they hold a strategic planning session to identify priorities for the coming year, and that this practice be replicated annually. Potential sources of information that would be considered during that session include the input received during our community engagement process, various available data including the STAR Communities, and a potential future vulnerability assessment.

REQUESTED ACTION

I respectfully recommend City Council approval of the attached ordinance to develop a Resilient Community Advisory Commission, approval of the associated recommendations regarding operations of the Commission included in this memo, and approval to dissolve the Environmental Stewardship Advisory Commission.

Cc: Mary Rose Corrigan, Public Health Specialist
Nikola Pavelic, Community Engagement Coordinator