

City of Bloomington Common Council
Committee on Council Processes, Monday, May 5, 2025, 12:15 pm
Allison Conference Room (#225), Showers Building, 401 N. Morton Street

The public may also access the meeting at the following link:
<https://bloomington.zoom.us/j/87400678008?pwd=j2FDoaqpcm6Xu5wY6GZgFIWZeaeR03.1>

AGENDA

Chair: Isabel Piedmont-Smith

- 1) Agenda review and approval
- 2) Updates on board and commission processes (Deputy Clerk Crossley)
- 3) Proposal for Councilmember liaisons to boards and commissions (CMs Zulich, Piedmont-Smith)
 - a) Discussion of revised proposal
 - b) Public comment
 - c) Vote on forwarding proposal to full Council
- 4) Proposal for the planning and scheduling of deliberation sessions (CMs Piedmont-Smith, Daily)
 - a) Discussion of proposal
 - b) Public comment
 - c) Next steps
- 5) Operationalizing equity in city government (CM Flaherty)
 - a) Proposed request from Council to Mayor's administration
 - b) Vote on forwarding request to full Council
- 6) Title 2 revisions and Administrative Manual for Council
 - a) CM Asare's proposal to be discussed May 12 (includes allowing discussion at First Reading)
 - b) Review topics for Administrative Manual
 - c) Add/organize topics as time allows
- 7) General public comment - 1:35 pm
- 8) Adjournment – 1:45 pm

Next meeting will be Monday, May 12, 12:15-1:45 pm in the Allison Conference Room

City Council Engagement with Bloomington Boards and Commissions:
A Proposal for Council Liaisons

Submitted by CM Zulich and CM Piedmont-Smith, Revised April 9, 2025

Value Statement: City Council members should be aware of the work that city boards and commissions are doing so they can be well informed of the issues facing our residents and better advocate for legislation that may address these issues. In addition, our resident boards and commissions should have a clear line of communication with the Bloomington City Council to share the results of their work.

Proposal: Each councilmember should be assigned to 2-3 boards/commissions under the purview of their interview committee.

A. Expectations for engagement

1. CM liaisons should make initial contact with the Board/Commission Chairs and Staff Liaisons to open lines of communication and check in at least three times per year via email.
2. CM liaisons should attend at least one of each board's/commission's meetings per year.
3. Interview Committees should discuss any resolutions or recommendations passed by their assigned boards and commissions.
4. CM liaisons should apprise board/commission chairs and staff liaisons of any relevant legislation being developed or discussed by the Council.
5. CM liaisons will also serve as the point of contact, should the staff liaison or Commission Chair need to communicate any upcoming action of the Commission. (Engagement goes both ways.)

B. Process for selection

Each interview committee chair should ask the committee members to indicate which of the boards/commissions under their purview they are interested in serving as Council Liaison. The interview committee chair in each case will act as liaison to two boards/commissions, while the other two interview committee members will each act as liaison to three boards/commissions. Then each interview committee should meet to vote on a slate of liaison assignments prepared by the committee chair.

*For Boards and Commissions on which a Councilmember already has an ex-officio seat (marked by an asterisk below), the councilmember who serves on the Board/Commission

will automatically serve as their liaison to Council. Committee Chairs should keep these appointments in mind when making assignments.

C. Assignments of interview committees and interview committee membership

We take this opportunity to propose a reorganization of interview committees' purviews such that commissions with similar interests be grouped together. Also, due to current assignment of ex-officio seats to CMs, the membership of some interview committees may need to be changed as well.

Committee A shall be responsible for the following Boards and Commissions:

1. Animal Control Commission
2. Bloomington Arts Commission
3. Bloomington/Monroe County Human Rights Commission
4. Board of Zoning Appeals
5. Commission on the Status of Black Males
6. MLK Birthday Celebrations Commission
7. Housing Quality Appeals Board
8. Urban Enterprise Association* Rosenbarger ex-officio

Committee A is currently composed of Rosenbarger (Chair), Asare, and Stosberg. No change in membership recommended.

Committee B shall be responsible for the following Boards and Commissions:

1. Bloomington Digital Underground Advisory Committee
2. Community Advisory on Public Safety (CAPS) Commission
3. Commission on Aging
4. Commission on the Status of Children and Youth
5. Commission on the Status of Women
6. Transportation Commission* Flaherty ex-officio
7. Public Transportation Corporation
8. Utilities Service Board* Flaherty ex-officio

Committee B is currently composed of Daily (Chair), Piedmont-Smith, and Ruff. Proposed change is to remove Piedmont-Smith and replace with Flaherty.

Committee C shall be responsible for the following Boards and Commissions:

1. Commission on Hispanic and Latiné Affairs
2. Tree Commission
3. Environmental Commission
4. Bloomington Commission on Sustainability* Rollo ex-officio
5. Fire Merit Commission

6. Historic Preservation Commission
7. Redevelopment Commission
8. Monroe County Capital Improvement Board (CIB)

Committee C is currently composed of Zulich (Chair), Rollo, and Flaherty. Proposed change is to remove Flaherty and replace with Piedmont-Smith.

Reminder: From each interview committee, 2 members should each be liaisons to 3 commissions, and the chair of the committee should be a liaison to 2 commissions.

D. Liaison Appointments to Commissions that have no CM appointees

The Council does not make any appointments to the following bodies, but these entities would benefit from having CM liaisons as well. We recommend that the CM liaisons for these bodies be appointed annually by the Council president:

- Board of Public Safety
- Board of Public Works
- Board of Parks Commissioners
- Council on Community Accessibility
- Dispatch Policy Board

Proposal for Planning Deliberation Sessions of Council

Submitted by CM Piedmont-Smith and CM Daily, April 9, 2025

Purpose and Values: All Councilmembers should be able to suggest topics and formats for deliberation sessions, which are on the calendar for 2025 on the second Wednesday of each month (as Committee/Deliberation). As with agendas for regular sessions, the Council President, after due consultation, is responsible for the scheduling of topics for deliberation sessions. Councilmembers who propose a topic should assume responsibility for helping to plan the session if/when it is scheduled. To foster truly open dialogue with constituents, at least two deliberation sessions with full public engagement (beyond time at the microphone) should take place within each calendar year.

Proposal: Any CM or set of CMs can propose a topic and an appropriate format for a deliberation session. The CM(s) should consider the following questions.

What is the purpose of the session?

1. Discussion of a community problem (like the August 2024 session on homelessness)
2. Development of legislation/policy regarding the issue (like the Sept. 2024 session on homelessness)
3. Discussion of legislation that is being developed (like the Nov. 2024 session on the proposed Transportation Committee)
4. Discussion of legislation after first reading

What is the format that best serves the purpose, and how will the public be engaged?

1. CMs at the dais, with public comment at the microphone
2. CMs in a rectangle facing each other, with public comment at the microphone and/or members of the public joining the rectangle for discussion
3. Breakout groups with the public following presentation of the question and instructions for discussion - ***This will require facilitators***
4. Other?

Process for proposing sessions

- Create a Google sheet where CMs enter a topic, format and preferred date of a deliberation session (for one of our regularly scheduled 2nd Wednesdays). See sample below. The sheet should be set up so that all CMs are notified when new proposals are entered.
- Other CMs could “upvote” proposed sessions by adding their support in the Google sheet.

- The Council President would then schedule the topics, in consultation with other Council officers, Council staff, and the Clerk at biweekly scheduling meetings.

Topic & preferred date	Stage you are in the legislative process	Type of meeting envisioned	Type of public engagement	Format of session	Need for facilitator(s)?
	Drop-down list options				
	Brainstorming and/or researching	Discussion of community problem	Break-out groups	Break-out groups	Yes
	Outline of legislation	Development of legislation	Comments at the mic	CMs around a table	No
	Draft legislation	Discussion of legislation that is being developed	Include in discussion at the table	CMs at the dais	
	Completed legislation	Discussion after 1st reading	Other (Specify)	Other (Specify)	
EXAMPLE:					
Snow removal from sidewalks, Sept. 10, 2025	Brainstorming	Development of legislation	Comments at the mic	CMs around a table	no

Process for running sessions

If the session is proposed to include active public engagement (anything beyond regular public comment), the CM(s) who propose(s) the session must commit to helping with planning, including engagement of and coordination with facilitators.

Balance of types of sessions

We propose that two sessions per calendar year include active public engagement via breakout groups or other direct discussion between CMs and members of the public.

Operationalizing Equity in City Government - Next Steps

In 2024, the Council Processes Committee explored how to operationalize equity in council processes, which necessarily involved a more holistic inquiry about how to operationalize equity in city government. A survey of leading cities highlighted a range of options including: hiring dedicated city staff to support equity in operations and policy, ongoing training for city staff, formal adoption of equity frameworks and goals, investments in procedural equity with public engagement, and more. While many of these leading practices would involve aspects of council process, the committee broadly agreed that equity improvements in city government should ideally be pursued more holistically, involving significant collaboration between the mayoral administration, the city council, and the community—especially equity- and justice-focused groups and organizations.

Also in 2024, the city council expressed among its budget priorities for 2025 a focus on equity. Specifically, the council urged the mayor to: "Explore strategies to implement a whole-of-government approach to equity in city operations, budgeting, policy development, and employment practices, including through the potential development of a cabinet-level Chief Equity Officer position."

While the mayor's administration did not take up the council's recommendations, it did suggest some next steps. In a memo responding to the council's budget priorities, the mayor said: "This needs work and planning. We agree on the need for a comprehensive approach to equity and can start to knit together a plan in 2025. A cross-departmental team is needed as a starting point."

In a budget book memo, writing with regard to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, the administration indicated that "we want to clearly identify core areas for improvement and set expectations for outcomes." When asked who is heading this assessment; on what time scale it would occur; and whether the administration would share the assessment's conclusions with the city council, the administration responded: "All of this work is described as a goal because it is in the earliest stages of simply identifying the need. Creating the team, timeline, and so on, is yet to be done. That's all part of the work that has to be done. These questions on accountability are completely appropriate and should be answerable as we actually dig into the work."

In order to take a collaborative and holistic approach to equity in city government, the Council Process Committee recommends that the city council formally request for (1) an update from the mayor's administration based on its commitments 9 months ago to "create[] a team, timeline, and so on" to identify areas for improvement and establish a set of priority outcomes on equity in city government; and (2) request inclusion of and collaboration with the council and community members on this process going forward.

DRAFT 4/30/25

Topics to be covered in a Common Council Administrative Manual

Sections of BMC Title 2 proposed for deletion

- 2.04.110 Seating of members
- 2.04.120 Limits on debate
- 2.04.130 Absence from meeting—Leaving meeting in session
- 2.04.140 Orderliness of members
- 2.04.160 Expressing dissent
- 2.04.170 Violation of rules
- 2.04.180 Address on personal privilege
- 2.04.360 Voting procedure
- 2.04.380 Order of Business at Regular Sessions
- 2.04.390 Motions Generally
- 2.04.400 Motions When Question is Under Debate
- 2.04.410 Motion for the Previous Question
- 2.04.420 Motion to Adjourn or Recess
- 2.04.430 Call of the Council
- 2.04.440 Appeal from Decision of Presiding Officer
- 2.04.450 Motion to Lay on the Table
- 2.04.460 Motion to Reconsider

Common Council Meetings

Preparation for meetings

Preparation of agenda

How do non-legislative items get on the agenda?

Preparation of packets

Desire to minimize addendum to packets

CM review of packet prior to meetings (sponsors, president)

Who is allowed to put what in Council packets

Timing of CM questions prior to meetings

Timing of proposed edits to legislation prior to first reading

Order of Business

Order of business (agenda structure) for regular sessions

Remove from Title 2 and instead put outline in this manual

Where is appropriate place for approval of letters from Council?

Who is allowed to present legislation other than the sponsor?

If not sponsored by mayor's administration, who from administration can comment, when and for how long?

Reports

Reports from the mayor and city offices

Reports from the City Clerk

Council member reports (discretionary)

Council member reports (as appointees or liaisons to other bodies)

Reports from boards and commissions

Reports from community groups and non-profits loosely affiliated with the City

Common Council Committee Meetings

Scheduling meetings

Preparation of agenda

Preparation of packets

Record-keeping (what is done by the committee chair, what is done by the City Clerk, etc)

Different procedure for Interview Committees?

Drafting Legislation

Collaboration with staff

To what extent does staff write the legislation vs. the CM(s) writing the legislation?

Cross-reference "Working with Council Staff"

Collaboration with colleagues

Who determines it is ready to put on the Council schedule?

Deadlines applicable to legislation, whether proposed by CMs or Administration

Working with Council Staff

Research

Research into how to address a community problem

Research into what other communities have done

Research into city and state codes and precedents, other legal issues

Amendments

Timing

Writing legislation

Communications with mayor's administration

Communications with relevant boards/commissions

Working with Office of the City Clerk

Meeting notices

Meeting attendance

Scheduling committee meetings and council meetings not on the annual calendar

- Calendaring

- Creating Zoom link

- Room reservations