



City of La Quinta

CITY/ SA/ HA/ FA MEETING DATE: January 6, 2015

ITEM TITLE: ADOPT POLICY REGARDING
UNSCHEDULED VACANCIES ON CITY BOARDS
AND COMMISSIONS

AGENDA CATEGORY:

BUSINESS SESSION: 1

CONSENT CALENDAR:

STUDY SESSION:

PUBLIC HEARING:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Adopt a policy to select one or two alternates for each board/commission to fill unscheduled vacancies.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- The City Council appoints residents to ten boards/commissions with term expirations on June 30 during staggered years.
- Unscheduled mid-term vacancies sometimes occur due to resignation, death, or other causes. Current practice has been to advertise the vacancies and bring applications to the Council throughout the year, as each vacancy occurred.
- Selecting alternates during the annual appointment session will streamline the process, save advertising/administrative costs, and offer more convenience for applicants.

FISCAL IMPACT:

In addition to no-cost postings on the City's website, public bulletin boards, *The GEM* and social media, paid advertisements are placed in *The Desert Sun* each time applications are sought. The average cost per advertisement is \$300. A savings would be realized if Council chose to limit the solicitation of applications to once or twice per year.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The City Council appoints resident representatives to the following intra- and inter-City boards/commissions:

Intra-City

1. Architectural and Landscaping Review Board
2. Construction Appeal Board
3. Community Services Commission
4. Historic Preservation Commission
5. Investment Advisory Board
6. Planning Commission

Inter-City

7. Coachella Valley Association of Governments Trails Subcommittee
8. CV Mosquito and Vector Control District Board
9. Imperial Irrigation District's Energy Consumers Advisory Committee
10. Palm Springs International Airport Commission

Currently, the City fills vacancies, as positions are vacant. The City Clerk solicits applications and the Council subsequently interviews applicants. While this process has worked well, the Council has discussed how the City can make it work more efficiently.

Staff has identified five basic methods for dealing with unscheduled vacancies practiced by California cities. Some cities combine or implement variations of the following:

1. During annual appointments, select one or two alternates to fill mid-term vacancies as acting commissioners;
2. Accept applications throughout the year and keep an ongoing pool of applicants for Council to interview/select from as unscheduled vacancies occur;
3. Leave the seat vacant until annual appointments each spring;
4. Establish a second routine annual appointment date in January and leave the seat vacant until January or spring appointments occur; or
5. Advertise each vacancy and conduct interviews/make appointments as vacancies occur throughout the year (the City's current practice).

There are multiple advantages to Option No. 1. Conducting interviews and appointments once a year provides residents with a reliable schedule, eliminating the need to continually check the website, bulletin boards and local papers throughout the year in order to meet application deadlines. Selecting alternates during the annual process may also give the alternates incentive to attend meetings and remain involved should they need to step in to fill an unscheduled vacancy. Option No. 1 will eliminate the time and cost of multiple recruitments throughout the year unless the annual spring process does not result in enough applicants to fill both the vacant seats and alternate positions.

Option Nos. 1, 3 and 4 all save City funds, as well as staff and Council time, and establish a reliable, consistent timetable for applicants. However, Option Nos. 3 and 4 could render a board/commission inoperable if multiple mid-term vacancies occur or if membership is reduced to an even number and votes routinely end in ties, unless an exception is added. Option Nos. 2 and 4 benefit applicants who were previously unsuccessful by affording them the possibility of a second chance throughout the year. Option Nos. 2 and 5 provide a fresh pool of applicants each time a vacancy occurs and may capture the interest of residents who missed the annual recruitment. However, Option No. 5 has the negative effect of a continuous cycle of advertisements, interviews and appointments during years when multiple vacancies occur.

ALTERNATIVES:

Although Option No. 1 is staff's recommendation, Council may direct staff to implement any option listed above or provide alternative direction.

Report prepared by: Susan Maysels, City Clerk

Report approved for submission by: Frank Spevacek, City Manager

