

Boards and Commissions Task Force Report

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October 15, 2019

Dear Mayor Newton and Councilmembers Feinberg, Onley and Pierzchala:

This Mayor and Council deserve a lot of credit for creating the Boards and Commissions Task Force (BCTF) and for appointing the finest and most dedicated volunteers with whom I have ever had the pleasure to serve. These members have extensive experience in our boards and commissions. They maintained these prior roles in addition to serving on the BCTF. Please remember their names for this contribution. Further, the city staff was the best. While this is often the case with our staff, their roles in this endeavor were above and beyond.

We were aware from the beginning that the work would take a lot of time. We devoted enormous time to this task. We felt we could make a difference. We believe we have done so.

Our report explains what we did and how we did it. While there will be areas of disagreement, the BCTF always tried to keep in mind how we can make our city better. If we are called an All-American City, then we need to act like an All-American City.

Most of the board and commission volunteers are extremely satisfied and have strong feelings of accomplishment. They feel they make a positive contribution to the quality of life in Rockville. This is demonstrated by the high quality of the services these volunteers perform and are found to be the main reason for volunteering.

Rockville could accomplish even more with a larger and more diverse volunteer population. Accordingly, one of the BCTF's main goals is to recommend a way to provide outreach to potential volunteers and enhance this experience to the benefit of the city and its volunteers.

Unfortunately, even in the face of substantial contributions from volunteers that create value and improve and expand our City government, the residents seem largely unaware of the extent and importance of this work. This report includes recommendations to address this lack of awareness and ways to appeal to more diverse groups of potential volunteers.

The BCTF also recognizes the importance of leadership, noting that the interaction between chairs and their staff liaisons is key to success. Surveys and interviews indicate training, clearer direction from the Mayor and Council, and in some instances, more resources are needed. The considerable efforts of chairs and staff liaisons in multiple departments and the City Clerk's office are crucial for continued growth and needed improvements suggested in this report. The BCTF feels the creation of a high-level staff position to coordinate the boards and commissions efforts is indicated. This individual, whom we recommend being in the City Clerk's office, would also conduct outreach to recruit new and diverse volunteers, keep the public more fully informed, correct operational deficiencies, increase transparency, and educate the public.

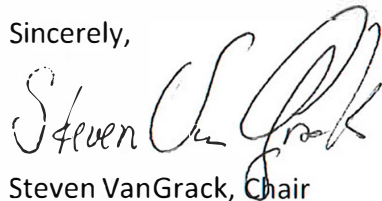
The proposals for new and modifications to boards and commissions are decisions to be made by the next Mayor & Council.

We do present some important conclusions:

1. Rockville should conduct an official review every decade of the way we incorporate the opinions of our residents and businesses in our governance.
2. Rockville has a truly amazing corps of volunteers who devote staggering amounts of time to make our city unquestionably GREAT. However, we should enhance volunteerism to the benefit of the people who volunteer as well as those to whom the volunteers serve.
3. Diversity and transparency are critical to the success of our city. We are good, but we need to be better.

We thank you for the opportunity to serve and hope we can enhance the experience in the lives of the people, by the people and for the people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven VanGrack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steven" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "VanGrack".

Steven VanGrack, Chair

Executive Summary

Our Mission

The BCTF was established by the Rockville Mayor and Council in July 2019 to look at the city's 31 boards and commissions for clarity, understanding of purpose and structure, and to provide recommendations. This was asked of the task force to ensure that these volunteer organizations remained relevant to the City government and residents. (Appendix A Boards and Commission Task Force Charter)

The BCTF convened and reviewed the Charter and developed a working document of vision, mission, goals, and objectives to guide its efforts. (Appendix B December 2019 BCTF Working Document)

Methods

Agreed methodologies for fact-finding were:

- Research on the Rockville city website and other relevant websites and resources
- Surveys of current and former volunteer leaders and the public
- Interviews of volunteer chairs and staff liaisons
- Dashboard exercise

(See page 8 for Survey and Interview discussions, Appendix I for Dashboard details.)

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation of the boards and commissions focused on five criteria: diversity, relevance, transparency, effectiveness, and operational performance (See Proposed BCTF Evaluation Criteria, Appendix D). After completing the methodological activities listed above, issues discussion and analysis revealed a high degree of coherence in the results and few outliers. The following key conclusions in each evaluation area were:

Diversity

Issues of diversity in gender, age, race, ethnic, and socio-economic and geographic diversity were raised in every component of the BCTF's fact-finding. The actual diversity of boards and commissions varied, but the desire for more diversity was universal and echoed by the BCTF. The question is the how? Some felt it is the purview of the Mayor and Council who approve the appointments. Regardless, the BCTF recommends broad-based, sensitively composed, and targeted outreach to all components of the city's population to increase their interest in volunteering. (See Diversity discussion page 23)

Transparency

Open and accessible information about the boards and commissions is another shared value that is not completely realized. The BCTF focused on increased Maryland Open Meetings Act (OMA) adherence. This would force a more complete, timely, and accurately posting of minutes and agendas, and coupled with needed improvements to the city's website; it would be a big step towards assuring transparency. Many surveys and interviews, including those with city staff and Council members, mentioned the negative effects of the lack of transparency in the current volunteer nomination process; it is slow, not always responsive to applicants, and tolerates a considerable number of vacancies.

Relevance

While the city website does not address the relevance or reason for individual boards and commissions, the Mayor and Council, the volunteers, and staff, who work on them, speak to their own views of the relevance of their work with enthusiasm. The BCTF found resonance with these views and concluded that all the boards and commissions, if not most, are relevant. The few that seem tangential are the subject of specific recommendations for restructuring. (See Relevance discussion page 26).

Effectiveness

The BCTF took a high-level view of assessing this criterion by looking at results. Indeed, almost every board and commission have visible results in contributions to the city by supporting various government functions or with events and benefits to the city's residents. Volunteers and staff are responsible for managing the members and the work of the boards and commissions. The BCTF did find that additional onboarding and training on board management and leadership could address specific issues that interfere with mission coherence and results. (See Effectiveness Discussion page 27)

Operational Performance

The BCTF found this criterion to be complex. Rockville's boards and commissions have been established over time, and the guidance on specific points of both effectiveness and performance varies from group to group.

Further, interviewees and those surveyed responded from personal experience. Nevertheless, the BCTF was able to develop a list of issues that were mentioned and brought attention to these into both general and specific recommendations. (See Operational performance discussion page 28)

Key Recommendations were made in the following areas:

- Improve diversity across all volunteer organizations
- Increase transparency
- Effectively utilize City resources for engagement and management of volunteer organizations
- Coordinate missions, objectives, and workplans
- Enhance volunteer experience
- Identify opportunities to add new, relevant volunteer organizations and review existing organizations
- Update the Rockville City Code and Guidelines and Procedures for Citizen Boards to reflect changes

See Key Recommendation discussion (page 29)

One key recommendation that stands out for the BCTF and is mentioned several times in this report is to create a new full-time position in the office of the City's Clerk. This position would support boards and commissions and coordinate their activities, and support volunteerism. The BCTF unanimously passed this recommendation, and it is crucial to implementing almost every key recommendation in this report. Without this position, the improvements we envision will not be possible. Rockville has long had a government that includes and depends on volunteers. Those volunteers are ready and willing, but to continue with this model and to ensure that the efforts of these volunteers are supported, we need this position created and filled expeditiously.

New and Revised Boards and Commissions

The BCTF did not have adequate time to fully consider ideas for new boards and commissions. Consistent with the issues we found about existing boards and commissions, the BCTF did develop a recommended policy for developing a new board or assessing existing boards. This process is in the form of a checklist that can be used by anyone with an idea for a new organization. It goes through all the components that should be part of the thought process for forming an effective, relevant organization with an attention to mission, goals, and needed resources. By adopting the use of such a process, some of the issues of concern noted in this report would be avoided. (See page 35)

A list of suggestions for improved operation of existing organizations is also included in the report. Most are focused on restructuring. (See Page 33)

Introduction

Rockville's government has been recognized as a model of open government that stresses citizen participation by 4 All-America City Awards (nationalcivicleague.org). The City enjoys a reputation for high caliber, professional management, and citizen volunteers who make important contributions to the government and community.

Many volunteers provide services to the City, the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department, Rockville Hometown Holidays, and youth sports coaches being three good examples. However, this report focuses only on those volunteers who serve as members of City boards, commissions, task forces, and committees (hereafter referred to as boards and commissions). These volunteers are an important component of Rockville's success.

As a result of its location in the National Capital area, Rockville can draw on a population who values community service and exhibit high levels of professionalism, knowledge, and skills. They are among the many reasons Rockville is an exceptional place to live, work, play, and visit. Indeed, Rockville is fortunate to have many residents willing to volunteer to serve the community.

Thousands of volunteers have served these organizations over the years, and nearly 200 continue to serve on 31 current boards and commissions. The volunteers differ in that they are nominated to their positions by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council. **Collectively, the volunteers who work on these boards and commissions contribute thousands of hours of service to the City in important functions that expand the city's capabilities.** They also provide an important feedback loop and source of advice to the Mayor and Council and City staff.

In 2018, Rockville's Mayor and Council created a volunteer task force to review the City's boards and commissions. Residents were asked to express their interests in participating in the task force, and the Mayor and Council selected a panel of individuals to serve as its members. The Boards and Commissions Task Force (hereafter referred to as the BCTF) was established formally on July 2, 2018, and the first meeting was held on November 7, 2018, to review the 31 boards and commissions identified by staff.

The following report lays out in detail the process used, and the results found by the BCTF and identify several areas of improvement for the Mayor and Council to consider. Goals for the boards and commissions guided the efforts of the BCTF and are summarized, along with key recommendations on the General Findings and Recommendations Dashboard Summary on page 30 and the key recommendation narrative, which follows.

The following goals for Rockville volunteer organizations guided the thinking and the work of the BCTF:

1. Provides resident input to City Government that is:
 - Relevant
 - Effective
 - Diverse
 - Transparent
2. Complement activities of the City staff and elected officials
3. Utilize fully the expertise and experience of volunteers in the formulation of City policies and practices.
4. Ensure consistent communication within volunteer organizations
5. Ensure consistent communication among volunteer organizations, City staff, and Mayor and Council.
6. Promote interest and satisfaction in participating in the City's volunteer organizations by
 - Transparent and efficient processes to identify and appoint volunteers
 - Volunteer satisfaction that they are doing relevant and important work
 - Volunteers seeing the impact and receiving productive feedback from City staff and the Mayor and Council
 - Volunteers being recognized for their efforts and contributions
7. Identify areas of opportunity, including forward-looking areas that warrant citizen input to the Mayor and Council and City staff.

Data Collection & Review

To fulfill our directive from the Mayor and Council, the BCTF adopted an approach that included collecting data and insight from various stakeholders in the boards and commissions system. This included current board and commission members, former members, chairs, Mayor and Council members, city staff, and the public. The BCTF divided this data collection into several different projects, summarized in Table 1. Our findings have been summarized below, but all individual questionnaire responses¹ and interview summaries are available in Appendix C. Members of the BCTF designed and developed all questions and instruments used in the data collection process, and those instruments – including links to the questionnaires on Survey Monkey and the structured interview documents – are available in the appendices.

¹ Questionnaire responses have been anonymized for current and former board and commission members.

Table 1: Data Collection Efforts

Data Collection Effort	Method	Responses
Current B&C Member Questionnaire	On-line Questionnaire	83
Former B&C Member Questionnaire	On-line Questionnaire	25
Public Questionnaire	On-line Questionnaire	22
Current Board & Commission Chair Interviews	Structured Interviews	15
Mayor and Council Interviews	BCTF Team Interview	4
Staff Interviews	Structured Interviews	6

In the following sections, we summarize the major findings and themes from our direct data collection efforts.

Current Board & Commission Members Feedback Questionnaire

The foundation of the BCTF's data collection effort was an 18-question questionnaire sent to 197 current board and commission members and chairs based on information provided by city staff. The BCTF received 82 responses to our questionnaire between January 13, 2019, and March 3, 2019. We received responses from at least one member of 22 different boards, commissions, and task forces, as shown in Table 2. The responses were highly consistent with few outliers. Given the number and breadth of respondents, we can generally assume that the responses represent a reliable and valid snapshot of the current board and commission member opinion.

Table 2: Board & Commission Member Responses

Board or Commission	Responses
Animal Matters Board	3
Board of Appeals	4
Board of Supervisors of Elections	1
Caregiver Funding Task Force	2
Cultural Arts Commission	7
Environment Commission	8
Ethics Commission	4
Financial Advisory Board	3
Historic District Commission	5

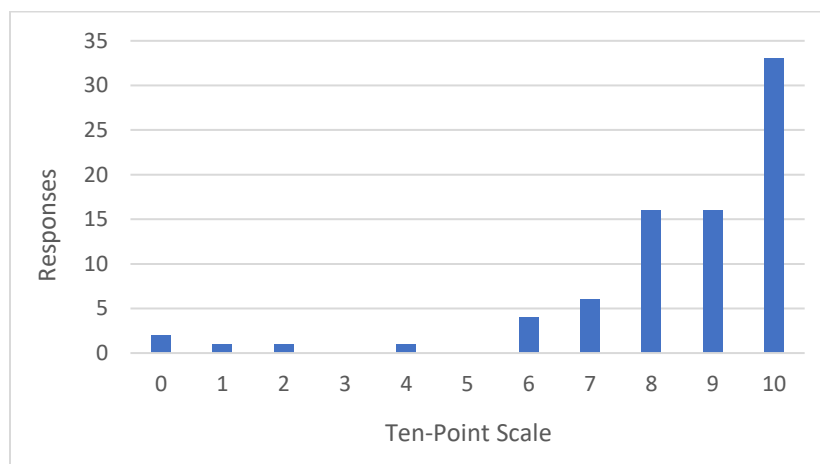
Human Rights Commission	6 ²
Landlord-Tenant Affairs Commission	7
Personnel Appeals Board	1
Recreation and Parks Advisory Board	2
Rockville Economic Development, Inc.	1
Rockville Seniors, Inc.	2
Senior Citizens Commission	3
Total	82

The nature of the questionnaire – multiple topics and open-ended questions – makes summarizing the findings challenging, and readers should refer to the appendices for all the respondent data. However, multiple themes emerged from our analysis of the responses.

Satisfaction

- Current Board and Commission members enjoy serving and would recommend participation to a friend.

Figure 1: Recommend Serving to Others?



² One respondent identified as a “former” member of the Human Rights Commission within this survey but was retained in the analysis.

³ One response referenced the board of Montgomery Community Media, not a City of Rockville Board or Commission. This response was not included in the analysis.

Administrative Functions

- boards and commissions use a variety of means to hold meetings and communicate – e.g., formal teleconferences, dial-in, electronic communication – but monthly face-to-face meetings are by far the standard.
- The Chairs initiate agenda development and distribution. Legally-established entities (e.g., Rockville Housing Enterprises, the Planning Commission) tend to have more formal processes and formats.
- Meeting minutes serve as the primary communication and reporting method. For those groups whose meetings are televised (e.g., the Planning Commission), the recordings serve as the primary reporting method.

Motivation for Volunteering

- Respondents cited consisted of motivations for participation, mostly related to a service motivation and/or contributing to the community.
- Others were motivated by professional concerns or wanting to retain or improve certain skills (e.g., conflict resolution, accounting, etc.).
- Motivation often coincided with a specific issue of concern (e.g., affordable housing, ethics, or diversity). A representative quote from an RHE board member described their motivation as a,

Desire to advocate for and facilitate affordable housing for in-need Rockville residents.

Conducting Business

- Expectations for participation and attendance vary between the more formal, legal organizations (e.g., the RAOs, the Landlord-Tenant Affairs Commission, the Planning Commission), and the advisory boards (e.g., the Environment Commission, the Animal Matters Board). The decision-making boards have a strong culture and expectation of attendance and participation.
- Smaller advisory entities frequently mention the difficulty in maintaining/achieving a quorum.
- Many issues exhibited this dynamic, a split between the more formal organizations and the advisory boards. For example:
 - Goal tracking was more common among organizations like the Planning Commission.
 - Reporting was more likely to be reported or required.
 - More formal boards and commissions were more likely to identify annual submissions to the Mayor and Council.

- Few groups – whether legally required or advisory – reported any formal onboarding or training process. The Planning Commission, the Historic District Commission, and the Board of Appeals represent exceptions since members must pass a State-sponsored course to qualify.
- Chairs reported a good range of skills among the members. Some boards and commissions (e.g., the Financial Advisory Board) report difficulty finding applicants with the requisite specialized skills.
- Rockville City staff were almost universally identified as an invaluable resource.
- Only one organization reported working cooperatively with other boards or commissions.

Application and Selection

- A significant number of responses mentioned the Mayor and Council being slow to fill vacancies. For example, a member of the Human Rights Commission stated:

There are often vacancies on the Commission and applicants interested filling the vacancies. It seems like it often takes a long time for the Mayor and Council to appoint new Commissioners. This lag time does make it more difficult to move forward with our projects. We have had meetings without a quorum.

- Similarly, many mentioned members serving beyond their terms.
- Several respondents mentioned that they or colleagues had applied for different boards or positions than the one they were appointed to, possibly resulting in inefficiencies or a skills mismatch.

Suggestions for Improvement

- Clear mission communication from the Mayor and Council.
- Regular, mandatory public testimony on board and commission activities before the Mayor and Council.
- Timely appointment of replacements and enforcement of term length.
- Expansion of membership for many groups (especially from smaller boards and commissions).
- “How-To” training (e.g., conducting a meeting, leadership, etc.).

Former Board & Commission Members Feedback Questionnaire

The BCTF sent a similar 15-question questionnaire to former board and commission members for the City of Rockville based on a list provided by city staff. The BCTF received 25 responses

out of 87 total invitations between February 18, 2019, and February 28, 2019. We received responses from former members of fourteen different boards or commissions. The responses we received were highly consistent within the former board and commission respondents, as well as consistent with the responses from the current board and commission members.

Table 3: Board and Commission Responses

Board or Commission	Count
Animal Matters Board	1
Board of Supervisors of Elections	1
Compensation Commission	1
Cultural Arts Commission	1
Financial Advisory Board	2
Historic District Commission	3
Human Rights Commission	1
Recreation and Parks Advisory Board	5
Rockville Economic Development, Inc.	1
Planning Commission	1
Senior Citizens Commission	2
Rockville Sister City Corporation	1
Sign Review board	1
Traffic and Transportation	3

The primary participatory motivation for former members remained a desire to serve the community, specifically within an area of interest or expertise such as public art or animal welfare. The challenges identified by former members were also like current members, such as finding qualified candidates, clear direction from the Mayor and Council, and ensuring participation from members. All but one respondent felt that their service was “recognized and appreciated,” and only a single respondent did not describe their experience as “valuable.” The most common reason for leaving was a change in a geographic location or a move to a different board or commission, not dissatisfaction. As one former chair put it:

I had to leave the position because I moved right outside the city limits. I still continued to work full-time in Rockville and had hoped that the Board members could live or work in the City.

Some consideration might be given to allow more flexibility on board and commission membership.⁴

Other highlights include:

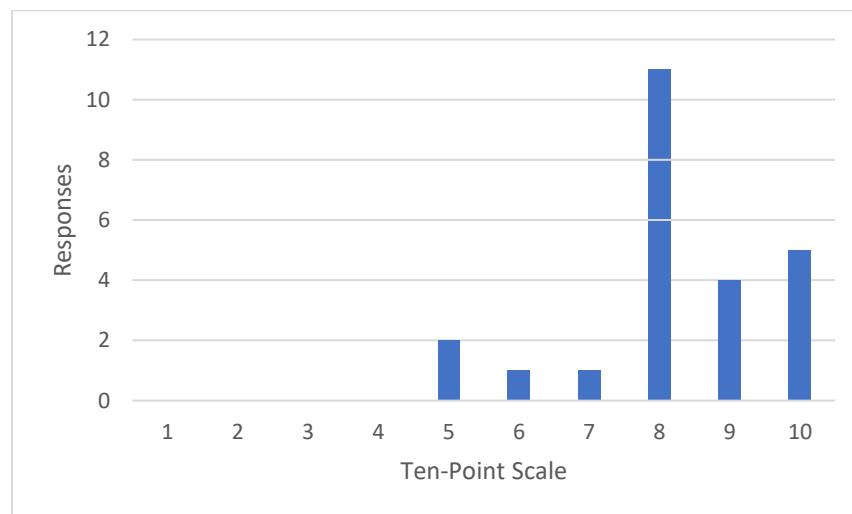
- Most former members continue to volunteer.

Table 4: Continue to Volunteer?

Response	Count
Yes	17
No	8

- Former members are largely satisfied and would overwhelmingly recommend serving to a friend or colleague (average: 8.2).

Table 5: Recommend Serving to Others?



⁴ Expanding board and commission membership to non-Rockville residents with a Rockville “connection” was also identified by staff liaisons in separate interviews.

Public Questionnaire

The Boards and Commissions Task Force also designed a public questionnaire consisting of five questions and released the survey on February 19, 2019. The public questionnaire was promoted in *Rockville Reports* and through other City communications portals. The BCTF received 22 responses from Rockville residents over approximately two months – the survey closed on April 21, 2019.

Overall, the responses did not indicate much familiarity with the City’s boards and commissions. The generalizability of the responses cannot be determined, but those residents that responded indicated general confusion about the purpose of the boards and commissions. The respondents generally did not know the purpose of the boards, their mission, or why they were important to the city government.

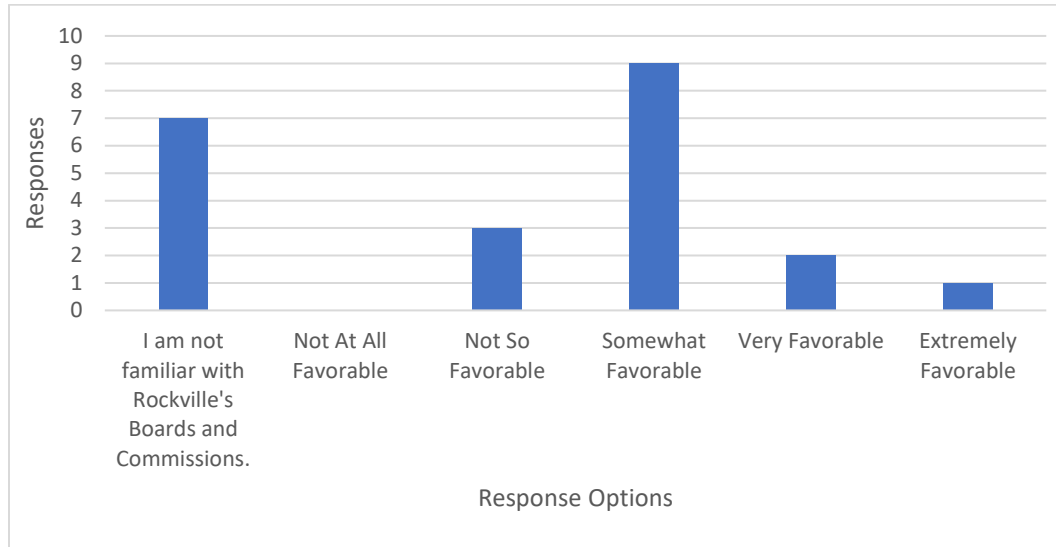
Figure 2 provides the responses to the question, “How would you describe your overall opinion of Rockville’s boards and commissions system?” The modal response was “Somewhat Favorable,” but approximately one out of three respondents replied, “I am *not* familiar with Rockville’s boards and commissions.”⁵ An illustrative quote from one respondent stated,

*I'd suggest more promotion and public outreach -
many residents are unaware that they can
participate.*

The public response contrasts with the responses from current and former commission members, who generally viewed their experiences positively and were strong proponents of the system overall. This suggests that public apathy may be more related to a lack of information and awareness than the specific conduct or experience of the boards.

⁵ The mean response (on a 0 – 5 scale) was 2.1, indicating a significant lack of familiarity with the boards and commissions system.

Figure 2: Opinion of Rockville Boards & Commissions



Other findings are included:

- Public recommendations addressed themes previously identified in other data collections.

Table 6: Recommendations

Topic
Improved Transparency
Regular Public Testimony (Mayor and Council)
Regular Updates & Information Posting

- The public provided many ideas but no consensus on the need for new boards or commissions.

Table 7: New Boards or Commissions

Response	Count
Elections Commission	1
Town Center Commission	1
Parks Commission	1
Transit Commission	1
New Planning Board	1
Reduce Boards	1

Green Space Commission	1
Crime Commission	1
Community Development Commission	1
Education Commission	2
None/Unclear	13

Structured Interviews: Current Board and Commission Chairs

In addition to the questionnaires provided to all current board and commission members, the BCTF members also interviewed current board chairs using a “Structured Interview Tool” (Appendix H). One of the most important findings of the BCTF has been recognizing how central the chairs are to the operation and success of their board or commission. Chairs handle the bulk of the administrative, organizational, and strategic work of the boards and commissions. Good chairs can energize their board or commission, engage other members, and provide the organization with a strategic vision. Table 8 provides the list of chairs interviewed by BCTF members for this report.

Table 8: Board and Commission Chair Interviews

Board or Commission
Animal Matters Board
Traffic and Transportation
Cultural Arts Commission
Senior Citizens Commission
Human Services Advisory Commission
Financial Advisory Board
Ethics Commission
Human Rights Commission
Historic District Commission
Planning Commission
Retirement Board
Board of Supervisors of Elections
Compensation Commission
Board of Appeals
Environmental Commission
Rockville Sister City Corporation
Rockville Housing Enterprises (RHE)
Rockville Senior Citizens, Inc.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the interviews uncovered many common themes among board and commission chairs, though there were areas where Chair opinion differed. These differences tended to develop between different types of boards and committees. For example, advisory boards tended to want increased Mayor and Council involvement, such as attendance from Mayor and Council members at board or commission meetings, annual presentations to the Mayor and Council, or more direction from the Mayor and Council on their mission.

Other board and commission chairs, particularly those with legal responsibilities like the Board of Appeals or Board of Elections, want to maintain their independence from the Mayor and Council. Other boards, like the Planning Commission and the Historic District Commission, have unique decision-making authority and don't fit well with the analysis of advisory boards like the Animal Matters Board. Still other boards and commissions – e.g., Rockville Housing Enterprises or the Rockville Sister City Corporation – are Rockville-affiliated organizations such as 501(c)3's or other types of non-profits where the City has influence but not full control over the organization.⁶ However, despite these differences, the responses from the chairs interviewed were generally consistent. We have identified areas of consensus and divergence and highlighted them below. The full interview notes for the Chair interviews can be found on the Boards and Commissions Task Force page on the city's website⁷.

Mayor & Council Involvement

As mentioned above, opinions on the involvement of elected officials tended to be split between types of boards. Boards with legal requirements to make decisions for the city or review appeals indicated a strong desire to maintain their independence and distance from the Mayor and Council. However, many of the advisory commissions indicated a desire for *more* direction from the Mayor and Council. This includes attendance, financing for events, regular presentations before the Mayor and Council, and suggestions for areas to investigate over a specific time period (e.g., annually).

Staff Support

Among the chairs interviewed, experience with the City staff was almost uniformly positive. One typical comment was, "Staff have been excellent. Very supportive."

Mission and Relevance

As mentioned previously, many advisory chairs indicated a desire for more specific instructions from the Mayor and Council expectations. Some chairs indicated that the Mayor and Council could provide suggestions and recommendations for topics to research and report on annually.

⁶ Within this report, we may refer to Rockville Economic Development, Inc., Rockville Housing Enterprises, Rockville Recreation and Parks Foundation Inc., Rockville Seniors, Inc., and the Rockville Sister City Corporation collectively as Rockville-Affiliated Organizations or RAOs. These are independent organizations that the city either appoints all or some of the board members but represent separate legal entities not fully under the control of the city.

⁷ <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/2098/Boards-and-Commissions-Task-Force>

Additionally, some of the advisory commissions indicated that their area of concern has changed and expanded since their charter or ordinance was adopted (e.g., the Human Rights Commission). In these cases, their mission needs to expand/adapt, and the Mayor and Council should be part of specifying those changes.

Training and Leadership

Very few chairs indicated that they had established any formal training beyond the Open Meetings Act requirements.⁸ Chairs were generally split on whether they wanted more formal training or not. Chairs leading those boards that require specialized knowledge – such as the Financial Advisory Board – tended to recommend minimal additional training, whereas other advisory board chairs such as the Human Services Advisory Commission indicated that staff provided limited training on the charter and Rockville city code and seemed to view that as enough.

One area where many chairs suggested increased training was needed was on how to conduct meetings and manage the board member's participation. This included the proper procedure for conducting a meeting, proper taking of minutes, rules of order, etc. This may be an area where the city can provide general material to new board and commission members.

Vacancies & Participation

Filling vacancies was a problem identified by many of the chairs. Some had difficulty maintaining a quorum to conduct business. This was a problem that transcended the board or commission type. It was noted by both boards with decision-making authority (e.g., the Planning Commission or Compensation Commission) and advisory boards (e.g., Human Rights Commission). Many indicated that long-term vacancies create a self-reinforcing problem – applicants are not given the opportunity to serve and left in limbo, making it difficult to recruit more volunteers, making it still more difficult to fill vacancies. Many – especially issue-specific boards – indicated a desire for more influence over applicants selected to fill vacancies. Several also indicated that more volunteer recognition – e.g., receptions, plaques, acknowledgment on the website, etc. – would help retention and encourage participation.

Diversity

Diversity was a goal and theme addressed by all the chairs, but how diversity needed to be addressed differed. Some felt their organizations were sufficiently diverse, while others noted a lack of racial, ethnic, age, or gender diversity within their organization. Some reported disappointing prior experiences with outreach, though not specifically for diversity. Additionally, many seemed to see the issue of diversity within the boards and commissions as one for the Mayor and Council to address. Many indicated a willingness and support for

⁸ More information on the Maryland Open Meetings Act can be found at the Maryland Attorney General's website at: <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/OpenGov/OpenMeetings/default.aspx>.

opening their meetings to public attendance but indicated it was difficult to address diversity on their board without Mayor and Council leadership/cooperation.

Miscellaneous

- The collaboration was not widespread. Many chairs mentioned a desire to collaborate, but few actual meetings or collaborations were identified.
- Many actively supported the opportunity to present to the Mayor and Council on a regular basis (e.g., annually).

City of Rockville Interviews: Mayor & Council and City Staff

The BCTF also interviewed both staff and elected officials to get their opinion on the volunteer boards and commissions. The BCTF was also able to interview staff liaisons for a diverse selection of boards, including the meet-as-needed Board of Appeals, the dormant Animal Matters Board, the active Cultural Arts Commission, and the infrequently required Compensation Commission. The interviewees and their positions are listed in Table 9.

Table 9: City of Rockville Interviews⁹

Staff Interviews	Position
Rob DiSpirito	City Manager, REDI Liaison/Board Member
Major Eric Over	Rockville Police Department, Animal Matters Board Liaison
Bobby Ray	Board of Appeals Liaison
Sara Taylor-Ferrell	City Clerk, Liaison, Compensation Commission & Board of Supervisors of Elections
Andy Lett	Staff Liaison, Cultural Arts Commission
Tim Chestnut	Director, Recreation and Parks
Gavin Cohen	Chief Financial Officer/Director of Finance, liaison, Retirement Board
Lise Soukup	Staff Liaison, Environment Commission
Sheila Bashiri	Staff Liaison, Historic District Commission (HDC)
Eliot Schaefer	Staff Liaison, Ethics Commission
Mayor & Council Interviews	
Virginia Onley	Councilmember
Mark Pierzchala	Councilmember
Beryl Feinberg	Councilmember
Bridget Newton	Mayor

⁹ Staff interviews conducted by 2-3 member teams of the Board and Commissions Task Force. All Mayor and Council interviews conducted by the whole BCTF. Interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes.

City Staff

Despite the variety of boards and commission covered by the city staff interviewed, many of the comments addressed similar themes. Vacancies and the process to fill them were mentioned by multiple staff members. However, the impact of vacancies differed between types of boards and commissions. Some staff members indicated that their commission seems to “draw applicants” when the city announces vacancies. Others indicated that the board requires a “special kind of person” to take an interest in the work.

Overall, vacancies were a major concern from almost all staff members, including for the dormant Animal Matters Board. The staff liaison for the Animal Matters Board indicated that they see value in the board for addressing “hot button issues” but are not clear on what to do with the board in the interim.

Diversity was also a reoccurring theme. One staff member commented that their entire four-member board was white, male attorneys. Another staff member commented that there was considerable diversity on their board, but that the mission of the commission was hurt by high turnover in leadership. Other staff members identified diverse organizations within the City – including the Asian Pacific Task Force – as possible routes to recruit a more diverse board and commission membership.

Another theme was direction from the Mayor and Council. One staff member that identified high turnover in their commission mentioned that it might be mitigated by strong direction from the Mayor and Council to compensate for frequent changes in leadership style. Another commented that there was little activity and direction from the City. Additionally, some staff members want direction for what their board can do between times when their input and advice are needed. This may be a case where the Mayor and Council can provide more direction to the boards and commissions.

Process and appointments were another common theme. One staff member identified the need for someone to track and monitor the boards and commissions’ activities and ensure they fulfilled their requirements – such as annual reports – and that their work products were made public. Transparency requirements were also recommended not just for board and commission work products but also expressions of interest so that the public is aware of whether there is an applicant for a vacancy. The same staff member also suggested consecutive terms for boards, so that certain required boards are not left shorthanded during busy periods. Finally, it has been suggested that nominations not be the sole purview of the Mayor, but that other Councilmembers be allowed to provide formal input on nominations, perhaps on a rotating basis.

Mayor & Council

Interviews with the Mayor and Council took place in two sessions, approximately six weeks apart, and were conducted in a free-form discussion between the elected official and all present BCTF members. Several common themes emerged regarding issues – e.g., hiring a volunteer coordinator position – but in many areas, the Mayor and Councilmembers expressed differing opinions on issues. We have summarized some of the areas of divergence below in order to highlight areas where consensus might need to be reached.

- Staffing: Mayor and Council members differed on the need for and nature of a *volunteer coordinator* position for the City of Rockville. Some thought the need was for a part-time position, at most. For example, “Is it an eight-hour a day job?” Others identified the existence of a similar position within Montgomery County.
- Diversity: All elected officials agreed on the need for greater diversity. Some questioned the existence of the Asian and Pacific American Task Force when there are not similar groups dedicated to outreach to other ethnic and racial communities within the city. Others recommended expanding the boards and commissions to include an “outreach commission” to encourage involvement with the city. Others identified a need to “balance” board and commission membership.
- Ease of Participation: Multiple elected officials brought up, making it easier for residents to participate, including providing dependent care and adjusting the overall time commitment.
- Vacancies: Vacancies were a major concern among the officials. Some thought that the nomination process was too “confined” or closely held by the Mayor, inhibiting healthy turnover and requiring that members stay on past their term. Others recommended involving the boards and commissions more formally in choosing their replacement members. Multiple members suggested a public posting and tracking of EOIs to improve transparency.
- Procedures: One member recommended a regular (~4 years) Charter Review Commission to review the City’s approach to boards and commissions and recommend changes. Others recommended regular appearances before Mayor and Council and clearly defined mission statements and goals. “Lingering applications” were another issue identified by multiple elected officials.
- Miscellaneous:
 - Transparency: EOIs publicly posted and tracked. Recommended by multiple Mayor and Councilmembers.
 - Expanded Council: One member mentioned that boards perform better with Mayor and Councilmembers express interest in their work and attend their meetings. However, with so many boards and commissions, it’s difficult to attend all the meetings. An expanded Mayor and Council would ease this burden.

Evaluation Process

The Charter from the Mayor and Council directed the task force to “review the Rockville City Charter and Code for clarity, understanding of purpose and structure for each Board and Commission, and to provide recommendations to the Rockville Mayor and Council.” This included examining the effectiveness and necessity of individual boards and commissions, their membership definitions, structures, and workplans. It also included “reviewing the City Charter and Code to clarify content for increased understanding.” The Charter (see Appendix A) also provided goals, defined membership, functions, and roles.

After an initial review of background materials provided by City Staff, information displayed on Rockville’s web pages, and internal discussions, the BCTF developed a “Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives Working Document.” The December 17, 2018 version of this document is available as Appendix B. In early February 2019, the BCTF developed a set of “Proposed BCTF Evaluation Criteria.” These are available as Appendix D. This document identified the following characteristics on which to evaluate the boards and commissions and proposed ways to conduct the evaluations:

- Relevance – How is the board or commission relevant to the city’s population and their concerns?
- Effectiveness – How well is the board or commission performing its role and achieving its mission?
- Diversity – Does the board or commission membership reflect the City’s population
- Transparency – How visible and accessible is the board or commission to the Rockville community?
- Operational Performance - How well does the board or commission operate according to applicable codes, laws, and City guidelines?

The BCTF developed a series of surveys and conducted interviews with key volunteers and staff from January to July 2019. The survey data and supporting information culled from interviews provided a very clear picture that emphasized the importance and contribution of volunteers. It established firmly that Rockville volunteers on boards and commissions provide critical functions and provide them competently and enthusiastically. The investigation also revealed areas needing improvement. Details of these findings are provided in the “Data Collection & Review” section of this report.

Each BCTF member added information both from their own individual perspectives and the surveys and interviews conducted into an Excel dashboard. This dashboard provided a format for evaluation and discussion of the five characteristics mentioned earlier for each board and commission. Individual boards and commissions were classified in each of the five areas as (1) goal achieved, no major shortfalls, (2) goal somewhat achieved, some improvement needed, (3) significant improvement needed. Areas of potential improvement were also discussed for each

group in each category, and specific recommendations developed through consensus. It is important to note that any deficiencies are related to process and structure, not the volunteers themselves.

Information on each of the evaluation criteria was culled from the “Data Collection & Review” document, from the supporting details by evaluation criterion and organization in the dashboard, and from several special analyses. The special analyses included:

- Compliance with Open Meetings Act
- Availability of Board and Commission Information on City Websites
- Nomenclature (Appendix L)
- Nomination Process

The information from all these sources was assembled into separate issue papers for each of the five characteristics to be evaluated. The highlights of the evaluation findings for each of the five characteristics are summarized in the following sections of the report.

Diversity

Rockville’s diversity is good but needs to be better.

The BCTF looked at the diversity of Rockville’s boards and commissions based on how well they mirrored Rockville’s demographics with respect to:

- Gender
- Age
- Race/ethnicity
- Geographic - volunteer members from different neighborhoods
- Socio-economic

Lack of diversity was a major concern expressed by board members and chairs, as well as by City staff and elected officials. Only a few boards believed that they were sufficiently diverse with respect to gender, ethnicity, race, or age.

Geographic diversity was also deemed particularly important, particularly on boards responsible for making decisions affecting land use and other programs affecting activities across the City. But geographic diversity was considered less important for boards responsible for technical issues that don't impact specific geographic areas of the City. All agreed that diversity was an important goal that the City needed to address more aggressively. However, many seemed to see the issue of diversity within the boards and commissions as one for the Mayor and Council to address in their appointments of members, rather than an issue for the task force

Diversity was also a reoccurring theme in interviews with City staff and elected officials. Staff members identified diverse organizations within the City – such as the Asian Pacific Task Force – as possible sources of a more diverse pool of prospective board and commission members.

Members of the BCTF shared all the concerns about diversity challenges on the boards and commissions expressed by the board members and chairs, City staff, and elected officials. Although there was a consensus that diversity across all boards and commissions is a desirable goal, there was also recognition that diversity was more critical for some boards and commissions than others. Some members recommended expanding the boards and commissions to include an “outreach or diversity commission” to encourage greater volunteer involvement with the City. With respect to age diversity, several members noted that volunteer opportunities as currently available with respect to times and locations might not appeal to millennials.

Transparency

Transparency is critical, and Rockville needs to be transparent in all things.

"Transparency" is defined as how visible and accessible the workings of the volunteer organizations are to the City government and public. Visibility is determined by the availability of accurate information about the board or commission's relevance, effectiveness, diversity, operational performance, and conformity with legal requirements. The BCTF evaluated this characteristic by:

- Asking about workplans, meeting minutes, and agenda during interviews.
- Reviewing information about the volunteer organizations on the City's website, including meeting agendas and minutes, and in *Rockville Reports*

The Maryland Open Meetings Act

The Maryland Open Meetings Act (OMA) places specific requirements on state and local "public bodies" to make the activities of those bodies, including the decisions and recommendations that they make, transparently available to the public. The City complies with these requirements (among others) by posting on the Rockville website meeting agendas and minutes for the Mayor and Council and for its various boards and commissions. It also transmits live videos of all Mayor and Council meetings as well as for the meetings of certain boards and commissions and retains recordings of these videos on its website. The City requires all members of boards and commissions to take open meeting act training.

The BCTF reviewed the city's boards and commission website pages to assess whether meeting agendas and minutes were posted to the website on a timely basis. Two reviews of the information were conducted; one in late January 2019 and another in August. Both reviews showed that most boards and commissions appeared to be in compliance. Concerns included a lack of required posting of agendas and minutes in a timely manner. The BCTF supports compliance with the OMA and believes compliance will improve transparency. The new position we have recommended would be responsible for monitoring compliance; this oversight should contribute to improving compliance rates.

Board and Commission Reporting

The survey results noted that the minutes of the Rockville volunteer organization meetings served as the primary method of documenting and reporting their activities. Interviews with Rockville officials, including staff liaisons to various boards and commissions, identified the need to make board and commission work products, including annual reports, more available to the public. Three groups' meetings are videotaped; Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission, and Planning Commission. Although videos give the most detailed sense of what transpired at a meeting, reviewing them takes a time commitment that may discourage many folks from doing so. A well-written set of minutes that captures the important matters discussed and the decisions made at the meeting was a superior way of making the substance of the meeting transparent to a wider audience.

The Volunteer Nomination Process

Concerns around the lack of transparency in the full nomination and approval process, including how Expression of Interest Forms (EOI) are handled, specifically acknowledgment of an EOI submission and timely notification of an appointment, reappointment or rejections came up in most aspects of the BCTF fact-finding. Lack of transparency in this crucial area may discourage interested candidates. The number of vacancies seems to indicate a system that is not working efficiently as well. The BCTF believes that this lack of transparency can cause some applicants to feel "lost in the process" and potentially disrespected. If this issue is not addressed effectively, this could frustrate the City's interest in promoting volunteerism and increasing diversity in its volunteer pool.

The Website

The City's website was reviewed as a vehicle for transparency, specifically looking at the availability, completeness, consistency, and accuracy of the information provided about boards and commissions as well as about task forces and committees. The results of this review are documented in detail in a separate issue paper, the recommendations from which are provided in Appendix G, to this report. The most significant findings from this review were:

- The website currently lists these organizations in two separate groups but doesn't explain the differences between the two groups.
- There were five organizations listed as "Boards and Commissions" that are sufficiently different from the "normal" boards and commissions that they deserve being listed as a separate group. The BCTF chose "Rockville Affiliated Organizations" as the name for this new group.
- Most webpages followed a standard format (as shown in Appendix G), but there were numerous inconsistencies in the nature of the information provided as well as the accuracy and currency of some information.

The BCTF concluded that the City generally does a good job of providing information on its website regarding the activities of its boards and commissions, but that there are opportunities for improvement.

Relevance

A core of volunteers spends enormous time to address relevant issues and concerns.

Two overarching criteria were studied for determining relevance. The first was whether the organization was required by state or federal law, or by grant-making agencies or other funding sources. All Rockville boards and commissions are created by the Mayor and Council in City statute, e.g., The Rockville City Code, Ordinance, or Resolution, or in a motion passed in one of their meetings. The second was perceived relevance by key stakeholders.

The City's website describes the functions of each board and commission but doesn't explicitly discuss the relevance of each. However, some of the descriptions state or suggest whether the board or commission was required by state or federal law and whether it has decision-making authority. For example, the Retirement Board is charged with the management of the three City employee retirement funds, with a value of several million dollars. Both characteristics were considered evidence of relevance. It's a simple task to identify state or federal laws that require Rockville to establish a volunteer organization or to determine whether any grant or other funding agency required one. (See Chart of Characteristics of Membership in Appendix F)

The second consideration was whether key stakeholders perceived the work of the board or commission as relevant. They do overwhelmingly. These stakeholders include the Mayor and Council, City staff, the public, local businesses, and visitors. Relevance, in this case, would be based on whether these stakeholders believed that the organization addressed a clear need or opportunity to do something positive for the City, e.g., help it meet certain grant requirements or fulfill its goals and priorities. As could be expected, Chairs, City staff, and the Council members who work with individual boards and commissions find their work meaningful, relevant and addressing community needs. Interviews with chairs and staff expressed enthusiasm for the work of their boards and commissions that indicate a closely held belief in the relevance of their work.

Since the City created all the boards and commissions, it's clear that they were considered relevant when created.

Effectiveness

Rockville's boards and commissions are very effective as perceived by the Boards and Commissions Task Force

"Effectiveness" is how well the board or commission is performing its roles as prescribed in the City Code or as specified in annual workplans or other commitments to the Mayor and Council.

Organizational effectiveness is difficult to assess – there are many measures and approaches to look at outcomes, processes, structure, growth, and productivity. In the case of governmental bodies, the easy marker of profit is not relevant. The kind of survey that would be recognized by the business community is far beyond the capabilities in time, skills, and resources available to the BCTF. Nor does the BCTF have adequate history and endpoints to address effectiveness across all the 31 boards and commissions years of service.

A detailed and extended interview with Rockville's City Manager indicated that his perception is that most boards and commissions were very effective. Similarly, BCTF member comments posted on the evaluation dashboard on the Effectiveness spreadsheet, most boards and commissions were considered effective with notable successes. Interviews and discussions, reading through minutes and agendas, reports, news items, in addition to the collective group knowledge about volunteer activity in the City, gave the impression that missions are being addressed with a variety of energetic approaches and sincere effort.

One can easily observe accomplishments. Boards and commissions provide essential functions, such as the management of the city workers' retirement funds (Rockville Retirement Commission), act as virtual city departments (Rockville Economic Development Inc.), assure solid, controlled growth according to the city Master Plan (Planning Commission), and provide exciting events and activities attended by thousands of residents (Rockville Sister Cities and the Cultural Arts Commission). They also provide important independent oversight and safeguards to members of the community (Personnel Appeals Board, Board of Appeals, Board of Supervisors of Elections, Financial Advisory Board, and Human Rights Commission).

If the Mayor and Council want to delve into the more specific indicators of effectiveness, they should authorize the development of formal criteria and a process for assessing board and commissions in this respect. Such effectiveness study could require significant effort and cost.

Operational Performance

Rockville boards and commissions comply with relevant laws, but some revisions are needed.

The BCTF intended to evaluate the operational performance of Rockville's boards and commissions by how well they operate in accordance with applicable sections of State and/or Federal law, the Rockville City Code, and other City guidelines. This proved to be unfeasible.

Once again, we were faced with a task that went beyond our scope and time frame. Operational Performance was the most complex of the six characteristics to evaluate because it covered such a broad range of issues.

Individuals who responded to survey questions or participated in interviews discussed issues from their own personal perspectives as opposed to a “big picture” view that might have revealed root causes of some of their specific concerns. Most of the issues one would expect under this topic would have been addressed in the “Guidelines and Procedures for Citizen Boards and Commissions” published by the City of Rockville on March 12, 2012. Yet none of the persons surveyed or interviewed mentioned this document. As the BCTF reviewed the city web site, digging deep into minutes, news and documents generated by the boards and commission, a lack of consistent operations was noted in areas including appointments, establishment of groups and subgroups, information included in and format of minutes, communications with the Mayor and Council, lack of synchronicity with city priorities and data about City residents.

Specifically, survey and interview results both mentioned problems with:

- Advisory boards and commissions not having a sufficiently clear sense of what the Mayor and Council expected of them and desiring clear and more frequent communications.
- Decision-making boards and commissions, particularly those established pursuant to state law, feeling that they already have a clear sense of their responsibilities and desiring more independence from the Mayor and Council.
- The need for timelier filling of vacancies by improving volunteer outreach efforts and improving the transparency of the nomination and appointment processes.
- The need to clarify the roles and responsibilities between boards and commissions and any internal committees that they create to carry out aspects of their work. This need is seen particularly acute in committees that are mainly staffed by volunteers, not by appointed board and commission members.
- The need to clarify roles and responsibilities between certain boards and commissions and the City staff with whom they work.
- The need for improved coordination between boards and commissions and task forces or committees with related or overlapping jurisdiction, e.g.:
 - The Human Rights Commission and the Asian Pacific American Task Force.
 - The Planning Commission and Traffic and Transportation Commission and the Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee and Rockville Pedestrian Advocacy Committee.
 - The Human Services Advisory Commission and the Caregiver Funding Task Force.
- The need for training for new board and commission members as part of a more formal onboarding process as well as training for chairs in how to lead meetings, how to plan the work of the organization, how to coordinate better with other boards and commissions, and how to deal more effectively with the Mayor and Council and City staff.

- The need for annual workplans and annual reports, particularly from advisory boards and commissions, but possibly for decision-making boards and commissions as well.
- On occasion, individual member's agendas can interfere with the mission coherence essential to managing board and commission activity. Too many activities can dilute the effectiveness and affect progress in meeting goals.

Volunteer groups have been part of Rockville's approach to government historically. The 31 boards and commissions included in the BCTF's scope of work have emerged over time. Processes, definitions, and charters have evolved guided by the various Mayor and Councils, the staff, the volunteer leadership, and the thinking at the time of their inception. The result is wide variations in practice. Now, with the number, depth of responsibility, and breadth of activity, there is a need for attention to these issues. Nomenclature (see Appendix L), and specific recommendations from the BCTF suggest solutions and believe that regular reviews such as this one, should be repeated periodically and on a regular basis.

Key Recommendations

The BCTF believes the following key recommendations are critical to improving Rockville's boards and commissions. Each recommendation may address more than one of the five evaluation criteria described in this report. More specific recommendations about operations, activities, or for each volunteer organization are contained throughout the report and most accessibly in the Excel Dashboard (Appendix I). For more discussion or details, consult the evaluation criteria sections and the relevant Addenda.

Improve Diversity Across All Boards and Commissions

Issues around diversity were raised in every portion of the BCTF's fact-finding. Concerns go beyond ethnic and racial representation to age groups and geographic areas. While some boards and commissions are more diverse than others, all can improve. Volunteer and staff leadership would like more discussion and direction from the Mayor and about how they envision accomplishing this. The BCTF believes a broad, proactive effort, reaching out to relevant community organizations in the city and county, is needed, as well as any necessary revision of city policies to attract volunteers who represent all diverse components of the city's population.

Effectively Utilize City Resources to Promote Civic Engagement and Manage Boards and Commissions

Existing city staff and resources are not enough to provide the needed support and coordination of volunteer activities. City staff and volunteers, especially chairs, are stretched already. Staff liaisons may provide support for more than one volunteer organization. For that reason, the BCTF is recommending a new full-time position, as part of the City Clerk's office, to coordinate existing volunteer activities and new ones that are suggested in the report recommendations. This position is critical to the accomplishment of the specific

recommendations from the BCTF and to improving and expanding the volunteer program in support of the city's mission and goals. Tasks for the new position are detailed in Appendix J.

In addition to the new position, the Mayor and Council need to look at the level of oversight and resources needed by the different boards and commissions to assure appropriate resource allocation. The City Staff should address workloads for staff and key volunteers, other resources, and efficiencies of operations in a policy or guidelines and work with the Mayor and Council to assure appropriate support. In addition to the practical matters of resource allocation, this would also provide needed recognition of the significant work of staff and volunteers from the highest level of city government.

Increase Transparency

Transparency is key to citizen awareness about the work of the boards and commission and to attracting new volunteers. While the website provides a lot of information, it needs to be reorganized and expanded to improve and update information and frequently offer news about the activities and accomplishments of boards and commissions. The website should push information about volunteer opportunities and accomplishments out to the resident's attention. The content should educate readers about the mission of the volunteer organizations and increase awareness about how the board or commission's work affects life for residents. Making volunteer opportunities easier to find and including information to attract potential volunteers must be accomplished with sensitivity to all diverse populations. Descriptions should reflect the same sensitivity and should apply to materials developed for all volunteer outreach methods. Detailed improvements recommended to the City's website regarding boards and commissions are provided in Appendix G.

The Open Meetings Act is another important element of transparency. The BCTF supports adherence and believes transparency will result. For example, the posting of agendas and minutes that are accurate and available on a timely basis. The BCTF recommends a new full-time position to assure that this happens.

Coordinate Mission, Objectives, and Workplans

Comments in surveys and interviews with chairs and staff liaisons indicate that the Mayor, Council, City staff, and volunteers could be better aligned on the mission and workplan of each board and commission. This can be achieved by requiring annual reports and workplans to ensure that objectives, expectations, and results are clear. This would also help create a dialog between the Council and boards and commissions, improving communication.

There is also a need to address volunteer boards and commissions that deal with overlapping issues and define mechanisms for improved communication, collaboration, and cross-fertilization among them. An untapped opportunity for chairs and members of boards and commissions to share exists. Concerns were raised about a lack of cooperation when boards and commissions are addressing different aspects of a common issue. For example, consider an

application from the owner of a single project that must be reviewed by the Planning Commission for land use, the Historic District Commission for historic preservation implications, and the Board of Appeals for a variance. How do we ensure that the needed collaboration and sharing of information and perspectives take place? This recommendation will require staff leadership and focal point for awareness of all the boards and commissions activities and is included in the responsibilities for the new full-time position recommended.

Enhance the Volunteer Experience

The volunteer selection process and nomination process need improvement through a variety of means, including:

- changes to the handling of Expression of Interest (EOI) process
- enforcing terms
- filling vacancies in a timely fashion
- Improving the transparency of the entire recruitment and nomination process.

Concerns about this process were raised in most of the fact-finding activities of the BCTF. Applicants should be kept informed of the status of their application, as well as get timely notification receipt of an application, their appointment, reappointment, or rejection. Any efforts to attract additional volunteers must first pay attention to this important matter.

The City leadership and staff need to ensure that volunteers are doing meaningful work that has an observable impact on the city's residents. They should be recognized for their hard work in a variety of ways, including recognition from the Mayor and Council and staff in workplans and reports, increased visibility on the city website, social media, and press, and in major volunteer recognition events attended by the Mayor and Council. In short, increased visibility and acknowledgment.

Consistent basic training is needed to improve overall effectiveness. Volunteers need an orientation process with:

- training on the City structure and operations
- the role of the board or commission
- the members' role and responsibility on the board or commission
- governance
- meeting facilitation.

The specific skills and knowledge needed by each board or commission vary depending on the volunteer organization's mission and the body of knowledge and background required to act on its behalf; individualized training from outside educational resources should be provided as needed.

Last, but not least important, we need proactive outreach out to the community to increase volunteerism through various means, such as organizing volunteer fairs, and development a volunteer database that could be used to identify needed volunteer expertise. Again, the addition of the recommended position is critical to these activities.

Identify Opportunities to Add New Relevant Volunteer Organizations and Regularly Review Existing Organizations

Boards and commissions have been established over time in a variety of different ways. This has led to inconsistencies in operations and gaps or overlaps in missions and activities. Going forward, the BCTF recommends the use of a process checklist (See Page 34) to ensure the need and resources for a new board or commission and to assess the continued need for existing boards and commissions or subgroups under current boards and commissions. This approach will guide residents who have an idea for a new group and provide the staff and Mayor and Council with needed information to assess mission coherence and needed resources.

A process to review applications for new volunteer organizations that encourages civic involvement while maintaining order and efficiency among new and existing and proposed boards and commissions are needed. A periodic review process to evaluate the effectiveness, relevance, diversity, performance, and transparency of existing volunteer organizations should also be considered.

Update the City Code and Guidelines and Procedures to Reflect Changes

We have not linked these recommendations to the Rockville City Code or Guidelines and Procedures for Citizen Boards and Commissions, as the time needed for that task was beyond the time limits of the BCTF. The BCTF recommends that the Mayor and Council work with the city legal staff to review the legislative authority for each board or commission. In addition, the Guidelines document was last updated in 2012, and many changes have occurred since then. Once specific recommendations in this report are acted upon, we suggest that City staff review the Volunteer Guidelines and propose needed revisions.

Modifications to Present Boards and Commissions

Animals Matters Board

This organization has not met in the previous five years. However, animal matters are relevant to our city. This board should be reevaluated using the BCTF's proposed evaluation criteria. If the board is maintained, the board needs (i) regular communication established between the City liaison and board members to keep them apprised of ongoing events and (ii) the scope should be redefined to address current issues, such as deer management and other matters. The Code should also be reviewed to make the board more relevant.

Compensation Commission

The Compensation Commission meets satisfactory performance standards. Our findings for improvement include:

- (i) This commission should have members with appropriate background and experience. The City should consider documenting the necessary experience in the City guidelines. Prior experience, such as financial advisory board experience, is useful for this commission.
- (ii) Members should be recruited early in order to fill vacancies expeditiously; the timeline for appointment of members should meet requirements for issuing recommendations on time for the next election cycle. Consecutive terms should be encouraged for effective members.

Environment Commission

The Environment Commission is highly relevant and does much good work. Our task force identified inefficiencies as well as the tension between the Commission, its various subcommittees, and City staff that should be addressed. We recommend the Environment Commission work closely with the City and Mayor and Council to clarify roles, expectations, and processes within the commission, its subcommittees, and the City to improve effectiveness.

Human Rights Commission

Our findings indicate this commission is performing well and is relevant. As our report points out, diversity needs to improve throughout our volunteer organizations and our city. The scope of the Human Rights Commission can be expanded to cover this broader initiative. The concern over diversity enables us to recommend that there be greater outreach to the various communities, such as African Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, Hispanic Americans, and other ethnic groups. A program that formally welcomes all new residents to our city and makes it clear that ALL people are welcome here may be helpful, and we should have a goal that in Rockville will discourage all prejudice

Personnel Appeals Board

The Personnel Appeals Board has not met for many years. The existence of this board, along with the corresponding sections of the City Code, should be reevaluated. The personnel appeals process is necessary but could be accomplished by City staff.

Recreation and Parks Advisory Board

While the City of Rockville Recreation & Parks Department is fantastic, the effectiveness and structure of this Advisory Board should be reviewed. We found a proliferation of subgroups that impacts the operations and efficiency of this advisory board. The role of this advisory board is unclear and should be refreshed, especially considering the importance of recreation and parks to the City.

Rockville Economic Development, Inc. (REDI)

REDI has been very successful in the promotion of economic development in Rockville. However, we are concerned by the fact REDI is not a government organization subject to transparency requirements. We also found that the Mayor, Council, and REDI board could benefit from annual goal setting and review of opportunities to avoid potential conflicts of interest.

Rockville Seniors Inc & Senior Citizens Commission

Both groups are doing good work, but there is room for improvement. The City, Mayor, and Council should work with these organizations to establish role clarity and encourage collaboration between these groups. In particular, the Rockville Seniors Inc has dedicated staff and is doing great work at the senior center, but we found a lack of collaboration and focus outside of the senior center.

Sign Review Board

We recommend the duties previously served herein should be handled by city staff with appeals permitted to the Board of Appeals.

Traffic and Transportation Commission

Expand the role of this commission by incorporating committees on pedestrians, bicycles, scooters, and METRO. 3 METRO Stations 1 without parking garage. There have been great accomplishments with the Rockville Bike Advisory Committee and the Pedestrian Advocacy Committee. However, these committees can be more effective in working together under the Traffic and Transportation Commission. We also have issues of scooters, autonomous vehicles, and other motor vehicles that will need review in the future.

Process for Approving New Boards and Commissions

Assumptions:

1. An individual or group of individuals want the Mayor and Council to form a new volunteer group (i.e., board, commission, task force, etc.) to provide one or more services for the City.
2. This request will eventually have to be brought before the Mayor and Council for their approval.
3. A decision by the Mayor and Council to create a new group will have to be formalized in a Resolution, an Ordinance, a change to the City Code, or a motion passed by that body.
4. It would be helpful for the City to have a formal process so that everyone involved in creating a new volunteer group understands what is expected of them.
 - a. It helps applicants understand what information they are expected to present to the City and to whom.

- b. Helps City staff:
 - i. determine whether applicants have satisfied the information requirements; and
 - ii. assure that the application is shared with any affected City departments and with other volunteer groups that might have similar or related responsibilities.
 - c. It also helps applicants and City staff understand where an application is in the approval process.
 - d. Assures the Mayor and Council that they will have enough information to determine whether to approve the applicant's request.
5. The Mayor and Council will determine whether the new volunteer group should be designated a Board, Advisory Board, Commission, Task Force, Working Group, Committee, or another title.

1. Process for Applications, Evaluations, And Initial Setup of a New Volunteer Group.

- a. The applicant opens an application for a new volunteer group on the City website and provides requested information. [NOTE: Some information may have to be obtained from other parties.]
- b. The applicant submits an application to the City Clerk.
- c. City Clerk reviews application.
 - i. If the application does not meet the criteria for completeness and content, return the application to the applicant with instructions for providing the necessary information.
 - ii. If the application meets the criteria for completeness and content, the City Clerk:
 - 1. Sends the application to any affected City departments and other volunteer groups with similar or related responsibilities.
 - 2. Prepares an agenda item, including comments from City staff or other volunteer groups, to transmit it to the Mayor and Council for consideration.
 - 3. Schedules the presentation of the agenda item on the Mayor and Council calendar.
 - 4. Notifies the applicant when the agenda item will be presented to the Mayor and Council.
- d. Once approved, the City Clerk or other designated person guides the new board or commission through the setup process.

2. Proposed Criteria for new Boards and Commissions

- a. Criteria should help the Mayor and Council evaluate:
 - i. Whether a new volunteer group should be established and why
 - ii. The group's scope of work and objectives
 - iii. How the new group should be organized, including (1) whether it should be a board, advisory board, commission or task force, (2) how many members, (3) level of expertise of members

- iv. The appropriate level of governance required for the group
- v. The appropriate level of city resources that should be committed to the group
- b. The proposed criteria are listed in Table 10 below. Table 10 is not a proposed application. Once we agree on the process and criteria, these criteria can be converted into a user-friendly application.
- c. The criteria are categorized using the categories from the proposed evaluation criteria for existing groups. We are not proposing to maintain these categories in the application for new groups, but feel it is important to reference these categories in this document to ensure we are covering all the areas we need to evaluate.

Table 10 - Proposed Criteria for New Rockville Volunteer Group

REFERENCE CATEGORY FROM EVALUATION CRITERIA (internal use only)	APPLICATION QUESTION(S)	HOW TO EVALUATE
Requirement	Is a new group required by the city, state, or federal law, grants, or other funding sources? Add supporting references and/or documents.	
Relevance	What is the purpose of the group? Why is the proposed group relevant to the City government and other stakeholders, including? i) The Mayor and Council ii) City staff (including the staff liaison to the group.) iii) The public iv) Businesses	
	How does the group present an opportunity to obtain funding or something positive for the city?	
	How does the group address a clear need or opportunity? Is the need or opportunity a short term needs or long-term need?	

	How does the work of the proposed group overlap with any existing organizations, including existing COR volunteer groups? Can this work or need be addressed by an existing organization? Why or why not?	
Effectiveness	What is the proposed mission of the group?	
	What is the proposed Scope of Work and deliverables of the group?	
	What would the proposed volunteer group do? Please check all that apply and provide the appropriate information as needed. • Provide a service. Please identify which one(s). • Provide advice. On what subject(s)? • Fulfill a legal requirement. Please cite the requirement. • Provide funding to support a City program. Please identify the source(s) of the funding. • Establish and maintain relationships with outside groups who can benefit the City. Please identify which one(s). • Adjudicate complaints or appeals. Please identify the source(s) and the nature of the complaints or appeals. • Mobilize citizens around an issue of public interest. Please identify the issue(s). • Other. Please describe.	

	Do the activities of the proposed volunteer group impact or overlap with activities of any City departments? Please identify which department(s), the activity(ies) affected, and the nature of the impact or overlap. Have you contacted each affected department to determine its views on your proposal? If so, what was the department's reaction?	
	What criteria should be used to judge the success of the new group?	
Diversity	How will the group impact diversity and specific demographic groups?	
Operations	How should the group be structured?	
	i) How many members ii) Subcommittees	
	Level of expertise required of members	
	What resources from the City or other organizations are required?	
	Will a representative from Mayor or Council be required?	
Transparency	How will this group communicate its activities and progress?	
	How will the group interact with the public?	

Example New Boards and Commissions

The BCTF Charter requests that we review each board and commission and make recommendations for continuing, repurposing, merging or eliminating a board or commission. Recommendations may include adding a new board or commission. Members of the BCTF were approached by residents with their ideas. The enthusiasm and energy are exciting but needs to be channeled to avoid some of the effectiveness issues that we have discussed in this report. Our task force did not have the time to evaluate these suggestions or ideas from our own members adequately before our report to the Mayor and Council was due.

We have provided three examples to illustrate how the recommended process for new boards and commissions can work (Appendix K). The BCTF does not endorse any of these, nor are they

presented in any priority order. Any idea for a new board and commission will need the enthusiasm and the hard work of a champion. The recommended process will guide this champion through a process that will indicate the mission, goals, needed resources, and ensure its contribution to the future of Rockville. We encourage the Mayor and Council to respond to resident ideas by encouraging the use of the process checklist.

The following are illustrative examples showing how the recommended checklist would work, not recommendations from the BCTF.

Public Safety Board

Rockville is a relatively safe city; however, we can always make improvements. With the goal of becoming one of the safest cities of its size in America, engaging with residents would be one way to make this happen. This board would consist of residents and police expertise who can work together to identify areas of opportunity. This board would look at ways to educate our residents to help our police best protect our community in a variety of situations. It is important to note that this board would not have a managerial, supervisory, or an investigative role. Chief Victor Brito has been the proponent of and advocate for some of the early concepts and ideas.

Education Commission

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Board of Education (BOE) are responsible for the education of the students in Rockville, and over the years there have been numerous disagreements. Some of these challenging areas include transportation, school boundary changes, student capacity, and school locations just to name a few. Bringing together parents and educators would provide an opportunity to identify and bring forward the wants and needs of the city's students and ensure they are being addressed appropriately. New programs could be created and opportunities for new volunteer service hours are just frequently offered examples of opportunities that could be identified

Youth Advisory Board

Rockville is a wonderful place to raise children. We want them to understand how fortunate we all are to live in the City of Rockville. Our youth should be encouraged to learn about and participate in local, state, national, and international issues. We need to find ways to increase the participation of youth in government, and one way is to create Youth Ambassadors to study the issues and become more involved.

At one time, Rockville had a Youth Advisory Board, and it has been proposed to bring it back. Membership would consist of student and educator representatives. Examples of areas of discussion could include - school safety, transportation, mental health and wellness, employment and volunteerism.

Rockville Affiliated Organizations

Issues of transparency around the five affiliated organizations were the subject of much discussion among task force members and staff. It became apparent early on in conversations and reviews of information and survey data that these organizations are essentially different from the others in the study group. They work for Rockville's benefit but have an independent relationship with the city government. Their 501(c)3 non-profit status requires that they operate as a completely stand-alone organization, with their own budgets, space, staff, and workplans.

Rockville Affiliated Organizations

Rockville Economic Development Inc.

Rockville Housing Enterprise

Rockville Sister Cities Corporation

Rockville Seniors, Inc.

Rockville Recreation and Parks Foundation

The key advantage of non-profit organizations is a legal status that allows them to raise money from individuals, government, and private grants. The city is not eligible for this designation. This capability gives them the ability to add value to the city. For example, the Rockville Sister Cities Corporation (RSSC) brings an international component to the city with exchange programs and city-wide events attended by thousands of citizens. The Rockville Economic Development Institute (REDI) has brought in substantial national Small Business Association (SBA) funding to offer the Women's Business Center that provides support and training to women who run business in the City and County.

But the very fundraising that defines the status of these groups can complicate their relationship with the city. The state, which is the legal entity, scrutinizes these organizations with a checklist that requires proof of independent operation. As the BCTF reviewed the affiliated groups, potential issues emerged. Looking at budgets, for instance, compared to the Rockville Sister Cities, which receives in-kind contributions of the use of 3 city locales for events and some program funds, 90 percent of REDI's budget for economic development is provided for in the Rockville city budget. This does not in any way speak to the value of the work of any of these five organizations, including REDI, which has been successful in bringing business to the city and offering training and other development activities. Rather it speaks to the structure of the affiliated organization's boards and how their activities and goals fit with the priorities of Rockville government and resident needs. When considering these aspects of the relationship, issues of transparency arise. The 501(c)3 corporations are required to report to the state annually but are not required to report to the Mayor and Council. The issues related to the OMA and the website information discussed in this section contribute to potential

confusion about their unique affiliate relationship with the City. The BCTF members believe improved communication with the Mayor and Council and City staff would help and would not threaten the non-profit status of these organizations.

Appendices

- Appendix A. Boards and Commissions Task Force Charter
- Appendix B. Boards and Commission Task Force Working Document
- Appendix C. Boards & Commissions Task Force Questionnaire Links
- Appendix D. Proposed BCTF Evaluation Criteria
- Appendix E. Guidelines and Procedures for Citizen Boards and Commissions
- Appendix F. Membership Characteristics
- Appendix G. Recommended Improvements to the City's Website Regarding Boards and Commissions
- Appendix H. Structured Interview Tool
- Appendix I. Dashboard Evaluation Summary
- Appendix J. Commissions Support and Volunteer Coordinator Job Description
- Appendix K. Example New Boards and Commissions in The Evaluation Process
 - Public Safety Board
 - Education Commission
 - Youth Commission
- Appendix L. Nomenclature Issue Paper

Appendix A. Boards and Commissions Task Force Charter



Boards and Commissions Task Force Charter

Section 1: Boards and Commissions Task Force Objective

The objective of the Boards and Commissions Task Force is to review the Rockville City Charter and Code for clarity, understanding of purpose and structure for each Board or Commission, and to provide recommendations to the Rockville Mayor and Council. This includes examining the effectiveness and necessity of individual Boards and Commissions, membership definitions, structure and work plan of Rockville's Boards and Commissions, and reviewing the Charter or Code to clarify content for increased understanding.

Section 2: Boards and Commissions Task Force Purpose

The purpose of this review is to ensure that Boards and Commissions stay relevant to the City and the Mayor and Council. Another purpose is to utilize more fully the expertise and experience of the Board and Commission members in the formulation of City policies and practices, where applicable. This allows the intrinsic desire of serving on a Board or Commission to be met which is critical to their success. Board and Commission efforts should complement those of City Staff and elected officials.

Section 3: Boards and Commissions Task Force Goals

- Study the Rockville City Charter and Code and identify each Board or Commission's defined scope of work.
- Review each Board and Commission and make recommendations for continuing, repurposing, merging or eliminating the Board or Commission. Recommendations may include adding a new Board(s) or Commission(s).
- Review the enabling legislation for each Board or Commission and propose revisions to ensure clarity and understanding.
- Review each body's membership requirements and determine whether eligibility requirements or expertise should be required to be appointed.
- Recommend a practice to provide a statement of expertise needed when Board or Commission openings occur, if particular skills or experience are needed.
- Review all Boards, Commissions, Task Forces and Committees, and identify any gaps and/or overlaps among or between them.
- Review term lengths and term stagger for each Board and Commission, and determine if City Code and Charter requirements are met. If requirements are not met, suggest how to re-establish properly staggered terms.
- Review current City of Rockville Task Forces and Committees and recommend if they should be merged with another Board or Commission or become part of a new Board or Commission.
- Review the current appointment process, including the nomination and confirmation process and recommend changes where appropriate.

Section 4: Task Force Membership

- The Mayor and Council will appoint members.
- The Task Force will consist of up to 13 Members.
- The Task Force will represent a variety of individuals, for example former Mayors, former Councilmembers, the Community-At-Large, current or past members of Rockville Boards and Commissions or current or past members of citizen boards or commissions outside of Rockville.
- When practical, members will be Rockville residents or people who work in Rockville.
- If a vacancy on this Task Force occurs, it will be filled in the same manner as the initial appointment.

Section 5: Functional Roles

- Task Force Members: All Task Force members will take the Maryland Open Meetings Act Training, provide their completion certificate to the City Clerk/Director of Council Operations Office and follow the requirements of the Maryland Open Meetings Act to ensure transparency in governance.
- Task Force Chairperson: The Task Force members will select their Chairperson. The Chairperson sets the meeting agendas, leads the meetings, summarizes key meeting outcomes, delegates assignments and ensures the Task Force adheres to meeting guidelines. Meeting agendas will be identified in advance of each meeting.
- Staff Liaison: The Staff Liaison will coordinate administration, keep minutes and records of key outcomes and activities and ensure accurate and timely distribution of Task Force correspondence, including the web posting of meeting agendas and minutes.

Section 6: Meetings

The Task Force will determine their meeting schedule, with meetings occurring at least monthly and more frequently if desired.

Section 7: Task Force Duration

The Task Force will begin their work once all members are appointed. They will complete their work within six to nine months and provide a report with recommendations to the Mayor and Council.

Appendix B. Boards and Commission Task Force Working Document

← Revised BCTF Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives 12-1...



Boards and Commission Task Force (BCTF) Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives Working Document as of Dec. 17, 2018

Section 1: The BCTF Vision for Rockville's Boards, Commissions, and Other Volunteer Citizen Advisory Groups

Rockville's Boards, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen advisory groups effectively provide the Mayor and Council and City staff with relevant and robust subject matter expertise and diverse views that reflect the demographics of the City.

Section 2: The BCTF Mission

To develop, by the [date or event to be determined] recommendations to the Mayor and Council for improving the governance, transparency, diversity, and operations of Rockville's Boards, Commissions, Committees, Task Forces, Working Groups and other volunteer citizen advisory groups that provide advice to City government.

Section 3: BCTF Goals

1. To develop recommendations for the Mayor and Council on how the City's Boards, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen advisory groups can:
 - a. Provide relevant, effective, and diverse citizen input to City government;
 - b. Complement, but not duplicate, activities of City staff and elected officials; and
 - c. Utilize more fully the expertise and experience of the members of Boards, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen advisory groups in the formulation of City policies and practices, where applicable.
2. To develop recommendations for standardizing the operational procedures of all Boards, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen advisory groups to improve performance and ensure consistent communications within the groups and between the groups and positive experiences for those volunteering for those groups.
3. To increase citizen interest and satisfaction in participating in the City's Boards, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen advisory groups.
4. To identify issues and areas of opportunity that warrant citizen input to the Mayor and Council.

Section 4: Board and Commissions Task Force Objectives**← Revised BCTF Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives 12-1...**

- Assemble an overview of basic information about each Board, Commission, and other volunteer citizen advisory group that is readily available from the City Code and website.
- Obtain input from a broad cross-section of current and former members of Rockville's Board, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen organizations; the Mayor and Council; relevant City staff, including staff liaisons to the Boards and Commissions; citizens; and others who can provide useful input to the BCTF's work.
- Identify issues of concern about the relevance, effectiveness, operational performance and other characteristics of Rockville's Boards, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen advisory groups.
- Develop criteria and procedures for determining the relevance, effectiveness, operational performance, and transparency of Rockville's Boards, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen groups in providing input to the Mayor and Council and City staff.
- Identify opportunities to improve the governance, relevance, transparency, and operations of Rockville's Boards, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen advisory groups and make appropriate recommendations to the Mayor and Council for doing so. Governance refers to the Code and other authorities that establish the authorities and operating procedures for all Boards, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen advisory groups.
- Develop recommendations to increase the involvement of Rockville's citizens in the City's Boards, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen advisory groups that reflect community demographics in a transparent process.
- Identify criteria and opportunities for establishing new Boards, Commissions, or other volunteer citizen advisory groups.

ROCKVILLE'S BOARDS AND COMMISSION TASK FORCE

Nomination/Appointment/Election

~~Currently~~ As a part the work of the Rockville Boards and Commissions Task Force (RBCTF), the City of Rockville has raised at least three (3) areas of concern related to the nomination, appointment, election, and the filling of vacancy slots for Boards and Commissions (BnC). We feel that there is a need for the following:

1. Specific criteria for appointments to certain Boards and Commissions that account for diversity, geographic representation, and technical expertise;
2. Clearly defined and transparent processes that map out the nomination, appointment, election, and the filling of vacancies;
3. An assessment of the Mayor/Nomination and Council/Voting processes to ensure that they are fair, balanced, unbiased, and transparent.

Membership in BnC - Nomination/Appointment/Election Recommendations

The Boards and Commission Task Force is recommending leveraging existing resources (i.e., national association databases) to retrieve information on best practices (e.g., guidelines, city code/charters, reports, and/or white papers) at other municipalities. Also, the task force is seeking public input on the nomination, appointment, election, and the filing of vacancy slot process with a target audience including previous applicants. Therefore, the Boards and Commission Task Force are recommending the following regarding membership in BnC:

- a) Recommend additional City Staff to implement all existing aspects of the "Guidelines and Procedures for Citizen Boards and Commissions" and address new ones to be recommended by the Boards and Commissions (BnC) s task force. The existing implementation appears to be spotty, due to staffing shortages, and responsibilities are likely to increase.
- b) Revise the "Guidelines and Procedures for Citizen Boards and Commissions" to reflect the following:
 - a. Recommend that appointments to Boards and Commission include a consideration of diversity, geographic representation, and technical expertise, as appropriate;
 - b. Establish general criteria (not requirements) for consideration of ways by which this might be achieved (e.g., recommend max of X members from one neighborhood; address gender and cultural diversity; desirability of technical expertise);
 - c. Clarify need for Open Meetings Act training for Board, Commissions, and Committee members.
- (c) Create a mechanism to evaluate and report the effectiveness of BnC (i.e., eliminate, maintain, or create BnC). Define a regularly scheduled review process to evaluate the outcome and suggest revisions to the process.
- (d) Establish mechanisms for recruitment of new members:
 - i. Host "Rockville Boards and Commissions volunteer job fairs" or other events to which entire community is invited. Advertise as widely as possible; ~~Serve refreshments~~

ROCKVILLE'S BOARDS AND COMMISSION TASK FORCE

- ii. Send representatives to community group meetings to describe activities and encourage participation;
 - iii. Revise the existing City of Rockville's website for BnC with a single click approach to vacancies (i.e., at the moment, it takes three clicks to find BnC vacancies). Add to the current page of the City's website information specifically addressing needs for new BnC members with links to the BnC's pages;
 - iv. Contact existing groups that might help contribute to diversity, ~~like the Asia-Pacific Task Force (which is not included in our notebook) and the Human Rights Commission~~ to help spread the word of Boards and Commissions;
 - v. Send an electronic copy of the guidelines to all applicants so that they can be apprised of their likelihood for consideration for the appointment;
 - vi. Establish quality control measures to evaluate efficacy of updating applicants, including those who are not appointed or those who have been appointed but not informed of the appointment, of their status.
- (e) Clearly define processes for removal and replacement of BnC members:
- a. Establish a clearly defined and transparent process that maps out the filling of vacancies and implement this process. Define the role of BnC members in this process. (Note: this is something the guidelines address, but it is a provision that doesn't appear to be implemented for all BnC.);
 - b. Evaluate whether BnC should have term limits. If so, who should set the term limits? Will term limits produce more harm than good?
- (f) Seek broad input to the process:
- a. Public;
 - b. Staff;
 - c. Current and former BnC members;
 - d. Former elected officials;
 - e. Civic and Homeowners Associations.
- (g) ~~Assess the Mayor/Nomination and Council/Voting processes to ensure that they are fair, balanced, unbiased, and transparent.~~ Request data from other municipalities on their best practices (e.g., guidelines, city code/charters, reports, and/or white papers).

Appendix C. Boards & Commissions Task Force Questionnaire Links

Appendix C: Boards & Commissions Task Force Questionnaire Links

1. Current Members Questionnaire: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/K5WXW33>
2. Former Members Questionnaire: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3XKR67Q>
3. Public Questionnaire: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZWSMNS7>

Appendix D. Proposed BCTF Evaluation Criteria

Proposed BCTF Evaluation Criteria

The fourth objective in the draft BCTF Vision, Mission, Goals, and Objectives (dated Dec. 11, 2018) document is to “Develop criteria and procedures for determining the relevance, effectiveness and transparency of Rockville’s Boards, Commissions, and other volunteer citizen groups in providing input to the Mayor and Council and City staff.”

Relevance – deals with how relevant the B/C’s work is to City government.

- Perceived relevance by:
 - The Mayor and Council
 - City staff (including the staff liaison to the B/C.
 - The public
 - Others?

Effectiveness – deals with how effective the B/C is in having its views considered and adopted by the City government.

- Number of recommendations made to the City within the past 12 months.
[Alternatively, the number of issues on which the B/C made recommendations to the City.]
- % of recommendations adopted by the City. [Alternatively, the % of issues on which the B/C made recommendations that were adopted by the City.]
- Perceived effectiveness by:
 - The Mayor and Council
 - City staff (including the staff liaison to the B/C.
 - The public
 - Others?

Diversity

- Gender diversity -- % of B/C members who are:
 - Male
 - Female
- Racial/ethnic diversity [how best to define?]
- Geographic diversity -- % of B/C members from different neighborhoods

Operational Performance – How well the B/C functions.

- Has a formal work plan that is:
 - Updated at least annually or on a schedule approved by City government.
 - Approved by City government.
- Produces an annual report of its activities.
- Number of B/C members whose formal terms have expired.
- Length of time that B/C positions have been vacant.
- The average length of time to fill a B/C vacancy.
- the
- Availability of timely meeting minutes on the City’s website.

Conformity with Legal Requirements

- The extent to which the B/C operates the applicable sections of State and/or Federal law, the City Code, and City guidelines for B/Cs.
 - Number of members
 - Frequency of meetings
 - Compliance with the Open Meetings Act
 - Scope of the B/C's work.
 - Others?

Transparency – how visible are the workings of the B/C to the City government and public.

- Availability of information on the B/C's relevance, effectiveness, diversity, operational performance, and conformity with legal requirements.

Appendix E. Guidelines and Procedures for Citizen Boards and Commissions

CITY OF ROCKVILLE



GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR CITIZEN BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Approved March 12, 2012

PURPOSE AND ORIGIN

Boards and Commissions

Individuals serving on Rockville's Boards and Commissions provide an invaluable service to the City. Their advice and expertise on a wide range of topics assist the Mayor and Council in the decision-making process.

Boards and Commissions originate from different sources including federal and state law as well as the City Charter and City Code. The following guidelines have been adopted to assist these groups in effectively carrying out their respective missions.

STRUCTURE

Lengths of terms may vary for certain bodies, however, in most cases appointments are for three years. The practice is that terms be staggered to provide for overlap.

ELIGIBILITY

In most cases, only Rockville residents are eligible for appointment to City Boards and Commissions. Some groups provide for non-residents to participate if a specific expertise is required.

Persons employed by or under contract to the City are not eligible for membership unless so provided in the enabling legislation.

Members are free to resign at any time.

The Mayor and Council generally do not appoint individuals to more than one board or commission at a given time (with the exception of ad hoc committees, special appointments, sub-committees, or task forces) The Mayor and Council may make exceptions to this practice.

APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES

Board and Commission vacancies are advertised in Rockville Reports and on the City's website and at Mayor and Council meetings. Rockville residents are encouraged to submit an application to the Mayor and Council c/o the City Clerk. An "Expression of Interest Form" is available on the City's website, rockvillemd.gov and from the City Clerk's office. Use of the City's website form will facilitate the application process. A resume, although not necessary, is also appreciated.

When applications are received by the City Clerk, the following process occurs:

- Each applicant is sent a letter acknowledging receipt of his/her application.
- The Mayor and Council, the staff liaison and the chairperson of each Board or Commission receive a copy of the applicant's letter and resume for review and comment.
- Chairpersons or staff liaisons invite an applicant to attend a group meeting. Applicants are encouraged to attend a meeting of the particular Board or Commission to familiarize themselves with the activities of the group.
- The Mayor may take into consideration any comments of the Chairperson, staff liaison or members of the Council. The Mayor will make the final decision on the appropriateness of a nomination to the Council.
- The City Clerk will notify the Council regarding the Mayor's intention to make an appointment to the Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission and Planning Commission three weeks prior to a nomination. During the three-week period the Councilmembers who wish to contact the nominee prior to appointment have an opportunity to do so. All other appointments do not require the advance notice.
- The applicant is advised a week prior to his or her nomination being brought to the Mayor and Council for appointment approval.
- After an appointment has been confirmed by the Mayor and Council, the chairperson and staff liaison are advised; and the appointee receives a copy of the Guidelines and Procedures for Citizen Boards and Commissions and the New Member Training and Orientation Handbook. The chairperson and/or staff liaison will alert the newly appointed member to the next meeting date of the body and brief the appointee as needed.

- Applicants who are not appointed will be notified by the staff liaison and advised that their applications will remain on file (for at least one year) for consideration when future vacancies occur.

COMPENSATION

Board and Commission members receive no compensation, although they may be reimbursed for actual expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with appropriations for the Board or Commission made by the Council.

ATTENDANCE

All board and commission members are expected to attend the meetings of their respective Board or Commission. Excessive absences as set forth in Section 2-220 of the City Code may result in removal of a member from a Board or Commission. Occasionally, special meetings or training sessions are held for members. Attendance is generally not mandatory for these sessions, but is encouraged.

TERM EXPIRATION

- Prior to the expiration of a member's term, the staff liaison assigned to the Board or Commission should ask the member if he/she wishes to seek reappointment. Written notification of a request for reappointment through the submission of a "Reappointment Expression of Interest Form" should be sent to the City Clerk's office prior to the expiration of the member's term. An updated resume is also appreciated. The member may or may not be reappointed by the Mayor. If reappointed, such reappointment is subject to confirmation by the Council.
- Persons seeking reappointment to a City Board or Commission will be placed into the same pool as persons seeking appointment for the first time.
- The position will be advertised in Rockville Reports, on the City's website and Mayor and Council meetings. If the individual desires reappointment, he/she will be considered along with the other applicants.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO APPLICANTS AND MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF APPEALS, HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION AND THE PLANNING COMMISSION

In accordance with Chapter 16, "Public Ethics" of the City Code each applicant to the Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission and the Planning Commission is required to file a financial disclosure statement (on a form available from the City Clerk) prior to appointment. In addition, in accordance with the provisions of

Chapter 16, each member of the Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission and the Planning Commission shall submit an annual financial disclosure statement to the City Clerk on or before April 15 of each year during the individual's term in office for the immediate preceding calendar year.

OPERATING GUIDELINES

Unless the enabling legislation specifies otherwise, a body elects its chair annually from among its appointed members in accordance with Section 2-219 of the City Code. The term of the chairperson is one year.

The chairperson is responsible for setting the meeting agenda. A City staff liaison is assigned to each Board and Commission and will assist the chairperson in the preparation and distribution of the agenda and meeting materials. Boards and Commissions may adopt reasonable rules and regulations for the conduct of their business. Such rules and regulations shall become effective upon adoption by the Board or Commission. Some of the Boards and Commissions have adopted their own rules of procedure.

All Board and Commission meetings are open to the public pursuant to the Open Meetings Law. A Board or Commission may convene in executive (closed) session only for those reasons set forth in Section 10-508 of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Any request for an executive session should be reviewed by the City Attorney's Office.

Boards and Commissions shall hold meetings when necessary to conduct business or at such intervals as may be mandated by law, resolution or rule. Meetings shall be held at the call of the chairperson. The staff liaison is responsible for ensuring that all meeting dates are adequately publicized on the City's website.

A majority of the members of the board or commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, and a majority vote of those present at any meeting, but not less than the number necessary for a quorum, shall be sufficient for any official action taken by the Board or Commission.

Minutes are kept of all meetings, and the staff liaison is responsible for posting and forwarding copies of the approved minutes to the City Clerk for distribution to the Mayor and Council. The staff liaison is also responsible for providing the City Clerk with copies of all meeting agendas and minutes. Agendas and minutes should also be posted on the City's website in a timely manner.

With the exception of meetings where transcripts are required, the minutes should be brief and reflect decisions and recommendations of a Board or Commission.

PUBLIC ETHICS ORDINANCE

Chapter 16, "Public Ethics" of the Rockville City Code requires that members of the Boards and Commissions disqualify themselves from participating in any decision by which they, their immediate family, their business associates or a business entity in which they have an interest would be directly and economically impacted. In addition, such individuals are required to file a written statement with the City Clerk disclosing any interest or employment, the holding of which would require disqualification from participation, sufficiently in advance of any anticipated action to allow adequate disclosure to the public.

With the exception of the Board of Appeals, Historic District Commission and Planning Commission whose members are required to file annual financial disclosure statements, Board and Commission members must disclose in a statement filed with the City Clerk receipt of gifts during the calendar year in excess of twenty-five dollars (\$25) in value or a series of gifts totaling one hundred dollars (\$100) or more from entities doing business with the City.

STAFFING

A staff liaison is assigned to each Board or Commission by the City Manager or his designee. While these individuals are responsible for providing staff support to their respective Board or Commission, they are not the group's employee. Staff liaisons are directly responsible to their department head and/or the City Manager, and their primary role is to facilitate the flow of information among the Mayor and Council, their department and the Board or Commission.

COMMUNICATIONS

Any position the board or commission would like to take on behalf of the City on issues affecting the City in general must be approved by the Mayor and Council.

Board and Commission members are encouraged to contact the Mayor and Council at any time with specific concerns, issues or questions. Correspondence directed to the Mayor and Council on behalf of the Board or Commission should be routed through the chairperson, the staff liaison and the relevant department director. The City Clerk also serves as a liaison with the Mayor and Council and may be contacted at any time.

MEETINGS WITH THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Periodically, the Mayor and Council may hold a worksession with a Board or Commission. These worksessions serve as an opportunity for open dialogue regarding matters of mutual concern and to address any issues, including those that may have a budgetary impact.

Agendas and minutes of the Mayor and Council meetings are on the City's website, www.rockvillemd.gov. These may include action of interest to a specific Board or Commission.

CONTACT:

City Clerk's Office 240-314-8280

Appendix F. Membership Characteristics

Membership Characteristics of Rockville's Boards, Commissions, Task Forces, and Committees
From Review of Rockville City Code Binder and Code

Rockville Board/Commission/Task Force	Roles of Mayor and Council in Appointing Members			Composition of BCTF		Special Requirements for Membership?		Term Requirements			Notes
	Mayor	Council	Authority	Members	Alternates	Rockville Resident?	Other Quals?	Years	Staggered?	Are Terms Extended until Replacement?	
<u>Boards and Commissions</u>											
Animal Matters Board	Appoints	Appoints	Sec. 3-92(a)	3	2	?	Y	3	N	Y	The City Code doesn't include language on the appointment of members or the Chairperson, the number of members, or their terms. The webpage for the Board has this information, but not the Code.
Board of Appeals	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 25.04.03.c.1	7	0	Y	N	5	Y	Y	
Board of Supervisors of Election	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	
Charter Review Commission	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	The binder didn't include any information on this Commission. However, this information is provided on the webpage for the Commission.
Compensation Commission	Appoints	Appoints	Sec. 2-21(b)	5	0	Y	N	4	Y	Y	* "must be broadly representative of the City." * "generally reflect the gender and ethnic diversity of the City" and represent specific constituencies. * Two members are City officials whose terms correspond to their job tenure.
Cultural Arts Commission	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 4-17(a)	11	0	?	Y	3	N	Y	
Environment Commission	Appoints	Confirms	Res. 21-02.2	9	0	?	Y	3	N	N	
Ethics Commission	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 16.3(a)	5	0	Y	Y	3	Y	Y	
Financial Advisory Board	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 2-238(a)	7	0	Y	Y	3	Y	N	
Historic District Commission	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 25-04.04.c.1	5	1	Y	Y	3	Y	Y	
Human Rights Commission	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 2-218(a)	11	0	?	Y*	3	N	Y	
Human Services Advisory Commission	Appoints	Confirms	Res. 5-01.2	11	0	Y	Y*	3	Y	Y	
Landlord-Tenant Affairs Commission	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 2-218(a)	7	3	Y	Y	3	N	Y	
Personnel Appeals Board	None	Appoints	Sec. 15-61(a)	3	0	Y	Y	3	N	N	
Planning Commission	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 25.04.02.c.1	7	0	Y	N	5	Y	Y	
Recreation and Parks Advisory Board	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 2-218(a)	9	0	?	Y	3	N	Y	
Retirement Board	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 15.83(a)	7	0	?	Y	3*	N	Y	
REDI	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	The binder didn't include any information on this group. However, this information is provided on the webpage for REDI.

Membership Characteristics of Rockville's Boards, Commissions, Task Forces, and Committees
From Review of Rockville City Code Binder and Code

Rockville Board/Commission/Task Force	Roles of Mayor and Council in Appointing Members			Composition of BCTF		Special Requirements for Membership?		Term Requirements			Notes
	Mayor	Council	Authority	Members	Alternates	Rockville Resident?	Other Quals?	Years	Staggered?	Are Terms Extended until Replacement?	
Rockville Housing Enterprises	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 2-218(a)	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	The City Code doesn't include language on the appointment of members or the Chairperson, the number of members, or their terms. The webpage for RHE has this information, but not the Code.
Rockville Recreation and Parks Foundation, Inc.	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	The binder didn't include any information on this Foundation. However, this information is provided on the webpage for this group.
Rockville Seniors Inc. (RSI)	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	The binder didn't include any information on this group. However, this information is provided on the webpage for RSI.
Rockville Sister City Corporation	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	The binder didn't include any information on this Corporation. However, this information is provided on the webpage for this group.
Senior Citizens Commission	Appoints	Confirms	Res. 62-69	5	0	?	N	2	Y	N	
Sign Review Board	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 25.04.03.c.1	3	1	Y	N	3	Y	Y	
Traffic and Transportation Commission	Appoints	Confirms	Sec. 2-218(a)	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	Unclear	The City Code doesn't include language on the appointment of members or the Chairperson, the number of members, or their terms. The webpage for the Commission has this information and references several Resolutions, but the binder didn't include the Resolutions.
<u>Task Forces and Committees</u>											
Boards and Commissions Task Force	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	The binder didn't include any information on this Task Force. However, some of this information is provided on the webpage for this group.

Membership Characteristics of Rockville's Boards, Commissions, Task Forces, and Committees
From Review of Rockville City Code Binder and Code

Rockville Board/Commission/Task Force	Roles of Mayor and Council in Appointing Members			Composition of BCTF		Special Requirements for Membership?		Term Requirements			Notes
	Mayor	Council	Authority	Members	Alternates	Rockville Resident?	Other Quals?	Years	Staggered?	Are Terms Extended until Replacement?	
Caregiver Funding Task Force	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	The binder didn't include any information on this Task Force. However, some of this information is provided on the webpage for this group.
King Farm Task Force	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	The binder didn't include any information on this Task Force. However, some of this information is provided on the webpage for this group.
Asian Pacific American Task Force	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	The binder included a printout from the City's website on this Task Force, but not under the "Task Forces and Committees" section of the City's website. This webpage came from the Community Engagement Programs website under the City Manager's Office. Certainly not an intuitive place to find it.
Rockville Bike Advisory Committee	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	The binder included a printout from the City's website on this Committee, but not under the "Task Forces and Committees" section of the City's website. This webpage came from the Bicycling website under the Traffic and Transportation Division of the Public Works Department. Certainly not an intuitive place to find it.
Upper Watts Branch Citizens Task Force	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	Not provided	The binder didn't include any information on this Task Force. Nor was this information provided on the webpage for this group.

Appendix G. Recommended Improvements to the City's Website Regarding Boards and Commissions

Recommended Improvements to the City's Website
Regarding Boards and Commissions

1. Reorganize and expand the City's website to offer frequently updated news of activities and accomplishments of boards and commissions. Make vacancies easy to find. Apply the same principles to other outreach methods.
2. Adding the following information to the City's website information on the process for nominating and appointing new board and commission members:
 - a. Post all pending EOIs for all applicants, including the applicants' names, the dates their EOIs were received by the City Clerk's Office, and the current status of each EOI.
 - b. Post the information provided by the Mayor's Office about its reasons for not taking action on each applicant whose application is over two months old.
3. Create a standard webpage template for all boards & commissions. This template should be used for all boards, commissions, task forces, committees, and other organizations listed on the City's website. Attachment G-1 shows the characteristics of a typical board or commission webpage on the City's current website. In addition to this current information, the standard webpage template should also include:
 - a. Links to the Rockville legal authorities (e.g., Code chapter, Ordinance, Resolution, etc.) that established the organization.
 - b. Links to any State or Federal statutes with which the organization needs to comply.
4. Have the standard template approved by the Council of Board Chairs [or by some other oversight authority]
5. Have all webpages updated to conform to the standard template.
6. In addition to the groups listed on the City's website as "Boards & Commissions" and "Task Forces & Committees," create a separate group for "Rockville Affiliated Organizations" to display information on the five organizations that don't meet the standard definition of a board or commission. These organizations are:
 - a. Rockville Economic Development Inc. (REDI)
 - b. Rockville Housing Enterprises (RHE)
 - c. Rockville Sister Cities Corporation (RSCC)
 - d. Rockville Seniors Inc. (RSI)
 - e. Rockville Recreation and Parks Foundation, Inc. (RRPFI)
7. On the introductory overview webpage for each of the three groups, add an introductory paragraph that includes a definition for the organizations in each group. Attachment G-2 provides sample language that could be used for each group.
8. Post minutes on the organization's webpage, not just videos. At a minimum, the minutes should reflect all decisions made at a meeting.

9. Each webpage should be reviewed at least annually to confirm that all information on it is current, accurate and complete. [Note: Require all boards and commissions to include a certification to this effect in their annual reports to the Mayor and Council.]
10. Remove the Development Review Committee from the list of Task Forces and Committees on the City's website. This is comprised of City staff, not volunteers.

Attachments:

- G-1 - Characteristics of a Typical Board or Commission Webpage
- G-2 - Proposed Introductory Language for Each Group of Volunteer Organizations on the City's Website

Characteristics of a Typical Board or Commission Webpage

Although there is some variation in the information provided on each organization's webpage, a typical webpage would include a two-column introductory section.

In the left-hand column:

- Description of the Organization – This is a more detailed description of what the organization does than provided on the overview list. It typically includes the number of members, their terms, in addition to a more detailed, but still high-level, description of its purpose and functions.

In the right-hand column:

- Phone number of the staff liaison to the organization.
- Name and email address of the staff liaison.
- Location of meetings
- Meeting schedule and times
- A link to previous meeting agendas and minutes
- A link to videos of past meetings, if available.

Following the introductory section is a list of current members with the dates their terms are expiring, or in some cases have expired.

Following the list of members, there are sometimes up to three additional sections:

- An invitation to sign up for notification of meeting alerts and when agendas are posted
- An invitation to join the organization; and/or
- A “Resources” section that provides links to documents that are important to the work of the organization, e.g., rules of procedure, guidelines, forms, etc.

These additional sections are not available for all organizations.

**Proposed Introductory Language for Each Group of Volunteer Organizations
on the City's Website**

Boards & Commissions

A Board or Commission is an organization created by an act of the Mayor and Council to perform an on-going function and is, therefore, subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act. These organizations are subject to the requirements established by the Mayor and Council regarding membership requirements, terms, and other characteristics. Some of these organizations were created in response to requirements of the State or Federal government.

Task Forces & Committees

A Task Force or Committee is an organization created by an act of the Mayor and Council to perform a time-limited function and is, therefore, subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act. These organizations are subject to the requirements established by the Mayor and Council regarding membership requirements, terms, and other characteristics.

Rockville Affiliated Organizations

An organization affiliated with Rockville is typically an organization created outside of the City government, with which the City has a contractual or other formal relationship. All of these organizations were incorporated as 501(c)(3) organizations and operate according to their own By-laws. Since most of these organizations are not 'public bodies' as defined in the Open Meetings Act, they are not subject to the transparency requirements of that Act. Rockville Housing Enterprises is an exception since it was created by the Mayor and Council and is subject to, and complies with, the Open Meetings Act. The underlined name of each organization on its individual webpage provides a link to a separate website managed by that organization that provides greater detail on the activities of the organization as well as its by-laws.

Appendix H. Structured Interview Tool

Boards & Commissions Task Force

Structured Interview Document

This questionnaire is designed to be used during the interview with current Rockville Board and Commission Chairs. All questions that are applicable should be answered, if possible. Feel free to ask follow-up questions, encourage the interviewees to elaborate, and frame questions in your own words.

Interviewee Name:	
Interviewee Board/Commission:	
Interview Date:	
Interviewers:	
<u>Introduction:</u> - Briefly explain the Boards & Commission Task Force's (BCTF) mission & purpose - Charged by the Mayor & Council to investigate the effectiveness and purpose of Rockville's current B&C. - Emphasize that this is not an attempt to change any B&C, but an effort to better understand the B&Cs and help the City better operate and organize them. - Thank them for participating and ask if they are ready to begin. - If you are recording, inform the interviewee and <i>ask for their permission before recording.</i>	
1. <u>Relationship with the City</u> - Mayor & Council, Staff, other Boards & Commissions - Do you think your board or commission would benefit from more communication, direction, or acknowledgement by the Mayor & Council? Have you ever met with the Mayor & Council or presented anything to them? - How does your board or commission interact with city staff? Did you find staff support adequate and helpful? How could relationships between staff and your board or commission be improved? What additional resources would you like the City to provide? - In response to our questionnaire, few board or commission members indicated that they had collaborated with other boards or commissions. How have you and your board or commission interacted with other boards and commissions within the City? Do you think increased collaboration would benefit your board or commission? How do you think collaboration in	

general could be improved?

2. Mission & Relevance

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more direction concerning their organization's mission and goals. Would your board or commission benefit from more clear direction from the Mayor and Council?

- How would you describe the mission of your board or commission? How does your board or commission's mission address current needs within the City?

- How has your mission/focus changed over time? What improvements, if any, would you make to improve the mission/focus of your board or commission?

3. Training & Leadership

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more training in leadership and organization. Do you believe such training would benefit the members of your board or commission? What training would best improve your board or commission's activities?

- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal orientation for new members. What materials or introduction (if any) does your board or commission provide new members? What types of training or materials do you believe would provide the most benefit to new members?

- Our online questionnaire indicated that most chairs do the lion's share of the work within their board or commission. How does your board or commission delegate tasks and generally divide up the work? E.g., who handles generating agendas, minutes, and/or reports? Do your members generally fully participate in the group's activities? Have you experienced difficulty encouraging participation from other members?

4. Vacancies & Participation

- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal succession planning for replacing members. How does your board or commission handle succession planning and replacing members?

- Many respondents to our questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the number of vacancies. How have vacancies affected the business/performance of your board or commission?

- *If the respondent has experienced significant vacancies, ask them to elaborate and provide specific examples. E.g., Has your board or commission had difficulties achieving a quorum? How*

long have these vacancies lasted? Have commissioners served past the end of their appointments? To what do you attribute these vacancies and how would you solve this issue?

5. Diversity

- How do you feel your group represents the diversity of the Rockville area? What efforts have you made to include diverse individuals or perspectives in your work?

- What thoughts would you have on improving diversity, representation, or outreach within Rockville's Boards and Commissions?

6. Final Thoughts

- What else would you like to tell us about your work or your experience?

- Do you have any suggestions for any new boards or commissions to fill needs of the Rockville community?

- What recommendations do you have for improving the boards and commissions system?

- | |
|--|
| |
| 7. <u>Interviewer Notes (Miscellaneous)</u> - Include any additional observations, insights, or comments on the interview. |

Appendix I. Dashboard Evaluation Summary

Appendix J: Dashboard Evaluation Summary

The dashboard exercise was designed to download information from the assigned interviews of individual boards and commissions to see them across like criteria, and in a way to rate that allowed assessment according to the same ratings and scales. The resulting Dashboard of General Findings lays out the goals and Key Recommendations is supported by specific cells on each board and commission that include observations and suggestions from the volunteer members who conducted the interviews.

This exercise allowed information to be laid out in parallel fashion across the evaluation criteria and overall ratings (1=significant improvement needed, 2=some improvement needed, and 3 goals achieved with no major shortfalls). The accumulation of the data in this way allowed BCTF members to be sure all the findings were captured and considered in the overall ratings and recommendations. Specific comments for each board and commission can be found in the full dashboard available on the Boards and Commissions Task Force Webpage

Key Recommendations to Improve Rockville's Boards and Commissions
Effectively Utilize City Resources to Promote Civic Engagement and Manage Boards and Commissions
1. Hire a full-time staff member in the City Clerk's office committed to increasing civic engagement; including volunteer outreach and management of Rockville's Volunteer Organizations.
2. Create a policy to distinguish the level of resources and oversight required for various types of boards and commissions s. For example, (i) should decision-making bodies require more oversight and resources than other boards and commissions s? How can the time of City staff be utilized more effectively and efficiently without overworking the staff? Should a City Council liaison be appointed to all boards and commissions s, or just select organizations?
Coordinate Missions, Objectives and Workplans
3. Mayor, Council, City staff and boards and commissions members should be better aligned on the mission and workplan of each boards and commissions ; require designated boards and commissions s to establish and publish annual reports and workplans, and Mayor and Council should review annual reports and workplans of each boards and commissions to ensure objectives, expectations, and results are clear.
4. Identify boards and commissions that deal with overlapping issues and define mechanisms for communication, collaboration, and cross-fertilization among relevant boards and commissions.
Enhance Volunteer Experience and Boost Participation
5. Improve the volunteer selection and nomination process through a variety of means, including (i) enforcing terms, (ii) filling vacancies, (iii) and improving the transparency of the recruitment, nomination and selection process. Expressions of interest of all candidates

should be available on the website, applicants should be informed of the status of applications, and applicants should be timely if they are appointed, reappointed, on hold or rejected
6. Ensure volunteers are doing impactful work and are recognized for their hard work through various methods, including but not limited to (i) receiving meaningful input from Mayor, Council and City staff on annual reports and workplans, (ii) increasing visibility on the COR website, social media and press, and (iii) organizing regular volunteer recognition events.
7. Improve the volunteer orientation process, with more training on the City structure and operations, the role of the boards and commissions, the member's role within the boards and commissions, governance, and meeting facilitation.
8. Proactively reach out to the community to increase volunteerism through various means, such as organizing volunteer fairs and maintaining and utilizing a volunteer database. Utilize this database to solicit expertise where needed.
Improve Diversity of the Boards and Commissions
9. Revise city policies on volunteerism to increase diversity.
10. Proactively reach out to diverse organizations and community associations in City and County to increase diversity of volunteer base.
Identify Opportunities to Add New Relevant Boards and Commissions and Regularly Review Existing Boards and Commissions
11. Create a process to review applications for new boards and commissions s; the process should encourage civic engagement while maintaining order and efficiency among existing and proposed boards and commissions.
12. Create a periodic review process to evaluate effectiveness, relevance, diversity, performance, and transparency of existing boards and commissions.
Improve Transparency
13. Reorganize and expand the City website to offer frequently updated news of activities and accomplishments of BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS s. Make vacancies easy to find. Apply the same principles to other outreach methods.

Appendix J. Commissions Support and Volunteer Coordinator Job Description

CITY OF ROCKVILLE, MD
COMMISSIONS SUPPORT AND VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR
JOB DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION

Under general supervision and a member of the City Clerk's office this individual provides direct support to the City's Commissions, Boards, Task Forces and committees (BCTF). Activities include recruitment, coordination of policies and procedures and ongoing communication of activities, requirements, etc. Ensures that the BCTF websites are being updates and maintained per guidelines. Completes annual audit of compliance with city, state and federal requirements; oversees the commission office's daily administrative activities; supervises, assigns, reviews, and participates in the work of clerical staff engaged in commission support activities; assists in maintaining official files of the commission; and performs other related duties as required. Provide citywide organization and support for all volunteers ensuring resources are identifies, engaged and are in compliance with requirements.

The incumbent reports to a higher-level administrator who reviews work through personal observations, conferences and written reports for

PRIMARY DUTIES

Acts as the primary administrative and operational support to one or more commissions or boards. Acts as a first point of contact for inquiries and requests submitted to the commission or board by other agencies, County staff, and the public; serves as a liaison for commission and board chairs with other commissioners or board members, as appropriate

Receives and documents sensitive information on community issues from this and other organizations and agencies, as well as members of the public; handles inquiries and public concerns in a sensitive and confidential manner consulting with commissioners, board members, and/or County staff, as appropriate; answers a variety of routine and semi- technical questions related to commission or board activities, functions, operating guidelines, and programs.

Performs professional level support (administrative) duties for the City of Rockville Commission, Boards and Task Forces. Providing coordination of:

1. Existing members
 - a. Ongoing communication to commissioners and members
 - b. Manage coordination of quarterly meetings/communication between commissioners to ensure broad awareness of activities and opportunities for cross engagement
 - c. Advises and ensures compliance with policies, procedures, and legal

requirements

- d. Compiling and monitoring budgets, and serving as a liaison between commissioners, board members, city staff, and the public.
 - e. Records management – ensure completion of required functions and reporting requirements
2. Managing the process by which new members become commissioners / members
- a. Recruitment – identify candidates, screen, manage process of coordination with city staff, Mayor and Council and appropriate chairs.
 - b. Communication throughout the process
 - c. Coordination with Mayor and Council and Chairs of appropriate B/C or TF.
 - d. Once appointed, manages orientation including completion of all training and or required forms as needed.
3. General Duties
- a. Responsible for exercising considerable judgment and independence in performing commission assignments of above average difficulty which require a comprehensive knowledge of assigned projects and programs.
 - b. Ensure all groups are adhering to guidelines and requirements
 - c. Manage database of existing members and potential candidates
 - d. Identify recognition opportunities and coordinate activities across all organizations and within the city.
 - e. Communicate information about the organizations to city staff and Mayor and Council.
 - f. Manage onboarding of designated members, ensure training and other requirements are met for specialized positions and establish and manage a council of all organization's chairs
 - g. Composes letters, memoranda, correspondence, summaries, resolutions, and notices from general instructions or in accordance with regulatory guidelines and accepted work procedures; types and distributes materials according to subject matter or routing and mailing procedures.
 - h. Manage city wide volunteers including: Recruitment, onboarding, recognition, events and all supporting efforts. Identify new

opportunities as needed.

- i. Manage website and social media activities.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

College Degree

2 years of management of electronic data, including software conversions;

2 years of posting and documenting notices for public hearings;

5 years of experience in enforcing City Code and development orders;

5 years of experience in Planning and Zoning or construction related approvals.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

- Considerable knowledge of City Code
- Considerable knowledge of rules and regulations regarding the management of public meetings and the retention of the public record
- Skilled in all current Microsoft Office software, particularly Excel, Word, and Power Point
- Skilled in NOVUS agenda, and EnerGov software systems
- Knowledge of municipal government operations
- Ability to supervise employees in a manner conducive to full performance and high morale
- Ability to exercise judgment and discretion in devising, installing, and/or interpreting City rules, regulations, policies, or procedures
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with other employees, supervisors, department officials, officials of other agencies, and the general public
- Ability to carry out complex verbal and written instructions
- Ability to express ideas and information clearly and concisely, both verbally and in writing
- Ability to prepare clear and concise reports, records, correspondence, and other documents
- Ability to supervise and prepare a variety of required reports accurately and completely and on a timely basis
- Ability to demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the cultural diversity in the community
- Knowledge of: Functions and procedures of a commission; provisions of the Government Code as it pertains to commissions and other advisory committees; commission budgets, government grants, and grant proposals; modern office methods and filing systems used to record, store, and retrieve resolutions and other records; modern office procedures including preparing business correspondence and legal notices; database management techniques; receptionist techniques, report writing, correct English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.

- Ability to: Compose meeting minutes and summaries that accurately reflect and interpret actions; independently compose clear and concise letters; meet the public and answer questions pertaining to commission procedures and activities; plan, organize, and coordinate the work of clerical subordinates; record meeting proceedings accurately; write and maintain records, notices, and reports; establish and maintain effective working relationships with County officials and the public; learn, interpret, and apply administrative and departmental policies and rules; understand and follow oral and written directions.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS:

- The work is typically performed while sitting at a desk or table
- The work is typically performed in an office

Appendix K. Example New Boards and Commissions in The Evaluation Process

- Public Safety Board
- Education Commission
- Youth Commission

Example: New Boards, Commissions and Task Forces:

Public Safety Board

Depicted below is one of three examples, for illustrative purposes, which show how the proposed checklist works for future proposed Boards, Commissions and Task Force.

BCTF offers the check list to Mayor, Council, Staff and Residents of Rockville as a recommendation for the consideration of additional Boards, Commissions and Task Forces. This check list can be used for proposed and existing Boards, Commissions and Task Forces.

Select one of the following to describe the proposed body:

Board: Merriam-Webster: a group of persons having managerial, supervisory, investigatory, or advisory powers. Ex.: She is on the bank's board of directors.

Commission: Merriam-Webster: a group of persons directed to perform some duty.

Ex.: The state set up a commission to study the proposed merger of the school districts.

Committee: Merriam-Webster: a body of persons delegated to consider, investigate, take action on, or report on some matter an advisory committee. Ex.: We are waiting for recommendations from the advisory *committee*.

Task Force: Merriam-Webster: a temporary grouping under one leader For accomplishing a definite objective. Ex.: They appointed a *task force* to review the situation.

1. Requirement:

- a. Does city, state or federal law, grants, or other funding sources require a new group? Add supporting references and/or documents.
 - i. No there is no mandate by law or legislation.
- b. See Section 7 Examples for other jurisdictions and municipalities that have established such bodies.

2. Relevance:

- a. What is the purpose of the group? See item 2b below.
- b. Why is the proposed group relevant to City government and other stakeholders, including:
 - i. The Mayor and Council
 - ii. City staff (including the staff liaison to the group)
 - iii. The public, residents, businesses, and visitors

The residents, businesses, and visitors in Rockville have been very fortunate with an outstanding and award-winning police department. We are also beneficiaries of protection with the Montgomery County Police Department, Maryland State Police Department and the Sheriff's Office of Montgomery County.

However, we can always improve safety. Our goal is to become one of the safest big cities in America. However, we can always improve safety. Our goal is to become one of the safest big cities in America.

We should be proactive in creating a board of residents and police expertise who will understand the role of a police department and be in existence without waiting for a

potential unfortunate incident. Everything from natural disasters to catastrophic events should be reviewed. We can educate our residents to help our police best protect our community in the event of terrorism.

We can create a police auxiliary corps with trained volunteers to assist our police. By training residents to inspect houses when families are on vacation, direct traffic for citywide events and create an extensive business, home, and city camera, registration program. These actions will make us safer with a fiscal benefit. They can even have a presence in our Town Center.

Chief Victor Brito has been the proponent of and advocate for some of these concepts. The Mayor and Council Priority Initiatives of June 1, 2018 states, "...Review and agree upon the scope of duties of the Rockville City Police Department and determine appropriate staffing.

The body shall be a conduit between residents and others and the Police Dept. to address the areas as mentioned above. Other Cities as noted above have established such entities to conduct coordination, communication, and exposure of Police and the public.

- c. How does the group present an opportunity to obtain funding or something positive for the city?
 - i. The proposed body can assist with submitting grant applications.
 - ii. See above for a review of positives for the City.
- d. How does the group address a clear need or opportunity? Is the need or opportunity a short-term need or long-term need?
 - i. The need is a permanent long term as it can initially work on bringing the Police and Rockville stakeholders together with the goal of identifying common goals/objectives and also areas of disagreement. Further the basis of moving forward with innovation and advocacy of new methods of safety education and involvement by Rockville and the Police working together to continue to increase the efforts on maintaining a safe city.
- e. How does the work of the proposed group overlap with any existing organizations, including existing COR BCTFs?
 - i. Currently no body deals with the mission and objectives of the proposed Policy Advisory Board.
- f. Can this work or need be addressed by an existing organization? Why or why not?
 - i. Currently there is no formal Advisory body in place.

3. Effectiveness

- a. What is the proposed mission of the group?
 - i. See Sections 1 & 2. The Proposed body undertakes tasks of evaluation, identifies public safety issues, positive communication, and interactions between police and residents, businesses and guests in Rockville, and mediates problems, advocacy of ideas, programs to increase interaction between Police and residents.
- b. What is the proposed Scope of Work and deliverables of the group?
 - i. See Sections 1&2 above

- c. What would the proposed volunteer citizen group do? Please check all that apply and provide the appropriate information as needed.
 - i. Provide a service. Please identify which one(s).
 - 1. mediation between Police and individuals and groups regarding complaints against the Police Dept. and improve relationship between public and police
 - ii. Provide advice. On what subject(s)?
 - 1. problems and complaints
 - iii. Fulfill a legal requirement. Please cite the requirement.
 - 1. N/A
 - iv. Provide funding to support a City program. Please identify the source(s) of the funding.
 - 1. Possible grant application assistance. The specifics require further research.
 - v. Establish and maintain relationships with outside groups who can benefit the City. Please identify which one(s).
 - 1. Prospective businesses and visitors.
 - vi. Adjudicate complaints or appeals. Please identify the source(s) and nature of the complaints or appeals.
 - 1. Mediation of complaints, disagreements, and concerns of current policies.
 - vii. Mobilize citizens around an issue of public interest. Please identify the issue(s).
 - 1. Support dissemination of information related public safety to Rockville, Mayor and Council, prospective businesses and visitors
 - viii. Other. Please describe.
- d. Do the activities of the proposed volunteer citizen group affect activities of any City departments?
 - i. Police Dept.
- e. Please identify which department(s), the activity (ies) affected, and the nature of the impact or overlap.
 - i. The City Dept. affected by this proposed body include the Police Dept., Information office, City Manager and Mayor and Council
- f. Have you contacted each affected department to determine its views on your proposal? If so, what was the department's reaction?
 - i. BCTF Chair VanGrack has discussed this proposed body with Chief Brito.

- g. What criteria should be used to judge the success of the new group?
 - i. Performance and results of mediation activities.
 - ii. Information sharing with Rockville
 - iii. Reports to Mayor, Council and Rockville
 - iv. Grant Applications and awards (if this task is possible)

4. Diversity:

- a. How will the group address diversity and specific demographic groups?
 - i. Based upon similar bodies by other municipalities the membership shall be comprised of police dept., attorneys, neighborhood representation, and Human Rights Commission member and community organizations.

5. Operations:

- a. Structure of the Body
 - i. How many members
 - 1. Asheville, NC: nine voting members: five area representatives, two at-large seats, a resident of property owned by the Housing Authority, and a Housing Authority representative. The term of office is three years.
 - ii. Montgomery County, MD: 7 public members plus legal/law enforcement professionals
- b. Subcommittees: none at this time
- c. Level of expertise required of members:
 - i. See examples shown below in Section 7.
- d. What resources from the City or other organizations are required?
 - i. Staff liaison from Police Dept., meeting location. Utilize funding from existing Police and City General Funds. Publication of information and other outreach accomplished via established communication, information, and media as provided by the City.
- e. Will a representative from Mayor or Council be required?
 - i. Suggest yes with the proviso that regular meetings may occur on an as needed basis, monthly, semi-monthly, quarterly, and semi-annually. Frequency depends on issues/matters at hand.

6. Transparency:

- a. How will this group communicate its activities and progress?
 - i. Publish reports and recommendations/position papers to Mayor, Council and City Depts. (Manager)
- b. How will the group interact with the public?
 - i. Public meetings and outreach activities

7. Examples:

- a. **Asheville, North Carolina:** The Citizens / Police Advisory Committee (CPAC) consist of nine voting members: five area representatives, two at-large seats, a resident of

property owned by the Housing Authority, and a Housing Authority representative. The term of office is three years.

The committee serves as a liaison between the police department and community. The committee mediates problems or conflicts and serves as an advocate for programs, ideas, and methods to improve the relationship between the police and community. The committee is also responsible for disseminating information to the community and to the government officials of Asheville. As an advisory committee to City Council, CPAC's primary function is to make recommendations to the City Council and act as a source of citizen information.

- b. **Dunedin, Florida:** Public Safety Committee, Consists of seven members and one alternate. Assess quality of life and make recommendations on public safety issues in areas of law enforcement, fire protection, emergency services and both long and short term disaster planning and identification of cost efficiencies in public safety matters.
Inform itself and the public on whatever public safety issues it deems relevant to the interests of the City of Dunedin and to make recommendations to the City Commission regarding such matters. The Committee is not authorized to serve as an oversight entity regarding the operational issues of the City's public safety services and shall limit its efforts to non-operational issues of the various agencies providing public safety services to the Dunedin public. The Committee may initiate such efforts and investigations as deemed appropriate including, but not limited to, surveys and public feedback forums in order to be properly informed and to provide the greatest degree of assistance to the City Commission, the City Manager, and his/her staff, Departments of the City and to the general public.
- c. **Ithaca, New York:** The Community Police Board (CPB) is charged by the City of Ithaca to act as a community liaison to the Police Department and actively foster positive communications between police and all segments of the community.
The Commissioners are chosen from a range of culturally and economically diverse community groups with consideration given to the effect each appointment will have on the diversity of representation, including geographic representation, on the board.
The Community Police Board provides two ways to engage members of the community and members of the Police Department in healthy communication.
A way to express appreciation by citizens to members of the Police Department for work and actions performed in the line of duty, which should be recognized and commended. The CPB forwards those statements to the Chief of Police with the hope that they will be forwarded to the Police Officers so cited.
A way to file a formal complaint by citizens to members of the Police Department for work and actions performed in the line of duty, which asks for an investigation and resolution between the parties. The Community Police Board conducts those investigations, and forwards its findings and recommendations to the Chief of Police and to the citizen(s) involved, expecting that appropriate action(s) undertaken to resolve the complaint to the mutual satisfaction of all parties.
- d. **Bowie, Maryland:** Public Safety Committee the Mission of the City's Public Safety Committee is to identify and examine Bowie's public safety issues. Public safety issues

include, but are not limited to Emergency Preparedness, Fire/EMS, and Police services.

- e. **Frederick, Maryland:** Excessive Use of Police Services Board the Excessive Use of Police Services Board shall hear appeals of actions of The City of Frederick in accordance with the [City Code, Section 15-46\(h\)](#).
- f. **Montgomery County, Maryland: Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission** (32)
Created: Mo. Co. Code Section 2-60 as amended
Description: Evaluates the organization and adequacy of law enforcement and the administration of justice in the County pertaining to local issues and agencies. Members serve three-year terms without compensation.
Type of Positions: Administrative Judges of the Circuit and District Courts; State's Attorney; Sheriff; Circuit Court Clerk; Public Defender; Police Chiefs of the Cities of Rockville, Gaithersburg, Takoma Park, and Village of Chevy Chase, and MNCPPC; Director MCPS School Safety and Security; Chair, Council Public Safety Committee; Chief Administrative Officer; Police Chief, Director. Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Chief, Behavioral and Crisis Services; Chief, Children, Youth and Family Services; Director, Dept. of Technology Services; Asst. Chief, Fire Code Enforcement and Fire Investigations; 7 public members; member selected by County Legislative Delegation; State Depts. of Parole and Probation and Juvenile Justice; Commission on Juvenile Justice; Victim Services Advisory Board.

Example: New Boards, Commissions and Task Forces:

Education Commission

Depicted below is one of three examples, for illustrative purposes that show how the proposed checklist works for future proposed Boards, Commissions and Task Force.

BCTF offers the check list to Mayor, Council, Staff and Residents of Rockville as a recommendation for the consideration of additional Boards, Commissions and Task Forces. This check list can be used for proposed and existing Boards, Commissions and Task Forces.

Select one of the following to describe the proposed body:

Board: Merriam-Webster: a group of persons having managerial, supervisory, investigatory, or advisory powers. Ex.: She is on the bank's board of directors.

Commission: Merriam-Webster: a group of persons directed to perform some duty.

Ex.: The state set up a commission to study the proposed merger of the school districts.

Committee: Merriam-Webster: a body of persons delegated to consider, investigate, take action on, or report on some matter an advisory committee. Ex.: We are waiting for recommendations from the advisory *committee*.

Task Force: Merriam-Webster: a temporary grouping under one leader For accomplishing a definite objective. Ex.: They appointed a *task force* to review the situation.

1. Requirement:

- a. Does city, state or federal law, grants, or other funding sources require a new group? Add supporting references and/or documents.
 - i. No
- b. See Section 7 Examples, at the end of this proposal, for other jurisdictions and municipalities that have established such bodies.

2. Relevance:

- a. What is the purpose of the group?
 - i. The students of Rockville have been subject to many disagreements in the past with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and the Board of Education (BOE). These have included the parking of school buses, long time parking of tractor-trailers in property close to METRO station, school boundary changes, student capacity, and school location. These policies have been significantly impacted by the public education of our children and restricted the family growth in our city. Our children are fortunate to have parents who find the time to object to MCPS and BOE decisions, which are not favorable to Rockville residents and businesses. With the added strength provided by the resources of City Hall, we can enhance our children's education. We can create programs where community service hours can be obtained in City Hall learning about how government helps people. Several PTSA activists have supported this proposal.
- b. Why is the proposed group relevant to City government and other stakeholders, including:
 - i. The Mayor and Council

1. Mayor and Council Priority Initiatives, June 1, 2018: “Partner with other jurisdictions to meaningfully engage with MCPS, Montgomery County and the state to promote school construction”.
 - ii. City staff (including the staff liaison to the group)
 - iii. The public, residents, businesses, and visitors
- c. How does the group present an opportunity to obtain funding or something positive for the city?
 - i. Create programs where students earn community service hours at City Hall learning about how government helps people.
 - d. How does the group address a clear need or opportunity? Is the need or opportunity a short-term need or long-term need?
 - i. This is a long term permanent body and its function is to advocate, inform, lobby for the interests of students who live in and attend Rockville located public schools
 - e. How does the work of the proposed group overlap with any existing organizations, including existing COR (?), Boards, Commissions, Committees, or Task Forces?
 - i. Overlap with Montgomery County Public Schools Administration and teachers, students and parents as well as the Montgomery County Public Schools Board as their policies and procedures and processes affect Rockville students
 - f. Can this work or need be addressed by an existing organization? Why or why not?
 - i. Rockville students are subjected to decisions and policies that do not always benefit and enhance their education. LIST PROBLEMS HERE

3. **Effectiveness:**

- a. What is the proposed mission of the group?
 - i. Advocate, inform, and lobby MCPS & BoE to increase benefit of education for Rockville students.
- b. What is the proposed Scope of Work and deliverables of the group?
 - i. Involvement in MCPS/BoE policies and decisions on school operations, curriculum and future expansion of school facilities and using Mayor, Council and City Staff to support such efforts.
- c. What would the proposed volunteer citizen group do? Please check all that apply and provide the appropriate information as needed.
 - i. Provide a service. Please identify which one(s).
 1. Public knowledge and advocacy of satisfying needs of Rockville students, teachers, and parents.
 - ii. Provide advice. On what subject(s)?
 1. School operations, programs, expansion needs

- iii. Fulfill a legal requirement. Please cite the requirement.
 - 1. N/A
- iv. Provide funding to support a City program. Please identify the source(s) of the funding.
 - 1. May be possible to obtain grants. THIS NEEDS TO BE DETERMINED.
- v. Establish and maintain relationships with outside groups who can benefit the City. Please identify which one(s).
 - 1. MCPS/BoE
- vi. Adjudicate complaints or appeals. Please identify the source(s) and nature of the complaints or appeals.
 - 1. N/A
- vii. Mobilize citizens around an issue of public interest. Please identify the issue(s).
 - 1. Quality of Rockville located MCPS schools
- viii. Other. Please describe.
- d. Do the activities of the proposed volunteer citizen group affect activities of any City departments?
 - i. Mayor and Council and City Manager
- e. Please identify which department(s), the activity (ies) affected, and the nature of the impact or overlap.
 - i. Resource needs, liaisons from City Council and City Staff
- f. Have you contacted each affected department to determine its views on your proposal? If so, what was the department's reaction?
 - i. TBD
- g. What criteria should be used to judge the success of the new group?
 - i. Information sharing with Rockville
 - ii. Reports to Mayor, Council and Rockville
 - iii. Success with MCPS/BoE resulting in programs and policies that benefit Rockville students
- 4. **Diversity:**
 - a. How will the group address diversity and specific demographic groups?
 - i. Education professionals, parents from the various school districts and students
- 5. **Operations:**
 - a. Structure of the Body
 - i. How many members

1. Nine members

- b. Subcommittees: none at this time
- c. Level of expertise required of members:
 - i. Education professionals, parents, students
- d. What resources from the City or other organizations are required?
 - i. City Staff Liaison and associated support time, materials
- e. Will a representative from Mayor or Council be required?
 - i. Suggested

6. Transparency:

- a. How will this group communicate its activities and progress?
 - i. Meeting agendas, minutes, report to Mayor and Council, and articles in Rockville Reports and other media.
- b. How will the group interact with the public?
 - i. Meetings open to the public and outreach events related to education and MCPS/BoE activities.

7. Examples:

- a. **Asheville, North Carolina:** A local board of education serves a vital role in our community by helping steer the educational journeys of our children. Its decisions influence the lives of students and their parents, teachers, school staff, and district leadership, and affect the overall well-being of the community. The Asheville City Board of Education serves as the governing body of The Asheville City Schools. This board establishes the vision for education in the district. It sets the goals, standards, and tone for what we want our public schools to be and ensures that these schools are responsive to the needs of our local community. The school board serves the larger purposes of representing the needs of the community in our schools, building bridges among parents, school leadership, and other sectors of the community, and ensuring that our schools are the best they can be. Board is comprised of five members serving four-year term with option to seek a second term.
- b. **Dunedin, Florida:** None
- c. **Ithaca, New York:** None
- d. **Bowie, Maryland:** Education Committee: The City of Bowie Education Committee is charged with advising the Bowie City Council on matters relating to education. The City Education Committee was established in 1976 by the Bowie City Council. It was originally called the Educational System Study Committee. The Committee evolved over the years until 1996 when it was combined with the City's Excellence in Education Scholarship Committee.
The Education Committee has established a number of programs to support education and

educators in schools in Bowie: **Bowie Reads** is a reading promotion the City's Education Committee began several years ago in an effort to encourage children to read and to develop a love for reading.

From January to May each year the committee collects new and gently used children's books to distribute at the City's annual festival Bowiefest, always held on the first Saturday in June at Allen Pond Park. Parents and grandparents may bring children to select free books to take home to read. Information about reading to children, helping children to learn to read, and other related topics are also available.

Excellence in Education the City of Bowie and the Education Committee sponsor a yearly event, entitled *Excellence in Education*, which recognizes teachers in Bowie schools for providing excellence in their classrooms and schools and in the education of their students.

Dignitaries, including the Governor, members of the General Assembly, and representatives from federal and local government join the education community and the City in honoring teachers. Their peers select the teachers, from eligible public and private schools in Bowie. The City has proudly honored educators for over three decades.

Education Grants the City of Bowie offers Education Grants of up to \$1,000 each to support educational activities for children in the City of Bowie. The deadline to apply for the grant is October 7. The City of Bowie Education Committee awards grants that support education for Bowie children. Grants, of amounts ranging from \$100 - \$1,000, are awarded to teachers, parent groups, and other interested individuals from [eligible community schools](#) who have new and creative ideas for projects and programs that will enrich the students' learning experiences.

Education Scholarships: The City of Bowie provides Excellence in Education scholarships yearly to qualified graduating high school seniors. Over the years, over \$50,000 in scholarships have been awarded to students. Nomination Process Nominations may only come from the schools. Students should contact the guidance office of their high school by mid-January and let them know that they are residents of the City of Bowie and would like to be considered for nomination. Eligibility for a school to consider a student for nomination, students must: have a minimum GPA of 3.5; Live in the City of Bowie; and have been accepted at an accredited college or university.

e. **Frederick, Maryland:** None

f. **Montgomery County, Maryland:** None

Example: New Boards, Commissions and Task Forces:

Youth Commission

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Select one of the following to describe the proposed body:

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Commission: Merriam-Webster: a group of persons directed to perform some duty.

Ex.: The state set up a commission to study the proposed merger of the school districts.

Committee: Merriam-Webster: a body of persons delegated to consider, investigate, take action on, or report on some matter an advisory committee. Ex.: We are waiting for recommendations from the advisory *committee*.

Task Force: Merriam-Webster: a temporary grouping under one leader For accomplishing a definite objective. Ex.: They appointed a *task force* to review the situation.

1. Requirement:

- a. Does city, state or federal law, grants, or other funding sources require a new group? Add supporting references and/or documents.
 - i. No
- b. See Section 7 Examples, at the end of this proposal, for other jurisdictions and municipalities that have established such bodies.

2. Relevance:

- a. What is the purpose of the group?
 - i. Rockville is a wonderful place to raise children. We want them to understand how fortunate we all are to live in a city of Rockville, the county of Montgomery, the state of Maryland and the United States of America. We should encourage our children to study and participate in local, state, national, and international issues. Countless government officials began their public service careers in grade school. We can improve the participation of youth in government. At one time, Rockville had a Youth Advisory Board. Randy Alton was chair in this Board and has proposed that it be re-established. We can create Youth Ambassadors of all ages to study the issues and participate in government.
- b. Why is the proposed group relevant to City government and other stakeholders, including:
 - i. The Mayor and Council
 - ii. City staff (including the staff liaison to the group)
 - iii. The public, residents, businesses, and visitors

1. Raise awareness of issues unique to youth/teens, develop future leaders, provide a voice to youth, civic education, contribute to Rockville
- c. How does the group present an opportunity to obtain funding or something positive for the city?
 - i. To Be Determined
- d. How does the group address a clear need or opportunity? Is the need or opportunity a short-term need or long-term need?
 - i. Long term, see 2.b. above and provide a voice for youth, expand involvement, encourage public involvement by youth.
- e. How does the work of the proposed group overlap with any existing organizations, including existing COR (?), Boards, Commissions, Committees, or Task Forces?
 - i. Possible Recreation and Parks, proposed Police Advisory and Education.
- f. Can this work or need be addressed by an existing organization? Why or why not?
 - i. Youth as a group of residents are currently not service in total by any existing body within the city. See previous sections of the inclusiveness of this proposed body.

3. Effectiveness:

- a. What is the proposed mission of the group?
 - i. Advise Mayor and Council, City Manager and Staff as well as parents, youth on programs and policies affecting youth and advocating for youth.
- b. What is the proposed Scope of Work and deliverables of the group?
 - i. Areas affecting Youth include transportation, school safety, mental health and wellness, part time employment, volunteer efforts in the City
- c. What would the proposed volunteer citizen group do? Please check all that apply and provide the appropriate information as needed.
 - i. Provide a service. Please identify which one(s).
 1. Yes for guidance, advocacy, for Youth, which does not formally exist.
 - ii. Provide advice. On what subject(s)?
 1. Mental health and well-being, safety, involvement in the City
 - iii. Fulfill a legal requirement. Please cite the requirement.
 1. N/A
 - iv. Provide funding to support a City program. Please identify the source(s) of the funding.
 1. Possible grant funding requires investigation

- v. Establish and maintain relationships with outside groups who can benefit the City. Please identify which one(s).
 - 1. Interactions with prospective businesses and visitors to the City, Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery County Gov't, and State Gov't.
- vi. Adjudicate complaints or appeals. Please identify the source(s) and nature of the complaints or appeals.
 - 1. None
- vii. Mobilize citizens around an issue of public interest. Please identify the issue(s).
 - 1. Youth involvement, guidance safety, education and experience in City Gov't, public participation.
- viii. Other. Please describe.
- d. Do the activities of the proposed volunteer citizen group affect activities of any City departments?
 - i. Police, Recreation and Parks, Human Rights, City Manager
- e. Please identify which department(s), the activity (ies) affected, and the nature of the impact or overlap.
 - i. Youth and Police: TBD
 - ii. Youth and Recreation and Parks: TBD
 - iii. Human Rights: TBD
 - iv. City Manager and Depts.: TBD
- f. Have you contacted each affected department to determine its views on your proposal? If so, what was the department's reaction?
 - i. No
- g. What criteria should be used to judge the success of the new group?
 - i. Performance and results of advocacy, guidance involvement in City
 - ii. Information sharing with Rockville residents, businesses and Gov't
 - iii. Reports to Mayor, Council and Rockville
 - iv. Grant Applications and awards (if this task is possible)
- 4. Diversity:**
 - a. How will the group address diversity and specific demographic groups?
 - i. Membership ranges from teens, the various City designated neighborhoods, and youth services professionals, education, police, and parents. Majority would be teens/youth as determined.
- 5. Operations:**
 - a. Structure of the Body

- i. How many members
 - 1. By number of Neighborhoods and adults with majority being youth, suggested number of members = nine to 11 members.
 - b. Subcommittees:
 - i. Mental Health and Wellness, School Safety, Government Activities
 - c. Level of expertise required of members:
 - i. Teen or pre-teen, parents, professionals in Youth Services, Police
 - d. What resources from the City or other organizations are required?
 - i. Staff and Council Liaison, resources for meeting locations, agendas and minutes and outreach
 - e. Will a representative from Mayor or Council be required?
 - i. suggested
- 6. **Transparency:**
 - a. How will this group communicate its activities and progress?
 - i. Public meetings, printed agendas and minutes, Rockville reports, and other City media, annual or as events occur reports to Mayor and Council.
 - b. How will the group interact with the public?
 - i. Outreach and conducting meetings in the various designated Neighborhoods.
- 7. **Examples:**
 - a. **Asheville, North Carolina:**
 - i. None
 - b. **Dunedin, Florida: Youth Advisory Committee:** Provide the youth of Dunedin with a forum to address their needs and concerns; provide input to Commission on issues affecting youth in our community; provide an opportunity to enhance leadership skills and civic involvement among Dunedin's youth. This is an advisory committee.
 - c. **Ithaca, New York: Ithaca Youth Council:** Teens in Ithaca face many challenges, which adults in government may not always see. The Ithaca Youth Council Ambassadors (YCA) is teens from Ithaca and Tompkins County who focus on civic engagement, community outreach, and peer leadership. The Ambassadors strive to raise awareness in the Ithaca community about issues that are unique to teens, and they work together to develop resources and find solutions. YCA meets twice per month at the Ithaca Youth Bureau to address issues facing youth in the Ithaca Community and to learn about local government from local government leaders.
Youth Council is a Program of Youth Employment Service. For more information, check out the Youth Council website.

Main Objectives: The Youth Council is teen-run; its members have developed an organizational structure and work to identify and prioritize issues that matter to local youth. Youth Council has four main goals: **Develop Future Leaders** Our youth have the power to shape the future of our city. By being provided opportunities to participate in city governance and have an active role in addressing community issues, members learn important skills, become positive agents for change, and become bonded to the community. **Give Formal Voice To Youth** The Youth Council provides representation for Ithaca's youth and provides a forum for advocacy. It provides ongoing, 2-way communication with policy-makers, especially Common Council, to better address youth and community issues. Youth Council members are expected to develop ways to get regular input from other youth about their ideas and concerns.

Civic Education Youth Council members get first-hand experience with how the democratic process works by becoming involved in government in a practical, hands-on way. **Community Contribution** In addition to representing the needs and interests of youth to policy makers, Youth Council plans and executes projects to improve conditions for teenagers. Mission: The mission of the Ithaca Youth Council Ambassadors is to listen and speak for the youth of Tompkins County

d. **Bowie, Maryland:**

i. None

- e. **Frederick, Maryland:** Source: Frederick city web site, 6/6/18: NEWS RELEASE Youth to Have Greater Voice; Council Offers Influence FREDERICK, MD –June 6, 2018: Frederick youth are invited to be a force within City government. The application period is now open to serve on the Youth Advisory Council that the Board of Aldermen voted unanimously to create earlier this year. Spearheaded by Alderman Roger Wilson, the council will consist of 18 total members, 13 voting and 5 non-voting. Each member will be appointed by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. City residents ages 14 to 18 will make up the voting members. Adult professionals from local organizations that specialize in providing youth services will serve as non-voting members. Youth may apply to serve on the council online (www.cityoffrederick.com/yac), and/or by sending letters of interest to Bob Smith, deputy director of Parks and Recreation; at 121 N. Bentz St., Frederick, MD 21701. The Mayor and Board hope to select the first council by September. The deadline for interested youth to apply is July 31. “This is a good start toward the goal I envisioned,” Wilson said. “The youth often feel that they don’t have a voice or any influence over issues that matter to them. This council changes all that, and offers them a real opportunity to get involved in their community in a substantial and meaningful way.” The Youth Advisory Council’s primary goal is to expand youth involvement and gain insight from youth so their voices can be heard, and to address a concern about the lack of opportunities for emerging adults in the Frederick community. Alderman Wilson also hopes that the council will encourage more young people to become involved in public service. The council has a mission to provide advice on legislation, assist the City’s Parks and Recreation Department, and work with the Human Resources Department to develop student programs.

NEWS RELEASE Boys & Girls Club of Frederick County and other local organizations have also expressed their support for the council. Mayor O’Connor said this is a genuine opportunity for young people to be active in their community, while collaborating with

adults to encourage them to communicate on topics that matter to them. “This goes to the heart of my intention to broaden citizen engagement,” O’Connor said.

f. **Montgomery County, Maryland: Children and Youth, Commission on** (27)

Created: Mo. Co. Code Section 27-48.

Description: Advises the County Executive, County Council, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Board of Education on the development of coordinated community and government policies, programs and services, which support children, youth, and families. Adult members serve three-year terms without compensation. Youth members serve one-year terms without compensation.

Type of Positions: agency representatives, parents, youth, a private school representative, and required public agencies.

- i. March 25, 2019 Greetings from the Commission on Children and Youth! On February 7, 2019, the Montgomery County Commission on Children and Youth hosted the 12th Annual Youth Having a Voice RoundTable at the Silver Spring Civic Building. Over 50 middle and high students from across the county attended and shared their experiences and opinions regarding public transportation, school safety, and mental health and wellness. This year the Commission has focused its work on these three identified areas and subcommittees were formed to explore the topics, narrow the scope, and make recommendations for the needs of our county’s children and youth. Our first subcommittee, the Mental Health and Wellness Subcommittee, has spent the past two years exploring ways to promote a positive approach to mental health and well-being. Our second subcommittee, the School Safety Subcommittee, is focused on balancing psychological and physical safety in Montgomery County schools and providing a safe environment for students during non-instructional hours, including after school activities on campus. By bringing these conversations to the youth that the Roundtable, our subcommittees are afforded the opportunity to gathered valuable information that will be used, in conjunction with input from several professionals, to make recommendations to the County Council, County Executive and the Board of Education. The School Safety Subcommittee plans to share preliminary recommendations with the Board of Education prior to the close of the current academic year. Our third subcommittee, comprised of our youth commissioners, spearheaded an effort to explore youth experiences with public transportation in Montgomery County, specifically examining the Kids Ride Free and Youth Cruiser SmarTrip programs. Youth responses were gathered both at the Round table event and from an online survey. The youth commissioners had the opportunity to share their preliminary findings with members of the Transportation and Environment Committee and leadership from the Montgomery County Department of Transportation. The youth commissioners will continue collecting data via the online survey and in the next few months will begin formulating specific recommendations that will support youth having greater and more reliable access to public bus service in Montgomery County. We appreciate you taking the time to review the attached summary of the Youth Having A Voice Roundtable Event. We also look forward to sharing our recommendations in the Commission on Children and Youth Annual Report in November 2019. Sincerely, Itamar Fiorino, Victoria Koretsky, Talia Nesin & Ashley Thommana Youth Commissioners, Commission on Children and Youth Department of Health and Human Services 7300 Calhoun Place, Suite 600, Rockville, Maryland 20855 240-777-4659, 240-777-4665

- ii. 12th Annual Youth Having A Voice RoundTable Hosted by the Commission on Children and Youth February 7, 2019The Commission on Children and Youth is dedicated to its mission of promoting the well-being of Montgomery County’s children, youth and families so that all young people may realize their full potential and become contributing, productive adults. Every year we host the Youth Having A Voice RoundTable event to hear directly from the youth and children of the county. On February 7, 2019, our commission held the 12th annual Youth Having a Voice RoundTable at the Silver Spring Civic Building. We had over 50 youth attend the event, from middle and high schools across the county. Councilmember Evan Glass and Councilmember Gabe Albornoz and members of their staff attended the event. Ms. Pamela Luckett attended on behalf of Councilmember Will Jawando. Other distinguished attendees included Ms. Shebra Evans, President of the Montgomery County Board of Education, Ms. Jeanette E. Dixon, Montgomery County Board of Education, Ms. Victoria Buckland, Acting Director of the Department of Health and Human Services, Ms. JoAnn Barnes, Chief of Children, Youth and Families, Dr. Barbara Andrews, Administrator of Early Childhood Services, as well as Dr. Jonathan Brice, Associate Superintendent from the Office of Student and Family Support and Engagement. This year, the Commission on Children and Youth has been focusing on two main areas of interest: mental health, wellness, and school safety. We chose these focus areas because we believe that these are some of the greatest issues affecting Montgomery County youth. Separately, the Youth Leadership Subcommittee, which is comprised of 4 youth commissioners, is currently focusing on public transportation options, partially due to its impacts on school safety. We, the youth commissioners, recently met with the Transportation and Environment Committee of the County Council and offered recommendations regarding future expansion of the Kids Ride Free programs. The Roundtable, in addition to an online survey, was used to collect information about how kids currently use public transportation programs.
- iii. Public Transportation At the Roundtable, when asking the youth participants questions about public transportation, we found that a mere 4 out of over 50 kids knew what the Youth Cruiser SmarTrip Card is—a program that is being used to phase out the use of student IDs for public transportation use in the future. We determined that this was due to the limited and somewhat confusing information provided on the Department of Transportation website as well as general lack of public awareness. In addition, we realized how restrictive the current Kids Ride Free Program is since many kids rely on public transportation on the weekends, holidays, and times outside of the set 2:00-8:00 PM. We also found that bus drivers are sometimes unfamiliar with the specifics of these programs, as multiple students shared stories of being “kicked off of buses” or not allowed to ride during designated times.
- iv. School Safety In addition to discussing transportation, a 35-minute portion of the evening was dedicated to the subject of school safety. The participants were told to think of safety in a broad way, including safety from physical violence as well as psychological safety from harassment, bullying, intimidation, discrimination, or ridicule. A majority of students reported a “moderate” feeling of safety within their school. Of those who did not report feeling safe, most students’ concerns were regarding bullying, intimidation, and fights between students. Students also reported feeling unsafe during lockdown

- drills, which they believed were not taken seriously enough by both students and teachers. Another concern that students shared was concerning the safety concerns with their school facility, citing specifics such as gas leaks and broken pipes. One of the school safety subcommittee's primary concerns was examining safety during afterschool hours so roundtable participants were asked to comment on school safety afterschool. Participants generally felt less safe after school hours, as security guards and school resource officers had left for the day. Most students that felt safe during these times mentioned trusted adults that they were with; those who did not often said they did not stay after school for this reason.
- v. Mental Health & Wellness Finally, the Roundtable addressed the topic of mental health and wellness. When asked to describe what mental health meant to them, the students referred "it was their state of mind" and "what they think and feel". Even early in the discussion, students indicated that they understood the fact that mental health is a sensitive subject. One student noted that it is not something people can control and that if other students chose to bully other regarding their mental health, it would be appropriate to confront the bullies. Additionally, students generally agreed that school was one of the major stressors in their lives. Tests, homework, and extracurriculars every day left many students feeling frustrated. Roundtable participants were also asked what they would do if a friend came to them for help regarding a crisis or of a situation that was, making them feel stressed. Many students reported that they would not immediately tell an adult but would instead prefer to handle the situation themselves. Participants also said that even if they themselves were feeling stressed or overwhelmed, they would talk with their trusted friends as opposed to adults, although some students shared that they had one or two teachers or school staff, such as coaches, they trusted. These students claimed that they were able to build a trusting relationship with these identified adults because the adult was genuinely interested in the well-being of their students. Interestingly, when specifically asked if they would talk with their school guidance counselors about mental health concerns, almost all said they would not. When asked why, students brought up many good points. While conceding that some adults were trained and experienced, the participants noted that they (the adults) do not understand the issue the same way students do. One extremely important idea that many students agreed upon is that teachers and counselors are often required to respond in a certain way with a specific protocol. This often escalates the situation further, something the students do not necessarily want.
 - vi. The Commission considered the Youth Having A Voice RoundTable event to be a huge success with a great deal of important data being collected from the youth participants. The Commission plans on examining the data collected and will use it to generate recommendations to share with County decision makers in order to better the county's policies regarding mental health, public transportation, and school safety.

Appendix L. Nomenclature Issue Paper

City of Rockville
Boards and Commissions Task Force
Issue Paper (August 18, 2019)

Issue: Nomenclature

Background

Rockville lists 31 volunteer organizations on its website in two groups: Boards and Commissions with 25 organizations, and Task Forces and Committees with six. However, none of those four terms: Board, Commission, Task Force, or Committee indicates the nature of the organization's authorities or functions. The terms Board and Commission appear to be used interchangeably in Rockville as well as in other jurisdictions and make no distinction as to whether the organization is empowered to make decisions, make recommendations, play advocacy roles, or something else.

The Task Force chose to examine this issue to determine the feasibility of coming up with a standard nomenclature that would apply to these organizations generally and whether each organization should be assigned a name that would more accurately indicate its function.

Discussion

The first challenge was to find a good acronym for the Boards and Commissions Task Force. BCTF is an obvious choice. The second challenge was to determine a name that would apply to the entire class of volunteer organizations. The term "Boards and Commissions" would exclude "Task Forces and Committees." The acronym "BCTF" would seemingly apply to all four types of volunteer organizations, but it could also be the acronym for this Task Force. Since these organizations are all composed of citizen volunteers, three new terms were suggested that might seem applicable to all of them collectively and each of them individually. The suggested new terms are Volunteer Citizen Organization (VCO), Rockville Volunteer Corps (RVC), and Rockville Volunteer Organization (RVO).

All three terms are new and the City might have a hard time accepting any of them into common use. Although VCO and RVO can be applied to an individual organization and the plural, VCOs and RVOs, can be applied to all volunteer organizations collectively, RVC seems to be more applicable to all volunteer organizations collectively than to an individual organization. It should also be noted that not all members of Rockville's volunteer organizations are, in fact, citizens of Rockville, which suggests the RVO would be the best choice. Alternatively, the BCTF can decide to use the phrase "boards and commissions" to include task forces and committees, since most of its analyses and recommendations deal with boards and commissions. For purposes of this paper, the term RVO will be used for all volunteer organizations unless the BCTF decides otherwise.

The next challenge is to distinguish between a Board, Commission, Task Force, and Committee. It's fairly easy to distinguish between the group of organizations called "Boards and Commissions" and the group called "Task Force and Committees" based on the term and nature of their work. "Boards and Commissions" are generally assigned responsibilities that are long-term, i.e., they last until the group is disbanded. "Task Forces and Committees" are generally assigned time-limited, task-oriented responsibilities and disbanded when the time limit expires, or the assigned task is completed.

However, it's difficult to distinguish between the organizations within each of these two groups. It's a fair question as to whether it's worth trying, but the BCTF chose to pursue this matter.

Although the range of responsibilities of Rockville's RVOs is quite broad, it should be possible to characterize those responsibilities in standard ways, e.g., quasi-judicial decision-making, other decision-making, advisory, advocacy, reactive, pro-active, subject to State and/or Federal requirements or only to City requirements, driven by technical or professional standards, driven by judgment or experience, driven by politics, etc. If we can come up with a standard taxonomy for all RVO authorities and responsibilities, we could assign the RVO a name based on a specific set of characteristics. It's also important to note that the term "advisory" has meaning in a RVO name; i.e. an "Advisory Board or Commission" is clearly different from a plain "Board or Commission."

Special Cases

When the BCTF began its work, each of its members was provided a notebook containing information on twenty-two (22) different "Boards and Commissions." These are shown in bold letters in the table in Appendix A. The Task Force subsequently found information on nine additional RVOs on the City's website. These additional RVOs were presented in two groups: "Boards and Commissions" and "Task Forces and Committees." Five (5) additional RVOs were listed under the first group and four additional RVOs were listed under the second. These additional RVOs brought the total up to thirty-one (31). After its work was well underway, the Task Force learned that the Mayor and Council had created a new Pedestrian Advisory Commission, bringing the total up to thirty-two (32). Information on this new Commission had not been posted on the City's website as of this writing.

When the BCTF began examining each of these RVOs and identifying their key characteristics, we identified some special cases that needed additional discussion. In no particular order, they are:

Rockville Affiliated Organizations

Some of the earliest RVO characteristics examined by the BCTF were related to the transparency requirements of the Open Meetings Act (OMA). It became readily apparent that several RVOs were out of compliance with the OMA, most notably the so-called

"four Rs:" Rockville Economic Development Inc. (REDI); Rockville Seniors Inc.; Rockville Sister City Corporation; and Recreation and Parks Foundation, Inc. None of these organizations post meeting agenda or minutes on the City's website. Over time, it became apparent that these four organizations had not been created by the City and, therefore, were not "public bodies" subject to the OMA. They had established themselves as 501(c)(3) organizations and are governed by their own by-laws, not by the City. Since all the other RVOs were created by the City and are subject to the OMA, it seems appropriate to create a separate group for these four organizations outside of the "Boards and Commissions" group on the City website. Rockville Housing Enterprises is also a 501(c)(3) organization, even though it was also established by a City Resolution. Because it operates much like the other four 501(c)(3) organizations, it's appropriate to include it with this group. Several names have been suggested for this new group, but one option proposed by the BCTF is "Rockville Affiliated Organizations" (RAOs). Another option will be presented in last section on "Decisions." Appendix B shows how the RVOs might be displayed in three groups: Boards and Commissions, Task Forces and Committees, and Rockville Affiliated Organizations. This spreadsheet also displays information on several important characteristics associated with each RVO.

Boards vs Commissions - in general

One way to distinguish among the RVOs designated as Boards and Commissions is to separate those with decision-making authorities from those only authorized to make recommendations. Appendix C is a spreadsheet that groups Boards and Commissions on this basis.

An interesting naming pattern emerges, particularly among the ten (10) Non-decision-making RVOs. Six of these RVOs are called Commissions; one is called a Board; two are called Advisory Boards; and one is called an Advisory Commission. The predominant pattern in this group is that Non-decision-making RVOs are generally called Commissions.

The naming pattern among the ten (11) Decision-making RVOs is almost evenly split between Boards and Commissions, although there's one more Commission than there are Boards.

If we wanted to follow the predominant naming pattern across both groups, we would re-name all Non-decision-making RVOs as Commissions, including and the Animal Matters Board. Advisory Boards have the same general responsibilities as Commissions, but there's no compelling reason to re-name them. This leaves the designation of Board for the Decision-making RVOs. This could be problematic for three of the Commissions required by State law, the Ethics Commission, Historic District Commission, and Planning Commission. State law directs local jurisdictions to establish commissions for all three of those functions. Presumably, Rockville could re-name each of those groups a Board as long as the corresponding City law prescribed that the new Board is assigned the role and responsibilities of the corresponding commission required by State law. It may simply be more trouble than it's worth to attempt this.

Advisory Board vs Advisory Commission

There are two Advisory Boards (the Financial Advisory Board and the Recreation & Parks Advisory Board) and one Advisory Commission (the Human Services Advisory Commission). All of these RVOs have similar roles and responsibilities, although the Financial Advisory Board doesn't play an advocacy role and the others do. The term "advisory" in each of their names signifies that they're Non-decision-making RVOs and there's no advantage to re-naming them to clarify this characteristic.

Retirement Board -- This Board differs from other Boards and Commissions in several important ways:

- It makes decisions that impact the raising and spending of money; e.g., retirement contributions by the City and employees and retirement benefits paid by the City.
- It is both pro-active and reactive.
- It makes other decisions on how retirement funds are to be invested and who manages those investments.
- It advises the Mayor and Council on retirement matters.

Board of Supervisors of Elections -- This Board also differs from other Boards and Commissions in several important ways:

- It's required by State law.
- It's reactive in that its responsibilities are tied to the election cycles.
- It makes other decisions on how and where elections are to be conducted.
- It oversees and manages the election process in the City, including the appointment of election clerks and other employees to assist with elections and election judges to serve each polling place
- It hears appeals of election judge results
- It certifies election results.

Land Use VCOs -- There are eight RVOs that can be fully considered "land use RVOs;" two of which are Task Forces that have completed their work and should be dropped from the overall list: King Farm Task Force and Upper Watts Branch Citizens Task Force. The six remaining "land use RVOs" are:

- Board of Appeals - because its decisions can impact land use decisions made by other "land use RVOs."
- Historic District Commission - because their decisions determine the boundaries of historic districts and the modifications that residents may make to historic structures.
- Planning Commission - because their recommendations impact zoning decisions by the Mayor and Council and they decide whether certain development proposals are consistent with the City's approved land use plan.
- Recreation and Parks Advisory Board -- because their decisions might impact the location and size of City parks.
- REDI -- because its activities might impact the location and speed of development activities within the City.

- Rockville Housing Enterprises -- because their decisions impact the location and nature of low-income housing in the City.

There are two additional RVOs that might be considered "land use RVOs:"

- Bicycle Advisory Committee -- because their recommendations might impact the location of dedicated bike paths or lanes.
- Recreation and Parks Foundation, Inc. -- because their decisions might impact the location and size of City parks.

Finally, there are two RVOs that might be considered partial (P) "land use RVOs:"

- Traffic and Transportation Commission -- because its decisions impact the size and locations of permit parking areas in the City.
- Pedestrian Advisory Commission -- because [I'm not sure what its responsibilities are, but they might impact sidewalk locations and sizes]

The BCTF requires additional information on these last four RVOs to determine whether they should be included among the "land use RVOs."

Annual Reports Required by Law -- There are only six RVOs required by law to file annual reports: the Environment Commission; Historic District Commission; Human Rights Commission; Planning Commission; Recreation and Parks Advisory Board; and Senior Citizens Commission. We are aware of at least one other RVO, the Financial Advisory Board that has chosen to file an annual report.

Nomenclature Decisions that the BCTF Needs to Make

This paper suggests several decisions that the BCTF should make regarding the nomenclature used in our final issue papers and report. It would be good to make them as soon as possible.

1. Should we use the term BCTF as an abbreviation for this task force, or use it to refer to all boards, commissions, task forces, and committees collectively?
 - a. Use it for this task force and find another term for all the groups collectively. **[The BCTF approved this option.]**
 - b. Use it to apply to all these groups collectively and refer to the task force as simple the "Task Force."
2. What's the best generic name for all of Rockville's volunteer citizen organizations to include boards, commissions, task forces, committees, and other volunteer groups serving the City?
 - a. There isn't any. Just call each by its formal name.
 - b. Volunteer Citizen Organizations (VCOs).
 - c. Rockville Volunteer Corps (RVC).
 - d. Rockville Volunteer Organization (RVO). **[The BCTF approved this option.]**
 - e. Boards and Commissions. Just use this general term to refer to boards, commissions, task forces, and committees. Other volunteer groups like

- the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department have their own identities and are understood to be different from boards, commissions, and similar groups.
- f. Other. Does anyone have another suggestion, e.g., BCTF?
3. Should we recommend renaming boards and commissions based on whether they make decisions or just recommendations?
 - a. Yes. The name would give clarity as to whether the organization made decisions or not. However, it would require a significant renaming effort and would likely be opposed by some group, as well as by members of the Mayor and Council.
 - b. No. Keep the existing names, but make sure that the description of each organization on the City's website describes explicitly whether the organization makes decisions and, if so, what kinds. Also, recommend to the Mayor and Council that they consider a new organization's decision-making role in deciding whether to call it a commission or board. **[The BCTF approved this option.]**
 4. What term should we recommend for the group of organizations that don't fit within the group called "Boards and Commissions?"
 - a. Organizations Affiliated with Rockville (OARs). This term was proposed because OARs help move a boat in the desired direction and some BCTF members considered that metaphor attractive.
 - b. Rockville Affiliated Organizations (RAOs). This was the first term suggested and it stuck with some BCTF members. **[The BCTF approved this option.]**
 5. Is it important to designate some RVOs as "Land Use RVOs?"
 - a. Yes. In which case, we need to explain why and the associated consequences.
 - b. No. It won't affect the names or responsibilities of any of the RVOs. **[The BCTF approved this option.]**
 6. Do any of the other considerations under the "Special Cases" section compel the BCTF to make other nomenclature recommendations?
 - a. Yes. What are the specifics?
 - b. No. We're done. **[The BCTF approved this option.]**

Addendum A. Boards and Commissions Evaluation Dashboard

Boards and Commissions Evaluation Dashboard

Group Name	Legal Requirement	Relevance	Effectiveness	Diversity	Operational Performance	Transparency	Key Recommendations to Mayor and Council
	Select: >> None >> City Resolution >> City code	Legend: >> WOW!: outstanding performance >> OK: satisfactory, no major shortfalls >> I: improvement needed					
Example: BCTF	City Resolution	OK	NA	OK	OK	I	1. Too early to evaluate Effectiveness as BCTF is in the process of gathering data for its report to Mayor and Council. 2. Operational Performance is strong. 3. Minutes to be posted to increase Transparency.
Animal Matters Board	City code	I	NA	I	I	NA	Need to revise or dissolve. If the board is maintained, the board needs (i) regular communication established between the City liaison and board members to keep them apprised of ongoing events and (ii) redefine the scope of the board's activities to address current issues.
Board of Appeals	State law	OK	OK	I	OK	OK	1. Meets high performance standards. Goals and objectives of each are met by current infrastructure, processes, and scheduling. 2. For improvement, (i) need mechanism to communicate with other boards and commissions dealing with the same issue/site, (ii) Need to fill vacancies expeditiously, (iii) diversity needs to improve
Board of Supervisors of Elections	State law	OK	OK	I	OK	OK	1. Meets high performance standards. Goals and objectives of each are met by current infrastructure, processes, and scheduling. 2. For improvement, expeditiously fill vacancies with knowledgeable members. Appointments should be made prior to the election cycle and consecutive terms for effective board members should be encouraged. Desired background and experience for members should be documented by City. 3. Diversity needs to improve.
Compensation Commission	City code	OK	OK	I	OK	OK	1. Meets high performance standards. Goals and objectives of each are met by current infrastructure, processes, and scheduling. 2. Need members with appropriate background/experience. Consider documenting necessary experience in City guideline. Prior experience is key. City should issue guidelines describing desired experience. Financial advisory board experience is useful. 3. Recruit members early in order to fill vacancies expeditiously; timeline for appointment of members should meet requirements for issuing recommendations on time for the next election cycle. Encourage consecutive terms for effective members.

Boards and Commissions Evaluation Dashboard

Cultural Arts Commission	City Resolution	OK	OK	I	I	OK	1. improve process for recruiting and appointing new members. 2. Modify code to provide greater clarity on their mission and identify other ways to expand role, funding and visibility within the city. 3. Improve support from Mayor and Council and City, especially city staff liaison.
Environment Commission		OK	I	I	I	I	1. Clarify roles, expectations and processes within commission, subcommittees, and with City. 2. Clarify M&C expectations for the commission. 3. Create annual written plan and align resources to meet written plan.
Ethics Commission	State law and City Code	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	1. Change the Board and Commission Guidelines to require annual work plans for all self-initiated projects and annual reports on the work performed. 2. Change the Board and Commission guidelines to require more detail on the subjects of Advisory Opinions being discussed by the Commission. 3. Try to appoint female to board to fill upcoming vacancy to maintain gender diversity.
Historic District Commission	Federal law, State law, and City Code	OK	OK	OK	I	OK	1. Mayor and Council should explore alternative methods of appointing Commission members to see if the impasse on HDC appointments can be broken in the future. 2. HDC need to find more effective ways to communicate technical aspects of work to Mayor and Council in order to increase understanding of need for qualified board members to fill vacancies.
Financial Advisory Board	Chtr 2, Div. 2	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	Explore strategies for attracting additional qualified, diverse members who want to stay committed for extended periods.

Boards and Commissions Evaluation Dashboard

Human Rights Commission	Chapter 11 Code	OK	OK	OK	I	OK	expand to cover more events and other groups (LGBT and others)
Human Services Advisory Commission	None	I	I	OK	OK	OK	1. Grant program could be more efficient if grants were for 2 years instead of 1 year; otherwise grantees are constantly working on grant applications instead of actual work. 2. Direct communication with Mayor and Council and collaboration with other organizations could improve effectiveness. 3. Commissions role is primarily grant approval, monitoring and admin; could be more relevant with more advocacy work
Landlord/Tenant Affairs Commission	Chtr 18	OK	OK	OK	OK	OK	guided by code and admin law operations
Personnel Appeals Board		OK	NA	NA	NA	NA	Consider automatic appointment of three staff or volunteers from related bodies that is triggered when there is a complaint.
Planning Commission	State Law	WOW!	WOW!	OK	WOW!	OK	The workload of volunteers on this commission should be considered when addressing resources during the budget process.
Rec & Parks Advisory Board		OK	I	I	I	I	Restructure with attention to proliferation of subgroups for improved operations and efficiency. Consider additional resources for the second largest department in City government.

Boards and Commissions Evaluation Dashboard

REDI (Rockville Economic Development Inc.)		OK	I	I	OK	I	The Mayor and Council and REDI board could benefit for annual goal setting and review of opportunities as opposed to the REDI board identifying things that come to their attention through their own networking with the business community.
Retirement Board		OK	WOW!	I	OK	OK	no recommendations
Rockville Housing Enterprises		OK	WOW!	I	OK	OK	A succession plan is needed for the chair of the board and vacancy needs to be filled.
Rockville Seniors, Inc.		OK	OK	I	I	I	More collaboration with Senior Commission and County

Boards and Commissions Evaluation Dashboard

Rockville Sister City Corporation		OK	OK	OK	OK	I	Develop additional Sister Cities with connections to Rockville population.
Senior Citizens Commission	City Resolution	OK	I	OK	I	I	Establish role-clarity between Rockville Seniors, Inc. and Senior Citizens Commission.
Sign Review Board	City Code	I	I	OK	I	I	1. Eliminate the Sign Review Board. Update the City Code, as per staff recommendations. 2. Distribute the SRB's authority to City Staff and the Board of Appeals.
Traffic and Transportation Commission	City Code	OK	OK	OK	I	OK	1. Improve data sharing with the Commission through city, county, and state agencies. 2. Adopt MOUs to grant access to preliminary data.

Boards and Commissions Evaluation Dashboard

Recreation and Parks Foundation Inc.		NA	NA	NA	NA	I	The Foundation's sole purpose is fundraising to augment the Parks and Recreation budget. Efforts have been minimal. Staff from this large department realize the need to rejuvenate the Foundation but resources are limited.
Charter Review Commission							
Asian American Task Force							
Bicycle Advisory Committee							
Pedestrian Advisory Commission							

Addendum B. Chair Interview Notes

Boards & Commissions Task Force

Structured Interview Document

This questionnaire is designed to be used during the interview with current Rockville Board and Commission Chairs. All questions that are applicable should be answered, if possible. Feel free to ask follow-up questions, encourage the interviewees to elaborate, and frame questions in your own words.

Interviewee Name:	Robert Wright <i>DRAFT: need confirmation of accuracy from interviewee</i>
Interviewee Board/Commission:	Financial Advisory Board
Interview Date:	4/3/19
Interviewers:	Ben Parry & John Becker
Introduction: - Briefly explain the Boards & Commission Task Force's (BCTF) mission & purpose - Charged by the Mayor & Council to investigate the effectiveness and purpose of Rockville's current B&C. - Emphasize that this is not an attempt to change any B&C, but an effort to better understand the B&Cs and help the City better operate and organize them. - Thank them for participating and ask if they are ready to begin. - If you are recording, inform the interviewee and <i>ask for their permission before recording.</i>	
1. <u>Relationship with the City</u> - Mayor & Council, Staff, other Boards & Commissions - Do you think your board or commission would benefit from more communication, direction, or acknowledgement by the Mayor & Council? Have you ever met with the Mayor & Council or presented anything to them? - <i>Yes, FAB reviews budget and has specific tasks assigned to them.</i> - <i>Charter clearly states FAB's actions</i> - <i>FAB makes presentation to M&C and City Staff</i> - How does your board or commission interact with city staff? Did you find staff support adequate and helpful? How could relationships between staff and your board or commission be improved? What additional resources would you like the City to provide? - <i>Yes staff support is good</i> - <i>Council liaison participates very well</i>	

- In response to our questionnaire, few board or commission members indicated that they had collaborated with other boards or commissions. How have you and your board or commission interacted with other boards and commissions within the City? Do you think increased collaboration would benefit your board or commission? How do you think collaboration in general could be improved?
- *Functions work well at this time.*

2. Mission & Relevance

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more direction concerning their organization's mission and goals. Would your board or commission benefit from more clear direction from the Mayor and Council?
- *Tasks as outlined in the Charter are clear and provide the appropriate guidance.*
- How would you describe the mission of your board or commission? How does your board or commission's mission address current needs within the City?
- *Advisory on Financial Mgmt. of the City of Rockville.*
- How has your mission/focus changed over time? What improvements, if any, would you make to improve the mission/focus of your board or commission?
Following accepted practices of other governmental entities has helped in the effectiveness of the FAB.

3. Training & Leadership

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more training in leadership and organization. Do you believe such training would benefit the members of your board or commission? What training would best improve your board or commission's activities?
- *Primarily and accounting finance background are the experiences of the FAB Commissioners. Training in Open Meetings Act and the basics of City Charters/Commissions Guidelines.*

- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal orientation for new members. What materials or introduction (if any) does your board or commission provides new members? What types of training or materials do you believe would provide the most benefit to new members?
- Our online questionnaire indicated that most chairs do the lion's share of the work within their board or commission. How does your board or commission delegate tasks and generally divide up the work? E.g., who handles generating agendas, minutes, and/or reports? Do your members generally fully participate in the group's activities? Have you experienced difficulty encouraging participation from other members?
- *10-25 hours per month.*
- *FAB does not meet every month but during budget season it meets several times a month.*
- *Also meets on an as needed basis.*

4. Vacancies & Participation

- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal succession planning for replacing members. How does your board or commission handle succession planning and replacing members?
- *Vacancies typically addressed by word of mouth.*
- *FAB meets prospective candidates and recommends to M&C.*
- Many respondents to our questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the number of vacancies. How have vacancies affected the business/performance of your board or commission?
- *Expanded membership from 5 to 7 members which helps with meeting quorum and progress of FAB.*
- *See above along with word gets out to the Community of Accountants and Gov't/Public/Private Finance professionals.*
- If the respondent has experienced significant vacancies, ask them to elaborate and provide specific examples. E.g., Has your board or commission had difficulties achieving a quorum? How long have these vacancies lasted? Have commissioners served past the end of their appointments? To what do you attribute these vacancies and how would you solve this issue?

There have been a couple of times when it was difficult to find the right people who are interested in th actively participating in the FAB.

-

5. Diversity

- How do you feel your group represents the diversity of the Rockville area? What efforts have you made to include diverse individuals or perspectives in your work?
- *This is not the sexist Commission, so with meetings primarily revolving around the City Budget Cycle membership is comprised of an Asian, 1- woman, 5-males. Of these two are CPAs.*

What thoughts would you have on improving diversity, representation, or outreach within Rockville's Boards and Commissions?

6. Final Thoughts

- What else would you like to tell us about your work or your experience?
- Do you have any suggestions for any new boards or commissions to fill needs of the Rockville community?
None at this time.
- What recommendations do you have for improving the boards and commissions system?

7. Interviewer Notes (Miscellaneous) - Include any additional observations, insights, or comments on

the interview.

Boards & Commissions Task Force

Structured Interview Document

This questionnaire is designed to be used during the interview with current Rockville Board and Commission Chairs. All questions that are applicable should be answered, if possible. Feel free to ask follow-up questions, encourage the interviewees to elaborate, and frame questions in your own words.

Interviewee Name:	Courtney Proctor: <u>DRAFT: requires review of interviewee for accuracy</u>
Interviewee Board/Commission:	Human Rights Commission
Interview Date:	4/3/19
Interviewers:	John Becker
Introduction: - Briefly explain the Boards & Commission Task Force's (BCTF) mission & purpose - Charged by the Mayor & Council to investigate the effectiveness and purpose of Rockville's current B&C. - Emphasize that this is not an attempt to change any B&C, but an effort to better understand the B&Cs and help the City better operate and organize them. - Thank them for participating and ask if they are ready to begin. - If you are recording, inform the interviewee and <i>ask for their permission before recording.</i>	
1. <u>Relationship with the City</u> - Mayor & Council, Staff, other Boards & Commissions - Do you think your board or commission would benefit from more communication, direction, or acknowledgement by the Mayor & Council? Have you ever met with the Mayor & Council or presented anything to them? - <i>More involvement from Mayor & Council as currently no Council representative attends HRC meetings and HRC needs support and advise from M&C.</i> - <i>They have not provided any annual report to M&C, nor has HRC ever met with M&C as a whole</i> - <i>More input into the budget process for HRC activities. MLK Day Celebration funds very limited as to program needs. No funds available for other HRC events and expansion of programs.</i> - How does your board or commission interact with city staff? Did you find staff support adequate and helpful? How could relationships between staff and your board or commission be improved? What additional resources would you like the City to provide? - <i>Need more staff support regarding budget and advancing HRC efforts and possible new initiatives.</i> - <i>No HRC input regarding social media and web page content.</i> - <i>Need HRC paraphernalia</i>	

- In response to our questionnaire, few board or commission members indicated that they had collaborated with other boards or commissions. How have you and your board or commission interacted with other boards and commissions within the City? Do you think increased collaboration would benefit your board or commission? How do you think collaboration in general could be improved?
- *They tried to reach out to the Cultural Arts Commission but no response. However an annual greet/meet with all commissions is suggested.*
- *Need more communication/collaboration efforts with other Commissions and staff*

2. Mission & Relevance

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more direction concerning their organization's mission and goals. Would your board or commission benefit from more clear direction from the Mayor and Council?
- *Mission is established but needs to expand from the era when HRC was established.*

How would you describe the mission of your board or commission? How does your board or commission's mission address current needs within the City?

Needs to expand beyond the traditional to the current period where more citizens and groups needs are addressed by HRC

-
- How has your mission/focus changed over time? What improvements, if any, would you make to improve the mission/focus of your board or commission?
See above.

3. Training & Leadership

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more training in leadership and organization. Do you believe such training would benefit the members of your board or commission? What training would best improve your board or commission's activities?
- *Review of duties/responsibilities and a legal requirement are desired as there is no formal training*

- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal orientation for new members. What materials or introduction (if any) does your board or commission provides new members? What types of training or materials do you believe would provide the most benefit to new members?

- *City Charter for the HRC and other appointed Boards/Commissions/Task Force guidelines.*

Our online questionnaire indicated that most chairs do the lion's share of the work within their board or commission. How does your board or commission delegate tasks and generally divide up the work? E.g., who handles generating agendas, minutes, and/or reports? Do your members generally fully participate in the group's activities? Have you experienced difficulty encouraging participation from other members?

10-15 hours per month with significantly more depending on events that take place

4. Vacancies & Participation

- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal succession planning for replacing members. How does your board or commission handle succession planning and replacing members?
- *Very diverse and no problem with participation.*
- *Desire having a say on membership appointments by reviewing and interviewing prospects.*
- *Appointment process is slow. Qualified prospects keep getting overlooked.*
- *Volunteers that have put in a lot of time are passed over when it comes to appointment to HRC*
- Many respondents to our questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the number of vacancies. How have vacancies affected the business/performance of your board or commission?
- *None*
- If the respondent has experienced significant vacancies, ask them to elaborate and provide specific examples. *E.g.,* Has your board or commission had difficulties achieving a quorum? How long have these vacancies lasted? Have commissioners served past the end of their appointments? To what do you attribute these vacancies and how would you solve this issue?
- *None*

5. Diversity

- How do you feel your group represents the diversity of the Rockville area? What efforts have you

made to include diverse individuals or perspectives in your work?

- *Yes Women, different religions, Christian, Older, College Student, Asian, etc.*

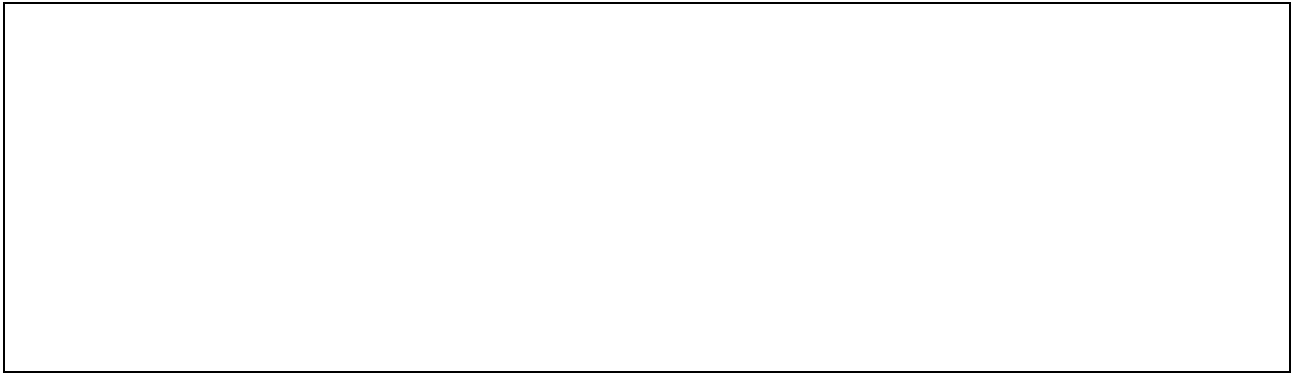
What thoughts would you have on improving diversity, representation, or outreach within Rockville's Boards and Commissions?

- *Schedule annual get together of Boards, Commissions, Task Forces along with updates on specific Commissions activities*

6. Final Thoughts

- What else would you like to tell us about your work or your experience?
Enjoy it, but further advancement and brining the HRC into the current environment is needed.
- Do you have any suggestions for any new boards or commissions to fill needs of the Rockville community?
- What recommendations do you have for improving the boards and commissions system?

7. Interviewer Notes (Miscellaneous) - Include any additional observations, insights, or comments on the interview.



Boards & Commissions Task Force

Structured Interview Document

This questionnaire is designed to be used during the interview with current Rockville Board and Commission Chairs. All questions that are applicable should be answered, if possible. Feel free to ask follow-up questions, encourage the interviewees to elaborate, and frame questions in your own words.

Interviewee Name:	Ciriaco Gonzales <i><u>DRAFT: need confirmation of interviewee</u></i>
Interviewee Board/Commission:	Human Services Advisory Commission
Interview Date:	4/3/19
Interviewers:	Ben Parry & John Becker
Introduction:	
- Briefly explain the Boards & Commission Task Force's (BCTF) mission & purpose - Charged by the Mayor & Council to investigate the effectiveness and purpose of Rockville's current B&C. - Emphasize that this is not an attempt to change any B&C, but an effort to better understand the B&Cs and help the City better operate and organize them. - Thank them for participating and ask if they are ready to begin. - If you are recording, inform the interviewee and <i>ask for their permission before recording.</i>	
1. <u>Relationship with the City</u> - Mayor & Council, Staff, other Boards & Commissions - Do you think your board or commission would benefit from more communication, direction, or acknowledgement by the Mayor & Council? Have you ever met with the Mayor & Council or presented anything to them? - <i>Need more sharing of info with M&C</i> - <i>Grant programs should be for two year periods as one year period is not sufficient to maintain program integrity/accomplishments as it's a never ending grant application cycle while grantee staff has no employment security.</i> - How does your board or commission interact with city staff? Did you find staff support adequate and helpful? How could relationships between staff and your board or commission be improved? What additional resources would you like the City to provide? - <i>HSAB reviews grant applications along with City Staff. Commission offers recommendations to City as part of City's approval process.</i> - <i>Sometimes there were problems with City Staff on the review process, but it is working now..</i> - <i>HSAB meets during budget season and conducts once a year inspection of grant awardees.</i> - <i>HSAB strongly suggest one additional staff position created to handle work load.</i>	

-

- In response to our questionnaire, few board or commission members indicated that they had collaborated with other boards or commissions. How have you and your board or commission interacted with other boards and commissions within the City? Do you think increased collaboration would benefit your board or commission? How do you think collaboration in general could be improved?

- *There is some collaboration w/other Commissions in the review process.*

Has reached out to Senior Citizens and Human Rights but no specific action other than info sharing.

2. Mission & Relevance

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more direction concerning their organization's mission and goals. Would your board or commission benefit from more clear direction from the Mayor and Council?
- *Advocate more direct communication and action to M&C and reduce some control by Staff*
- How would you describe the mission of your board or commission? How does your board or commission's mission address current needs within the City?
- *Caregivers Organizations sometimes provide more advocacy than HSAB.*
- *HSAB becoming more of an advocate.*
- How has your mission/focus changed over time? What improvements, if any, would you make to improve the mission/focus of your board or commission?

3. Training & Leadership

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more training in leadership and organization. Do you believe such training would benefit the members of your board or commission? What training would best improve your board or commission's activities?
- *How to conduct meetings, proper procedure and Robert's Rules of Order.*

- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal orientation for new members. What materials or introduction (if any) does your board or commission provides new members? What types of training or materials do you believe would provide the most benefit to new members?
- *Staff provides info/training to new HSAB members, but limited to basic Charter and Code.*

- Our online questionnaire indicated that most chairs do the lion's share of the work within their board or commission. How does your board or commission delegate tasks and generally divide up the work? E.g., who handles generating agendas, minutes, and/or reports? Do your members generally fully participate in the group's activities? Have you experienced difficulty encouraging participation from other members?
- *Chair handles administrative with staff.*
- *Sometimes there have been participation issues but not monumental.*

4. Vacancies & Participation

- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal succession planning for replacing members. How does your board or commission handle succession planning and replacing members?
- *10 members of HSAB.*
- *Good responses when vacancies occur.*
- *Mayor and council make appointments*

- Many respondents to our questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the number of vacancies. How have vacancies affected the business/performance of your board or commission?
- *Currently this is not an issue.*

- *If the respondent has experienced significant vacancies, ask them to elaborate and provide specific examples. E.g., Has your board or commission had difficulties achieving a quorum? How long have these vacancies lasted? Have commissioners served past the end of their appointments? To what do you attribute these vacancies and how would you solve this issue?*

- *Comprised of Women and Men, 2 African Americans, 1 Asian, 1 Latino, 1 Nurse, 1 lawyer, age range is 30-60, with Ciriaco the oldest.*

5. Diversity

- How do you feel your group represents the diversity of the Rockville area? What efforts have you made to include diverse individuals or perspectives in your work?
- What thoughts would you have on improving diversity, representation, or outreach within Rockville's Boards and Commissions?

6. Final Thoughts

- What else would you like to tell us about your work or your experience?
- Do you have any suggestions for any new boards or commissions to fill needs of the Rockville community?
- What recommendations do you have for improving the boards and commissions system?

7. Interviewer Notes (Miscellaneous) - Include any additional observations, insights, or comments on the interview.

Phone Interview by Anita Neal Powell and Report reviewed by Anne Goodman
Chair, Karen Becker, Chair, Animal Matters Board
June 4, 2019, approximately 4:00PM-5:00PM

Commissioners Anne Goodman and Anita Neal Powell have been trying to reach out to Chair, Karen Becker, for approximately 3 months. We were able to finally catch up with her this month. Anita met with Chair, Becker, via telephone and had a very productive meeting. Anne and Anita met to discuss the outcome of the meeting.

1. **Relationship with the City and other Boards and Commissions:** There are few meetings and interactions with the City. There are no meetings held with others boards and commissions. The board usually meet with the citizens when there are complaints. Meetings with City and Boards and Commissions would be helpful basically to share information and to hear other viewpoints. The Environment Commission would be a good fit for the Animal Matters Board.
2. **Mission and Relevance:** The board could benefit by reading the policies; understanding the structures and background information presented in public hearings and in meetings.
3. **Training and Leadership:** Board members Read the bylaws, background and this allows for those interested in applying for the board to be more prepared for the position and efficient in serving on the board. Meetings are not held often, only when a complaint or an issue arises and decisions must be made. For example, there were chickens and deer issues within the city, and neighbors were complaining about the noise and the number of wild deer in their communities. The chicken issue was brought before the board. Minutes, agendas and/or reports are provided by the Police Officer who serves as staff liaison to the Animal Matters Board. The benefit would to hold phone conferences and send emails.
4. **Vacancies and Participation:** Currently there are 7 members on the Board. Members of the board have specialized skills. Members participates when ad-hoc or public meetings are scheduled. This board may meet quarterly. It only depends of the need for the meeting. It is not clear if anyone has served past their terms. However, the Chair was appointed by Mayor to serve as Chair of the Board. Because this board really needs background and specialized skillsets it may be more difficult to appoint members to the Board without the skillsets needed (public health, environment, animals, etc.)
5. **Diversity:** Currently there are 5 white females and 2 white males. The board does not represent the City in its diversity.
6. **Final Thoughts:** More meetings would be great; however they must relate to issues related to animals; Meeting and communicating with other Boards and Commission would be great; Meeting with Mayor and Council and other City staff would work outside of the Mayor and Council meetings to discuss an issues or to bring items to the tables for a vote. A deer issue study would be something that could be looked into in the future. Stray cats and wildlife are other issues to look into or discuss at meetings. Staff liaison should convene more meetings.

Anita Neal Powell and Anne Goodman
Rockville Boards and Commissions Task Force
June 15, 2019

Notes from interview with Alan Frankle, Chair, Board of Appeals (BoA)

10 am, March 25, 2019

751 Rockville Pike, #7 (Mr. Frankle's office)

Interviewers: Anne Goodman, Anita Neal Powell

Mr. Frankle has been on the board for 2-3 years, and he loves it. Their responsibilities are clear, being limited to appeals of zoning variances for homeowners and special exceptions. He thinks the group is very effective, and the number of members is appropriate. There are 3 permanent positions and 1 alternate. Currently there are three white males on the board.

The group has no control over membership. The Mayor nominates at her discretion based on a submitted expression of interest. Council then votes.

The group meets monthly for the most part, unless there is no appeal to review. That schedule appears to work.

He is chair because of the rotation schedule described in the by-laws. No one else has wanted to assume the chair, so he has remained in it for a couple of years. He sees the board's function as a vehicle to help people.

He was invited to apply for the BoA by the Mayor. He didn't have much of a background in land use or zoning except what he learned in law school. Members attend orientation sessions given by staff for training. He doesn't think external training would be helpful.

Decisions are made based on 4 designated criteria (1) zoning, (2) special exceptions, (3) variance (set-back) and (4) land use. Vacancies can be a problem. Since he has been on, there has been a one-person vacancy on more than one occasion. This has made achieving a quorum difficult.

He considers the on-line training on the open meetings act to be inadequate. It is too easy to pass. However, he doesn't think outside training would be useful for this board.

He was critical of the proposal to move Sign Review Board functions to the BoA. He thinks the Sign Review Board should be maintained. A revision of the sign review ordinance is going through the system right now. BoA has reviewed the revisions. He disagrees with several provisions in the current revisions under review, including those on election signs, pole signs, "taking" of property, sunset provisions, and signs posted in yards.

Anne Goodman, one of the interviewers, noted that the Planning Commission (PC) was scheduled to discuss these revisions in its meeting later the same week as the interview. PC members had not received any input from either the BoA or the Sign Review Board, which has also reviewed the ordinance revisions. This is an example of the lack of communication among Boards and Commissions. All 3 discussants agreed that this lack needs to be addressed. Formation of a focus group with representation from various boards and commissions, with meetings on a fairly regular basis, was discussed as a possible way to address the issue. This may become a recommendation for a new board or commission.

Mr. Frankle feels no need to interact with Mayor and Council. In fact, he stated that BoA should be totally independent of them. He did not think Mayor and Council members should meet independently with developers.

He was extremely complimentary of staff with one exception. He felt that certain decisions have been made because staff rendered a decision regarding child safety by adhering strictly to the rules. He feels that, in certain situations, creativity is needed, particularly when safety is an issue.

There is no ethnic or racial diversity on the group at this time. He thinks Mayor and Council should work harder to involve the community in filling vacancies in Boards and Commissions.

He expressed the opinion that the Mayor and Council don't care about neighborhoods west of 270. Of note is that Anne Goodman heard the same sentiment from the President of the Twinbrook Citizens Association the preceding Friday. She has also heard the complaint from residents in East Rockville. She heard it at Community Forum on March 25, from a Lincoln Park resident. It appears to be a prevailing feeling that the Mayor and Council might want to try to address.

Take-home lessons:

- There is a need to fill vacancies expeditiously so that there can be a quorum for decision-making
- Boards and Commissions need to communicate. We may need to recommend a way for that to happen, possibly a focus group/commission or some other mechanism.
- Structure and function of BoA is adequate; there is no need to interact with Mayor and Council
- He thinks staff needs more flexibility when it comes to considerations of safety.
- He saw no need for additional training.
- He had no specific recommendations about increasing diversity on the board

Boards & Commissions Task Force

Structured Interview Document

This questionnaire is designed to be used during the interview with current Rockville Board and Commission Chairs. All questions that are applicable should be answered, if possible. Feel free to ask follow-up questions, encourage the interviewees to elaborate, and frame questions in your own words.

Interviewee Name:	ANNE Herbster
Interviewee Board/Commission:	Senior Citizens Commission
Interview Date:	04/2/2019
Interviewers:	James Hedrick

Introduction:

- Briefly explain the Boards & Commission Task Force's (BCTF) mission & purpose
 - Charged by the Mayor & Council to investigate the effectiveness and purpose of Rockville's current B&C.
 - Emphasize that this is not an attempt to change any B&C, but an effort to better understand the B&Cs and help the City better operate and organize them.
 - Thank them for participating and ask if they are ready to begin.
 - If you are recording, inform the interviewee and *ask for their permission before recording.*

1. Relationship with the City - Mayor & Council, Staff, other Boards & Commissions

- Do you think your board or commission would benefit from more communication, direction, or acknowledgement by the Mayor & Council? Have you ever met with the Mayor & Council or presented anything to them?
 - Presented a proposal to lower age from 60-55
 - Alexis DeAngelo - good relationship, handle lots of details (room, minutes, etc.), 3-4 of Senior Center staff participate, *very engaged with staff*
 - M&C vs. Commission-driven
 - Don't think the City does much to help us fill vacancies
 - Do more promotion about commission, passionate about seniors,
 - More outreach to Seniors, more outreach to residents
 - *Communication, communication, Communication*
 - Diversity
 - Pakistani, african-american, two white
 - Lack of generational diversity, people with parents who are seniors

- City: *Like them to help us identify people, access to applications and interview with commissions,*
- Lack of onboarding, never told about Maryland OMA,
- How does your board or commission interact with city staff? Did you find staff support adequate and helpful? How could relationships between staff and your board or commission be improved? What additional resources would you like the City to provide?
 - Jan (missed FEB) & March
 - Long-term chair, advocacy issues, law
 - Active in Maryland Seniors group
 - Anne - joined 2 years ago,
 - Didn't hear for about 4 months
 - Co-chair "Bruce" reached out
 - "If I'm going to volunteer, I want to do something, not just sit in meetings."
 - Meet, Senior Center staff, talked
 - "What's our mission?"
 - Average age ~75-ish
 - Frustration of inactivity, "Not really doing anything"
 - Use of the senior center
 - Lower the age of use of the senior center (60->55)
 - Someone else took it to M&C (former Chair)
 - RSI rejected it - RSI is more powerful than the Senior Citizen Commission
 - Should have sold RSI
 - Overlapping jurisdictions
 - Communication and Senior Center offerings
 - Mission/vision/value proposition.
 - Alexis DeAngelo - good relationship, handle lots of details (room, minutes, etc.), 3-4 of Senior Center staff participate, very engaged with staff
 - Meet 3rd TH at 1:30 pm.
 - Change to 10-10:30am, changing
- In response to our questionnaire, few board or commission members indicated that they had collaborated with other boards or commissions. How have you and your board or commission interacted with other boards and commissions within the City? Do you think increased collaboration would benefit your board or commission? How do you think collaboration in general could be improved?

- Collaboration (specifically with RSI) - role clarity b/t Senior Citizens Commission and RSI
 - Who trumps who? Better working relationships.
 - Someone from Senior Citizens Commission is also on RSI. Anne (SCC Chair) to reach out. Increased Collaboration
 - *Lack of clarity*, do we have to be unified? Who trumps who? More discussion.
 - RSI - 501c3 with a mission to support the Senior Center.

2. Mission & Relevance

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more direction concerning their organization's mission and goals. Would your board or commission benefit from more clear direction from the Mayor and Council?
 - primary focus - has been Senior Center, need a broad, more Senior-related approach.
 - Came on as new member (Anne H.), spurred the discussion of mission
 - Mission & Vision Statement, Goals/Vision/Priority
 - Reviewed older docs
 - Brainstorming, what you thought defines the org?
 - Post-It words and voting
 - First for mission, then for priorities
 - Narrowed "40 words" to "4 areas"
 - Communications, services, legislative, "senior center"
 - A move to expanding the Commission's mission and activities
 - An idiosyncratic approach (mostly just Anne's influence)
- How would you describe the mission of your board or commission? How does your board or commission's mission address current needs within the City?
- How has your mission/focus changed over time? What improvements, if any, would you make to improve the mission/focus of your board or commission?

3. Training & Leadership

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more training in leadership and organization. Do you believe such training would benefit the members of your board or commission? What training would best improve your board or commission's activities?
 - Help in identifying individuals to join Commission (~15k in Rockville are Seniors)
 - Less training and leadership for Commission
 - Should be "voice of the Senior", "in front of Mayor & Council"
 - "It's not a coffee clutch"
- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal orientation for new members. What materials or introduction (if any) does your board or commission provide new members? What types of training or materials do you believe would provide the most benefit to new members?
 - No formal orientation.
- Our online questionnaire indicated that most chairs do the lion's share of the work within their board or commission. How does your board or commission delegate tasks and generally divide up the work? E.g., who handles generating agendas, minutes, and/or reports? Do your members generally fully participate in the group's activities? Have you experienced difficulty encouraging participation from other members?
 - Good working relationship with other members, actively.

4. Vacancies & Participation

- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal succession planning for replacing members. How does your board or commission handle succession planning and replacing members?
 - People are "parachuted in" without discussion with the Commission
- Many respondents to our questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the number of vacancies. How have vacancies affected the business/performance of your board or commission?

- Vacancy filled by individual with no prior experience & an unrealistic idea of what the Commission can do. - - <i>If the respondent has experienced significant vacancies, ask them to elaborate and provide specific examples. E.g., Has your board or commission had difficulties achieving a quorum? How long have these vacancies lasted? Have commissioners served past the end of their appointments? To what do you attribute these vacancies and how would you solve this issue?</i>
5. <u>Diversity</u> - How do you feel your group represents the diversity of the Rockville area? What efforts have you made to include diverse individuals or perspectives in your work? - Generational diversity. More younger folks, with older parents. - What thoughts would you have on improving diversity, representation, or outreach within Rockville's Boards and Commissions?
6. <u>Final Thoughts</u> - What else would you like to tell us about your work or your experience? - <i>Clear Onboarding</i> - City's responsibility, set expectations for new folks. - Do you have any suggestions for any new boards or commissions to fill needs of the Rockville community? - A commission around education, county has such a strong influence, an opportunity to have a larger role with county in education. - What recommendations do you have for improving the boards and commissions system? -

7. Interviewer Notes (Miscellaneous) - Include any additional observations, insights, or comments on the interview.

- Rejected a nominee from the City because of his attitude and threatened to resign.
- Lack of clear purpose.
- New blood and turnover.
- Meet regularly, take minutes, follow Roberts Rules, minutes are supposed to be posted, experiment with changing our time, 8:30am - no shuttle service - change time.
- Want to make the commission have a broader, deeper reach.
- Maybe we should be an ongoing "Task Force"
- What does the *City* want the Senior Citizens Commission to do?
 - i. A true advisory/advocacy board needs a particular type of people.
- Question for M&C: What should your role as establishing organization be?
 - i. Clear reporting, regular meeting,
- Commission changing under new chair.

Boards and Commissions Task Force (BCTF)
Interview Notes

Interview with Gene Thirolf – Chair, Ethics Commission

Conducted by Anne Herbst and Jack Kelly for BCTF on March 12, 2019 at Gene's home. [NOTE: These notes include answers to a few follow-up questions that were asked subsequent to the interview.]

We began the meeting by giving Gene a copy of the Revised BCTF Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives from 12-6-18.

Relationship with the City

Gene stated that the Ethics Commission was created in 2015 in response to a State law requiring all Maryland cities to have an Ethics Ordinance and an Ethics Commission. The State law requires each city's Ethics Commission to certify annually to the State that the city is in compliance with State law. The Commission wrote the City's Ethics Ordinance that was adopted by the Mayor and Council and developed its own rules and procedures as well as forms, e.g., a Financial Disclosure Form, required to carry out the Ethics Ordinance. The Commission has a good relationship with City staff, in particular with Eliot Schaefer, their staff liaison from the City Attorney's Office.

Gene has been the Chair of the Commission since it was created.

The main relationships that the Commission has with other City organizations were with the Historic District Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Election Supervisors. All of their members are required to fill out Financial Disclosure Forms to avoid any conflicts of interest. [NOTE: Gene said that the Ethics Commission doesn't review the Financial Disclosure Forms, because the original Ethics Ordinance didn't give it the responsibility or authority to do so. This could be a **good follow-up topic for the BCTF** to consider.]

Mission & Relevance

Because State law requires it and specifies its responsibilities, the Commission doesn't require direction from the Mayor and Council. It's pretty independent and meets almost monthly. The bulk of the Commission's time is devoted to reviewing proposed changes to the Ethics Ordinance, its rules and procedures, and related forms, and considering complaints and requests for Advisory Opinions. The Commission's responsibilities include developing and maintaining materials for ethics training and the Commission has done this. However, the Commission hasn't delivered any ethics training yet. The City doesn't have an on-line staff training capability that the Commission could use to deliver ethics training. He asked the Mayor and Council for funds to do this and was provided \$15,000, but this wasn't nearly enough to do the job. Gene doesn't feel that ethics training is a big priority for the City and acknowledged that the Commission hasn't

pushed very hard for this either. Gene noted that different job types required different kinds of ethics training. [NOTE: This could be another issue deserving **BCTF follow-up.**]

Training & Leadership

All five members of the Commission are lawyers and don't require additional training or special orientation when they join the Commission. Gene himself was an ethics lawyer with the federal Department of Justice. The membership of the Commission has remained the same since the Commission was formed, with one exception. Kevin Jenkins replaced Kathleen Conway when she left the Commission. The Commission functions as a group. Tasks aren't delegated to individual members. The staff liaison generates agendas and minutes.

Vacancies & Participation

The Commission didn't have a problem replacing the one member who resigned, but the position was vacant for about 6 months, before it was filled. There's currently one member (Hurwitz) who's serving an expired term. She hasn't asked to be re-appointed, but is permitted to continue to serve until a replacement is confirmed.

Diversity

One of the five members is African-American, another is Hispanic, and one of the five is a woman. Gene believes that the Mayor and Council was particularly interested in assuring the diversity of this group (because of its mission – my comment, not Gene's).

Final Thoughts and Suggestions

Gene would like to see a better way to deliver ethics training and a random way of testing the effectiveness of that training. He also thinks it would be helpful if the City provided generalized training to all of its Boards and Commissions on topics including ethics, the Open Meetings Act, and how to interact with the Mayor and Council. [NOTE: potential for **BCTF follow-up.**]

Gene is concerned about the City's lack of awareness about the circumstances and needs of its senior population. He and Anne (who chairs the City's Senior Citizens Commission) discussed this issue and the fact that almost 28% of the City's population is over 55 years old. Gene recommended that the City conduct a professional survey of the City's senior population to determine the circumstances and needs of that population. He also said he would be happy to argue for that before the Mayor and Council.

When asked about possible need for new Boards and Commissions, Gene mentioned an Education Commission and said the City used to have one, but it was discontinued about 20 years ago. He doesn't know why it was discontinued. He never served on it, but a

neighbor of his (Paul ?) did. He pointed out a potential link between the County schools and the City's Recreation and Parks Department.

Finally, Gene pointed out that the list of applicants for the recent Council vacancy might be reviewed for candidates to invite to fill certain Board or Commission vacancies, since they indicated interest in serving the City.

DRAFT

Boards and Commissions Task Force (BCTF)
Interview Notes

Interview with Karen Askin – Chair, Cultural Arts Commission

There were two interviews conducted with Karen. The first was conducted by Jack Kelly on April 12, 2019. The second was conducted by Anne Herbster and Jack Kelly on April 17, 2019. Both were conducted at Dawson's Market in Rockville Town Center. [NOTE: These notes include answers to a few follow-up questions that were asked subsequent to the interview.]

Mr. Kelly began the first interview by giving Karen a copy of the Revised BCTF Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives from 12-6-18.

Karen's General Background (from first interview)

Karen's first career was as a Tax Attorney for 3 – 4 years with the IRS during the Reagan Administration. After she left the IRS to become a full-time mom, she started a part-time catering job and became very active in the Wooten HS PTA until her last daughter graduated.

She's love art since she was a kid. She decided to take an art welding course at the Corcoran, but got kicked out by the teacher because of safety concerns. Because she couldn't get a refund, she signed up for the only other open course, ceramics. She fell in love with working with clay and began classes at Rockville Arts Place. She became a Resident Artist there and very active in that organization. When Visarts was created to replace Rockville Arts Place, she clashed with the new Director and left.

Six years ago (2013?), Karen rejoined Visarts as a Resident Artist. At that time, Visarts almost imploded. The developer (name?) put up \$250,000 of its own money to bail it out. Karen was asked to help wind down Visarts, but she and others decided that they could make it work and she joined the staff (in what capacity?).

Karen believes that Visarts is now a viable organization, although it still struggles for money. They now have a good relationship with the City's Recreation and Parks Department. She believes her strength is in building community relationships.

Karen's Background with Cultural Arts Commission (CAC)

2 ½ to 3 years ago, the Mayor (Bridget Newton) approached Karen about joining the Cultural Arts Commission (CAC). Several years prior to Karen joining the CAC, a man named John Moser (generally known as "the Colonel") had been the Chair of the CAC for many years. He was very well connected to the political structure of Rockville and left the CAC about 5 years ago. Karen said that "the Colonel" was mainly interested in the Art in Public Places role of the CAC as well as Glenview Mansion. He wasn't so

interested in community arts organizations that weren't connected to the F Scott Fitzgerald Theater or Glenview Mansion.

After Karen joined the CAC, the CAC created a new Sub-committee to revisit its mission. Karen felt that the old CAC Charter focused on Glenview Mansion, although the current City Code doesn't mention it explicitly.

Karen has been Chair of the CAC since Feb. 2018. Unlike most Rockville Commissions, which elect their own Chairs, the Mayor appoints the Chair of the CAC. Karen said that she was the only member of the CAC that expressed interest in being the Chair after the previous Chair left.

CAC Activities

The CAC has two sub-committees: the Art in Public Places Sub-Committee, and the Cultural and Arts Organizations Sub-Committee.

In 2011, the City commissioned a Cultural Arts Plan. Karen thinks that this plan was awful. Whomever the Consultant interviewed was considered stakeholders even though there might have been other actual stakeholders who weren't interviewed. [Confirm this with Karen.] When the Cultural and Arts Organizations Sub-Committee was established, it reviewed the plan and didn't consider it forward-thinking enough.

There is currently a study underway that is looking at Rockville as an Arts Destination and considering alternate organizational placements for the arts support functions.

Karen delegates the work of the CAC to the Chairs and members of her two sub-committees. They do the actual work of the Commission. Jesse and Patricia share the lead of the Cultural and Arts Organizations Sub-Committee.

Support from City Staff

Andy Lett, a Recreation Superintendent in the Recreation and Parks Department, is the City Staff Liaison to the CAC. According to CAC minutes, there is at least one other Rec & Parks staffer, Laura Creech, who attends each meeting with him and is responsible for taking minutes. She was out sick for the meeting I attended on April 10, 2019. Betty Wisda, another Rec & Parks staffer, often attends CAC meetings, too. She was the Staff Liaison prior to Andy.

Karen feels that art and culture are just a tiny part of Andy's overall portfolio of responsibilities. She feels that he has so many other responsibilities with his job that he's simply overworked. Andy also has to worry about meeting the City's cost recovery goals. She also believes that the City's Art and Culture programs should have greater prominence in the City government and mentioned several organizational arrangements in nearby jurisdictions, e.g., Gaithersburg and Arlington County. [double check]

Relationship with the Mayor and Council

Karen feels like the CAC has a good relationship with the Mayor and Council and that she feels comfortable in going before them to make recommendations in meetings as well as contacting them informally, if needed. She has good relationships with both Bridget Newton (Mayor) and Mark Pierzchala, the CAC's M&C Liaison. She said that Mark attends most CAC meetings and is very supportive of the Commission's work. Because the City decided to bail out Dawson's Market this past year, money was very tight and the City Manager decided not to fill a vacant position at Glenview Mansion so that he could fund a Police position instead. Karen testified that the CAC was in favor of restoring that position. [find out what happened]

Vacancies

Not all members attend all meetings, but vacancies haven't been a problem. Three terms expire later this year (2019).

Karen believes that the residency requirements for the CAC are too restrictive. She favors expanding the pool of potential CAC members beyond Rockville residents to people who work in the City as well as people who own property in the City. These people are also stakeholders in the City's arts and culture programs.

Karen believes that the current process for filling vacancies is not transparent enough. She's also unclear as to how pro-active Commissioners can be in recruiting others to apply for Commission vacancies. She has never been asked to recruit proactively. She said she was asked by Mayor Newton to apply to be on the Commission, and that the Commission voted as a body to support the nomination of another candidate. The Mayor was furious with what she saw as a challenge to her authority to nominate new CAC members. This may have been a contributing factor in the Mayor sending word to City staff liaisons that their Boards and Commissions were no longer permitted to make recommendations on new B&C nominations.

Training

Karen thinks that leadership training for Board Chairs might be a good idea, but she hasn't had any problems in running CAC meetings (1) because there's not a lot of internal dissention among the CAC members, and (2) she has a lot of experience in running meeting from her time on the Wooten HS PTA.

The CAC doesn't have formal orientation materials but "unofficial minutes" of CAC meetings might be useful for that purpose. Because the City Attorney's Office won't permit the CAC to post detailed minutes (fear of potential litigation), the CAC began the practice of having one of its members take "unofficial minutes" that aren't posted to the City's website. The CAC feels this is important to document the substance of its discussions and decisions.

We also discussed the idea of having performance appraisals for Commissioners. According to Karen, some Commissioners don't contribute much to meetings or ideas. She'd like a way to replace non-contributing members with more productive ones.

Diversity

The CAC has a diversity problem. There is only one young African American woman on the Commission and no other minorities. There was recently a young Asian American man on the CAC, but he had to resign when his wife got a new job that required him to stay at home with the children more.

Anne and I mentioned that this problem was common to all Bs&Cs and that a City-wide solution needed to be sought. Karen suggested reaching out to the Asian-Pacific Task Force to solicit prospective B&C volunteers from that community and to the Human Rights Commission to solicit prospective volunteers from the LBGTQ community. We also need a more coordinated way of reaching out to the African American and Hispanic communities.

Miscellaneous Comments

Karen was critical of the lack of information on the City's website about the location and history of the many pieces of public art the City has purchased or sponsored over the years. [NOTE: This should be a **BCTF recommendation**.]

Karen wishes the CAC had its own small budget. She noted that the CAC used to receive a small grant from the Maryland Arts Council, but that this money now goes directly to the Rec. & Parks Dept.

Karen and some of the Commissioners believe that the City Code regarding the CAC is out of date and have proposed revised language that the CAC voted to send to the Mayor and Council.

Patricia Dubroff suggested that the CAC host a social event, separate from a business meeting, for the Commissioners to get to know one another better.

Karen thinks that the City lacks strategic thinking.

Interview with Drew Powell

Chair of Rockville Sister Cities, Inc.

March 25, 2019

Mr. Powell expressed a great deal of pride and satisfaction with the work of the Sister Cities program and his volunteers and staff. The program is a separate corporation but works closely with the city. The city provides in-kind support, most importantly venues for events. The city provides three fee venues for events during the year. The SRI raises the funds for the many events held through-out the year. This year for the first time they had an event to celebrate the end of the Lunar New Year celebration. This involved the many subsets of the Asian American community. This community is also well-represented on the board, which is diverse. Negotiations are underway with Elon, Taiwan for a sister city relationship and discussions about possible relations with a city in mainland China are also underway. The Mayor and Council would have to approve any additional sister city agreements. This is a bit of an issue as Mr. Powell explained that a tremendous amount of volunteer work must be done to put together an application. If the application is not approved, it's discouraging to those who have spent so much effort to bring it forward. He is meeting with the national organization to suggest changes to the process, perhaps creation of a policy and procedure that would include milestones. For now, Pinnesberg, Germany is the one contracted sister city and it has been a very successful relationship with many ongoing relationships formed. Mr. Powell stressed the importance of the people to people aspect of the program. This model is a grassroots model, not government to government, and is apolitical. This amazing program and all the events cost the city nothing.

The board rarely has vacancies, and with a 13 person board, Mr. Powell sometimes keeps an open seat so there is an opening if the right appointee is presented. The board members must work. Training and orientation is done by having potential members attend meetings, which are at least held monthly. A number of board members have served repeat terms but Mr. Powell sees no need for term limits; he feels their knowledge base and historic perspective are invaluable. There is a liaison from the Council, but Mr. Powell feels this sometimes presents potential conflicts of interest. He also added that the Mayor and Council hesitates to give direction if there are any sensitive, controversial areas or potential political agendas.

The Board does not report to the Council regularly but did arrange a working session with the Council when a sensitive request raised issues. This session was extremely helpful and productive. The City staff are very helpful and work well with the board. The Mayor and Council have been supportive and often take part in the events throughout the year.

Interview with Edward Dufy

Chair of the Rockville Housing Authority

March 26, 2019

Mr. Dufy is unique among the chairs we have interviewed. He began his career as a Rockville City employee in the housing area. He moved from entry level to management and knows the city's housing inside out. When he retired, he wanted to share his knowledge and experience and continue to work towards the goals of the Rockville Housing Authority. He was appointed to the board and has served several terms as chair. It's hard to imagine anyone who knows more about Rockville housing, and his breadth of experience is humbling. He has truly devoted his life's work to Rockville.

RHE is not the typical board. It oversees \$15 million in assets. They maintain a good relationship with the Council and City staff who are very knowledgeable and committed to the mission of the housing program. But they need more help; at least 5-6 more staff! They do not have problems filling seats on the board; even though volunteers must have a strong knowledge and experience in this type of housing program. Repeat volunteers are common and valued; not seen as a problem but an asset. Mr. Dufy mentioned the Neighborhood Resource Team as a potential way to improve citizen's knowledge of how the Boards and Committees of the city work and about volunteer opportunities.

He does feel that new volunteers need more training and understanding of the City government in general. He would recommend a 3-4 hour structured training course for all volunteers. Like all the chairs we have interviewed, he spends a substantial amount of time, over and above meetings and administrative tasks like co-signing checks, etc. He suggested that groups having problems filling vacancies have their board members recruit. He also suggested going to corporations and businesses in the city to recruit volunteers, especially when a specific technical knowledge is needed. Keeping the citizen-at-large seat filled is sometimes an issue for his board.

Interview with Abe Nadler and Roseanne Fitzpatrick

Rockville Senior Citizens Inc.

March 27, 201

We met at the amazing Rockville Senior Center set in a beautiful wooded area at the end of Carnation Street. This may be the best kept secret in Rockville. RSI is a separate, independent 501 (c) 3 not-for-profit corporation. The city maintains the property and the RSI board manages the volunteers, coordinates programs, and fundraises to support all costs associated with programming. Both volunteer leaders expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the City's role in supporting the Senior Center. City staff are on the board and are located in the Senior Center making for good communication, understanding and cooperation. Past issues with finances have been happily resolved. Their volunteers are intergenerational including many teenagers who are getting community service hours for helping. One issue they are working on is signage. The Center is hidden at the end of a cul-de-sac and Rockville rules only allow small signs that don't really stand out. They are working with the city to get an exception so they can raise visibility with better signage.

The Senior Center has 1500 members staffed by 100 + volunteers and manages \$330,000 in funds. They are in the process of implementing a yearly audit and purchasing board and directors liability insurance coverage. They offer a wide variety of successful programs. Their main issues are filling board vacancies and getting more publicity to educate citizens about their programs. They have used the city outlets but their audience is not using social media. They need help figuring out better ways to get their information across to their target audience. Another issue is a misconception that the senior center budget is paid by the City of Rockville or other government funding. This is not true at all. The RSI board fundraises to support everything except the building maintenance provided by the City.

RSI works with the Senior Citizen Commission but these two organizations have very different missions. The RSI's mission is tied to the building and what goes on in it, while the Commission deals with issues throughout the City. The Senior Center has been identified as a model and is "the most progressive in Montgomery County." They have pioneered such features as ATMs on site and a fully equipped gym with the latest equipment.

Both leaders express a high level of pride in the board and its role in assuring the support needed for this ambitious and forward looking organization.

Interview with Gail Sherman, Chair, Planning Committee

Conducted by Steve Van Grack and Lorraine Tarnove for BCTF

March 13, 2019

Ms. Sherman has an impressive history of volunteer service. We hardly needed to use the structured interview. Ms. Sherman talked at length about the specific issues of the Planning Commission. As we thought from reviewing the online survey responses, the boards and commissions that have a legal footing have a different profile. The Planning Commission has its own decision making authority and a staff of 14. These characteristics seem to create issues that interfere with effectiveness and efficiency of the Commissioner's ability to fulfill their mission. For instance, the staff feel they report to the board, but the volunteer members need the staff to work for and with them. Examples were given about routinely late delivery of complex documents needed to enable members to make decisions. The staff makes recommendations for action without providing adequate details. Staff does not provide requested information, liaisons, or reports, leaving commissioners in the position of making crucial decisions without the information they requested and need.

The time commitment for commissioners can easily require 8-10 hours a week. This and the Mayor and Council's delays in making appointments has left the Commission with 3 vacancies. The time commitment and the skills required make it difficult to find willing volunteers who are qualified. The lack of recognition for volunteers was also noted. A certificate of appreciation and a photo on the website of in Rockville Reports would go a long way to making volunteers feel appreciated.

The Planning Commission is clearly unique. Their mission and responsibilities are crucial to the future of the County. The Commission is not diverse and does not adequately represent the population mix of the County.

Given the importance of the Commission and the legal requirements, the BCTF may want to look at it separately and make suggestions accordingly. Overall though, having seen survey responses that signal issues that separate the needs of boards and commissions, we may want to consider less boards and commissions with more members, and perhaps some compensation for groups that require substantial time commitments. The boards and committees that are recommended should be established with adequate staff and clear lines of authority between volunteers and staff. Adequate training and orientation is needed as well.

Boards and Commissions Task Force (BCTF) Interview Notes

Interview with Matt Goguen – Chair, Historic District Commission

Conducted by Anne Herbster and Jack Kelly for BCTF on March 18, 2019 at the Rockville Memorial Library in Rockville Town Center. [NOTE: These notes include answers to a few follow-up questions that were asked subsequent to the interview.]

We began the meeting by giving Matt a copy of the Revised BCTF Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives from 12-6-18.

Matt's Background

Matt moved to Rockville from Vermont in January 2016. He graduated from the University of Vermont with a Masters in Historic Preservation and has a passion for that subject. He was appointed to the Historic District Commission (HDC) in December 2016 to fill someone else's uncompleted term. He was voted Chair by the members of the Commission in 2017 and again in 2019.

Relationship with the City

Matt doesn't feel that the HDC needs any direction from the Mayor & Council because of the well-defined, quasi-legal nature of its role. The Commission has never met with the Mayor and Council as a group and there is no Mayor & Council liaison to the Commission. [This could be a good follow up topic for the **BCTF** to consider.]

Sheila Bashiri, a Preservation Planner with PDS, is the staff liaison to the Commission and has over 30 years experience in historic preservation. Matt is very happy with the excellent support that she provides. Other members of the City's planning staff as well as a representative of the City Attorney's Office (usually Cindy Walters) attend Commission meetings regularly.

As for relationships with other Boards and Commissions, Matt emphasized that the HDC is independent of the Planning Commission, although they occasionally make recommendations to the Planning Commission. He also mentioned that the Board of Appeals could be brought in to resolve disputes with HDC decisions.

Mission & Relevance

Matt reiterated his view that the HDC's role is well defined by Federal, State, and City statutes and that no further direction from the Mayor and Council is needed for it to do its job.

The mission of the HDC is to help preserve the City's history and heritage through the review of historic property alterations and the recommending of new historic districts.

This mission has remained constant since the HDC was created in 1966.

Training & Leadership

The HDC is required to take two subject matter training sessions each year from the Maryland Association of Historic District Commissions. He doesn't see any need for management or leadership training. When he was appointed to the HDC, he received a large, very thorough orientation binder that had been prepared with input from the City's Planning staff, the City Attorney's Office, and Preservation Planning staff.

The City staff (Sheila Bashiri) does all the preparation work on the Certificate of Approval requests brought before the Commission as well as preparing agendas and minutes for the HDC meetings. The Commission functions as a group; there are no individual projects or assignments. [NOTE: Mr. Kelly attended one Commission meeting and was impressed with how well run it was and how quickly it attended to its business.]

Vacancies & Participation

This is an area of great concern. According to the City Code, the Commission is composed of five members and one alternate. [NOTE: The City's web page for the HDC doesn't mention the alternate or list this position as "Open," i.e., vacant. **BCTF** follow up required.]

There are currently three open positions, including the alternate, and two of the current members are serving expired terms. Matt's term expired December 2017, the year after he was appointed to fill a vacated position. The Mayor nominated a replacement for Matt, but the Council did not confirm him. The Code requires members of the Commission to have specific qualifications. Matt has a Masters Degree in Historic Preservation. One of the other members is an architect and the other has a long history of working with a preservation-related organization. Matt pointed out that the person nominated by the Mayor didn't appear to have the qualifications required for HDC membership and that the City might have lost funding had he been confirmed by the Council. Matt pointed out that he has special qualifications that make the City eligible for certain Federal funds as a Certified Local Government Program administered by the National Park Service.

Matt is notified of applicants to the Commission and knows of three people who have applied for appointment to the Commission; one last year and two this year. He has written to the Mayor and Council asking them to take action and has invited the applicants to attend Commission meetings.

It's clear that the Commission's vacancy problem is caused by the dysfunction of the Mayor and Council.

Diversity

For a five-member group, Matt believes that the three active members represent a diverse group. One is an African American woman from Lincoln Park/East Rockville who's been very active in her neighborhood community preservation programs. The other is a woman architect. Matt lives in Town Center and doesn't know where the woman architect lives. Matt is in favor of an even more diverse group, but needs the Mayor and Council to appoint and confirm new members that achieve that goal. [BCTF needs to point out that the M&C are ultimately responsible for the diversity of City Boards and Commissions.]

Final Thoughts and Suggestions

Matt doesn't have any suggestions for a new Board or Commission, although he did mention an interest in Town Center.

Matt would like to see greater transparency in the BCTF appointment process, since he receives no information on the status of applicants to his Commission. He'd also like the City to provide better information to the public on what its different Boards and Commissions do. He feels that more people might apply to join these groups if they had a better understanding of what the groups actually do and why they're important. Matt thinks that the City should do a better marketing job in this area. "Give more information in a public way."

Matt supports the idea of having a dedicated City staff person to support BCTFs. [Several BCTF follow-up items in this section.]

Interview with John Rodgers

March 20, 2019

Mr. Rodgers has been on the Retirement Board since 2012 and is completing his second term as chair. He is up for reappointment. The Retirement Board provides oversight and management of the employee pension funds for the County. The composition of the board includes two citizen members, a Council representative, the county manager and three city employees representing the three unions. This is unique among the boards and commissions and the presence of so many on the county payroll could present some potential conflicts. While Mr. Rodgers acknowledged the potential, he said it has not happened and offered that a requirement that the committee chair be one of the citizen members would be a good idea. Mr. Rodgers found the staff highly motivated and knowledgeable. Providing both technical knowledge and guidance. The time spent by volunteers is significant, counting preparation for meetings that are at least 4-6 hours quarterly, plus several special meetings annually the time exceeds the average for other chairs. Again, the majority of the members are in positions paid by the county and included in their job responsibilities. Mr. Rodgers did not feel honorarium for the two public members was needed.

The Retirement Board interacts with the Financial Advisory Board, providing updates on the status of the pension funds. Relations with the Board and Council are smooth. The chair has presented to the Mayor and Council on occasion but not on any regular basis. Lines of communication are built into the board by the composition.

There is no formal training for members. The citizen members appointed have financial backgrounds that provide the skills necessary. Mr. Rodgers has taken the OMA training and runs the meetings accordingly. They have no succession plan but recommend that potential citizen members attend a few meetings to familiarize themselves with the workings and content of the matters coming before the board. Thus far there have been no issues with member performance.

Mr. Rodgers expressed a great deal of satisfaction with his service on the Retirement Board. He feels it runs smoothly and all involved fulfill their roles well. He did have some experience as a volunteer with the Rockville Sister Cities where individual agendas and personalities interfered with the group's goals. He believes the structure and make-up of the Retirement Board, with built in connections to the staff and Council works well and recommended no changes except for the designation of a public member for chair.

Boards and Commissions Task Force (BCTF)
Interview Notes

Interview with John Becker – Chair, Environment Commission

Jack Kelly interviewed John on April 12, 2019, in Dawson's Market. [NOTE: These notes include answers to a few follow-up questions that were asked subsequent to the interview.]

Since John is also on the BCTF, there was no need to give him a copy of the Revised BCTF Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives from 12-6-18.

John's Background

John grew up in the Finger Lakes region of NY State. He went to Grad School at UNC – Chapel Hill and almost got a graduate degree in City and Regional Planning. He then got into real estate, construction, leasing, several small business start-ups.

REC Background

The Commission was first created in the mid-1990s as the Science and Technology Commission and became the REC in 2002. It was created by a Resolution, updated in a subsequent resolution, but never put into the City Code. Putting the Resolutions into the Code has been discussed, but no action taken to do so. [**BCTF should address.**]

John was appointed to the REC in 2011. He doesn't feel he has the qualification to be appointed now. This will be John's last year on the Commission and as Chair. He wants to move on.

Business Processes

The REC has a structured process for preparing an annual work plan that begins with a retreat every two years in January. John makes sure that the work plan addresses the Mayor & Council's priority goals. Unplanned activities pop up during the year and also have to be addressed. Planning for FY 2020 will begin in July and become more active in September. Meetings are 2 – 2 ½ hours. The REC presents an annual report to the M&C using a standardized PowerPoint format.

The REC has had an annual budget of \$1,000 for many years. John reviews spending proposals very carefully and won't approve of year-end spending requests just to use up unspent funds.

John puts in around 30 hours a month on REC business, even though sub-committees do much of the detailed work.

Sub-committees

The REC has three sub-committees (called committees): Energy Committee, Climate Action Committee, and Watershed Committee. Each committee consists of no more than two REC members, to avoid OMA problems with quorums, and from 2 to 6 volunteers depending on the committee.

Some of the Commissioners and most of the volunteers are very strong environmental advocates and sometimes demand a lot of support from City staff. The REC has been getting some pushback from staff recently about being asked to provide too much support. [Lise Soukup, the Staff Liaison, had a lot more to say on this issue in her interview.]

John would like to see the City create more structure around its Board and Commission sub-committees.

Staff Support

The REC gets good staff support from the Environmental Management Division of the Department of Public Works, in addition to the support provided by the Staff Liaison.

Relationships with Other Departments and Commissions

Although the REC's main relationship with City staff is with the Environmental Management Division in DPW, it has recently begun working with Rec. and Parks and Planning Departments on the 2020 Master Plan. This year, they've also had interactions with the Planning Commission and the Traffic and Transportation Commission. In general, John would like to see greater interactions with other Boards and Commissions.

Work Products

In addition to the annual work plan and annual report, John also mentioned that the REC testified in Annapolis in previous years and that the M&C has to clear their testimony.

He also said that the REC prepared a position paper on Montgomery County's proposal to relocate its bus depot to the site near Montgomery College.

Changing Role

The REC has two roles: advisory and advocacy. John believes that the Commission's role has changed over time from advisory (on compliance) to advocacy.

Vacancies

Vacancies haven't generally been a problem for the REC. In the past, the application process for new members was slow, but not now. The REC gets very good participation from its members.

Diversity

The REC has good gender and age diversity, but not ethnic diversity. It has a problem in attracting minorities.

Training

The REC has an orientation package for on-boarding new members and requires all new members to undergo OMA training. John would like training in how to run meetings more effectively, but according to "Bobby's Rules," not the formal Robert's Rules.

New Commission Suggestions

Communications Commission.

Boards & Commissions Task Force

Structured Interview Document

This questionnaire is designed to be used during the interview with current Rockville Board and Commission Chairs. All questions that are applicable should be answered, if possible. Feel free to ask follow-up questions, encourage the interviewees to elaborate, and frame questions in your own words.

Interviewee Name:	Dr. Alan Kaplan
Interviewee Board/Commission:	Chair??Traffic??and??Transportation??
Interview Date:	4/12/2019
Interviewers:	James Hedrick

Introduction:

- Briefly explain the Boards & Commission Task Force's (BCTF) mission & purpose
 - Charged by the Mayor & Council to investigate the effectiveness and purpose of Rockville's current B&C.
 - Emphasize that this is not an attempt to change any B&C, but an effort to better understand the B&Cs and help the City better operate and organize them.
 - Thank them for participating and ask if they are ready to begin.
 - If you are recording, inform the interviewee and *ask for their permission before recording.*

1. Relationship with the City - Mayor & Council, Staff, other Boards & Commissions

- Do you think your board or commission would benefit from more communication, direction, or acknowledgement by the Mayor & Council? Have you ever met with the Mayor & Council or presented anything to them?
 - Excellent staff (Daniel), "Staff has been very supportive."
 - Getting data from county and state, preliminary data.
 - Rockville Pike is really a state road. Recommendations have to go through State.
 - Multi-jurisdictional issues with Rockville roadways.
 - Excellent cooperation from Mayor & Council (specifically, Julie). Liaison would come to regular meetings. Presented to M&C. Operating within the City is really good.
 - Cooperation with staff is excellent.
 - Avoid meetings when we have nothing to discuss.
 - Monthly meeting with agenda.
- How does your board or commission interact with city staff? Did you find staff support adequate and helpful? How could relationships between staff and your board or commission be improved? What additional resources would you like the City to provide?

- In response to our questionnaire, few board or commission members indicated that they had collaborated with other boards or commissions. How have you and your board or commission interacted with other boards and commissions within the City? Do you think increased collaboration would benefit your board or commission? How do you think collaboration in general could be improved?
 - Never really collaborated with other board or commission. Have a member on bicycle commission, no joint meetings, work/communicate with Planning Commission when issues arise.
 - Mobility coordinator with county to come in. Bring in outside folks for educational purposes.
 - Formal report transmitted to Planning Board. Previously, just sent them the minutes. Last couple of years, send minutes and memo to Planning Board about their issues.
 - Example, developer wanted to eliminate bicycle lanes to add 4 parking places.
 - Sometimes don't get enough feedback from Planning Commission about concerns.
 - Review a development *before* it goes to the planning commission; staff has been essential and very good at assisting with that.

2. Mission & Relevance

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more direction concerning their organization's mission and goals. Would your board or commission benefit from more clear direction from the Mayor and Council?
 - We do it ourselves. Would sometimes ask Julie when she was liaison.
 - Self-directed. "Charted our own course."
 - "Bring up the issues ourselves."

- How would you describe the mission of your board or commission? How does your board or commission's mission address current needs within the City?
 - Meets the current needs of the city.
 - Chair has tried to increase input and information sharing (WMATA, public works, police, County Attorney, etc.). What issues are arising, what we should be paying attention to. E.g., speed bumps.
 - "Often *reactive* to what developers want to do."
 - "Just because that's the way you've always done it, doesn't mean it works."
 - "We have to learn." Crosswalks for example, heavier striping, make them more visible.
- How has your mission/focus changed over time? What improvements, if any, would you make to improve the mission/focus of your board or commission?
 - No.

3. Training & Leadership

- In responding to our questionnaire, many board and commission members indicated a desire for more training in leadership and organization. Do you believe such training would benefit the members of your board or commission? What training would best improve your board or commission's activities?
- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal orientation for new members. What materials or introduction (if any) does your board or commission provide new members? What types of training or materials do you believe would provide the most benefit to new members?
 - "Learning curve about traffic and transportation."
 - No formal training or orientation.
 -
- Our online questionnaire indicated that most chairs do the lion's share of the work within their board or commission. How does your board or commission delegate tasks and generally divide up the work? E.g., who handles generating agendas, minutes, and/or reports? Do your members

generally fully participate in the group's activities? Have you experienced difficulty encouraging participation from other members?

4. Vacancies & Participation

- Few respondents to our questionnaire indicated any formal succession planning for replacing members. How does your board or commission handle succession planning and replacing members?
 - "Don't think it's really been a problem." Vacancies filled quickly.
 - Original submission, was told "too many people from King Farm."
- Many respondents to our questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction with the number of vacancies. How have vacancies affected the business/performance of your board or commission?
- *If the respondent has experienced significant vacancies, ask them to elaborate and provide specific examples. E.g., Has your board or commission had difficulties achieving a quorum? How long have these vacancies lasted? Have commissioners served past the end of their appointments? To what do you attribute these vacancies and how would you solve this issue?*

5. Diversity

- How do you feel your group represents the diversity of the Rockville area? What efforts have you made to include diverse individuals or perspectives in your work?
- What thoughts would you have on improving diversity, representation, or outreach within Rockville's Boards and Commissions?

- “We sent out letters to all the homeowners associations for input.” Got *two* responses. Disappointed in the HOA responses. Few wanted to meet.
- Tried some outreach.
- “Hasn’t really been a problem.”
-

6. Final Thoughts

- What else would you like to tell us about your work or your experience?
 - Smooth out data-sharing between jurisdictions (e.g., county, state, etc.)
 - Traffic and Transportation has trouble getting info from county and city. Formalize or ease data sharing.
 - “Limited by lack of access to even preliminary data.” I.e., accident data,
 - “If don’t know what intersections are causing problems, you can’t make recommendations.”
 - “Better relationships and data sharing between county and state and city.”
 - “We ask for data and aren’t provided any preliminary report/data.”
- Do you have any suggestions for any new boards or commissions to fill needs of the Rockville community?
- What recommendations do you have for improving the boards and commissions system?

7. Interviewer Notes (Miscellaneous) - Include any additional observations, insights, or comments on the interview.

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Notes of interview with Lois Neumann, Chair, Board of Supervisors of Elections

11:00 am March 25, 2019

Interviewees: Anne Goodman, Anita Neal Powell

Blue Crab Room, City Hall

Ms. Neuman thinks her Board is great, including the interactions with City Staff. She said the current group is the sharpest, strongest, most positive group she has encountered, and she has been chair for several rounds of elections (since 2012). She has overseen elections for both 2 year and 4 year terms.

The board is composed of 4 members. Right now there is one vacancy. She encourages non-members to attend meetings. That happens seldom unless someone is interested in joining the board. Prospective members will sometimes come to observe. She says it takes a certain type of personality to be an effective member, and some can tell from those observations that they don't want to join

The board has no control over membership. Members are nominated by Mayor and elected by Mayor and Council. Ms. Neuman has expressed preferences for potential members to the Mayor in the past, but not everyone she recommended was nominated.

The board's activities center on elections, although there are some activities between them. Comment that the board might need to address can come anytime. For example, the group was extremely busy when it had to respond to the change in term length for the Mayor and Council from 2 to 4 years.

The Board routinely meets twice a month in an election and once a month in off years, sometimes more often, if necessary. Schedules are somewhat irregular and adjusted to meet the needs and other activities of board members. The schedule is published at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting and is therefore in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

She sees the board as an independent entity. There is no need for interaction with or guidance from Mayor and Council. In fact, if anything, the Board guides Mayor and Council members. She is satisfied with the number of members, as she is not in favor of large boards.

The Open Meetings training is all that members receive. With respect to backgrounds of potential members, she recommends that they have been poll workers, involved with elections at the city, county or federal level or as federal government employees. A writing background is also useful, as they have to write technical papers and guides with arguments and summaries. These have to be clear, as they are instructional for voters and candidates. An accounting background is helpful but not necessary. Communication with the public to get the word out is a primary focus. Technology for this can be costly.

The Board provides training for individual candidates. In this regard, the Board holds an orientation session with each political candidate and his/her treasurer.

The current Board is not ethnically or racially diverse, although perspectives and opinions of individual board members differ. There are presently 3 females and 1 male, all Caucasian, all over 50 years old.

That said, their services must be available to all people. Three of the board members can speak languages other than English.

She is satisfied with the structure of the board. While vacancies may have some impact, the effect does not appear to be major impact. Their functions include developing infrastructure for the existing voting process, developing new processes like early voting or vote by mail, revising regulations/making code changes, responding to questions, and providing orientation and training to candidates.

As part of the larger picture, language can be a barrier with respect to outreach. This may become less of a problem with voting by mail, since voters may have a family member who can assist with translations or understanding of the instructions provided.

Low voter turn-out is a concern and one of the issues the Board tries to address. Although there are no clear explanations for the particularly low turn-out in some neighborhoods, the process may contribute the problem. For example, it may be that ethnic groups who may lack documentation but are registered to vote may be afraid to do so. Vote by mail may increase voter turn-out. Interestingly, she said that early voting did not have a significant effect. Other factors may include lack of child care or taking time off the job.

Recommendations and conclusions:

- She had no recommendations about new boards or increasing diversity on this one
- She feels no need for additional training
- She is satisfied with the existing structure of the board
- Although there have been/are vacancies on her board, they don't seem to pose a major problem.
- She feels no need for additional interaction with other Boards and Commissions or the Mayor and Council.

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Recommendations and conclusions:

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Notes from interview with Richard Stolz, Chair, Compensation Commission

1:00 pm, March 24, 2019

Blue Crab Room, City Hall

Interviewees: Anne Goodman and Anita Neal Powell

Mr. Stolz said the Compensation must be one of the easiest commissions around. There are 3-4 meetings before elections held every 4 years (now that we are in a 4 year election cycle). The group apparently disbands in the interim.

Commission members have no control over vacancies. Everyone on the board is new this term. He responded to a vacancy announcement, and he was selected as chair by request from another member. It wasn't clear whether there was even a vote. There are supposed to be 5 members, but there is one vacancy. The vacancy doesn't appear to be a problem. Terms are not staggered. Their sole focus is compensation for the Mayor and Council. Their work must be completed within a specified time frame. Recommendations are due by the end of March for compensation for the Mayor and Council members who will be elected in November. Recommendations will be presented in April to the Mayor and Councilmembers.

Mr. Stolz has a background in freelance writing and compensation. He isn't sure what the background of the other members is, but at least one is an attorney. The only training he received was in the Open Meetings Act. He didn't identify any other training he thought would be helpful or appropriate. The Commission was provided compensation information from other municipalities for guidance.

Staff has been helpful. He interacts with City Attorney, City Clerk, and the Public Information Officer.

With regard to diversity, there is one African-American on the group and 3 Caucasians. Three are male and one is female. He made the point that not everyone can afford to be a member of a Board or Commission, which can be a deterrent to socioeconomic diversity.

There is no need for his group to interact with the Mayor and Council. It might actually be a conflict of interest if someone did.

Take-home lessons:

- He made no recommendations for changes to the Commission.
- Although there is a vacancy, it has not been a problem
- Diversity, or lack thereof, is an issue on this board as it is many others. He had no suggestions on increasing it.
- No particular need for training or interaction with other Boards and Commissions was identified
- In this case, board members should not interact with the Mayor and Council members because of the potential for conflict of interest.