



COLUMBIA ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2022

The Columbia Administrative Policy Committee met on Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at City Hall, 1737 Main Street, 2nd floor, Columbia, SC 29201. The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr., Chair called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. and the following members were present: The Honorable Aditi Bussells and The Honorable Joe E. Taylor, Jr.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

1. Columbia Health Initiative Overview - The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr.

Councilor McDowell said we started talking about this last year with the previous Council. This came out of conversations about health disparities in the city of Columbia. In 2020, we have the highest number of amputations, heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension. We talked about selecting a health officer. Instead of the health department model, we wanted to make it more palatable. We looked at a community model formed after a model in New Orleans.

Pamela Benjamin, Assistant City Manager for Administrative Services said there are a lot of partners that provide health related services, research, and activities. The Healthy BR model out of Baton Rouge uses a board of commissioners who work together to promote health within their community. The board consists of members who work at hospitals, universities, and other public health organizations. In October 2021, the committee left off with the formation of a committee to be appointed by City Council. The board would then decide on the vision and deliverables for the community health initiative. We also discussed how this committee could help guide Council during any kind of health related emergency or crisis.

Councilor McDowell asked the committee members to peruse the document prior to the next meeting. There are medical issues in all of our communities.

2. Development of Policies, Procedures, and a Structure for the Advisory Committee on Equality - The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr.

Councilor McDowell said there was much conversation about equity in the city of Columbia. Our task is to ensure that the Advisory Committee on Equality is not another blue ribbon committee and that teeth is put into the committee. I would like for you to peruse the document prior to the next meeting.



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Pamela Benjamin, Assistant City Manager for Administrative Services said this special committee was established by City Council. We provided you with the deliverables, goals, membership, the definition for equity and the City of Columbia and Richland County Racial Equity Index Summary.

Councilor Bussells said I served on the committee to develop that study with Ms. Devine. I would like for us to explore broadening ACE to include racially diverse people with different sexual orientations to deal with issues of equality and equity. I want all groups that may have felt marginalized included in the process of having their voices heard. As we review these materials, it is worth considering allowing this committee to address both equality and equity concerns. I suggest changing the scope of this advisory committee to include some of the results of the equity study that can help cultivate an inclusive Columbia. There is a model in Charleston that we can look at.

3. Requests to City Staff by Council Members - The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr.

Councilor McDowell said there was a concern relative to the voluminous number of documents. Councilman Duvall referred this to our committee to develop a policy that would give us a process for requesting information. One of the issues is the tracking process.

Councilor Taylor said at a previous council meeting, I requested a report on Bull Street. This is the report that was very well done. This binder was not requested by a councilmember. It is a collection of all ordinances and resolutions on Bull Street. All requests should be made directly to the city manager. If she thinks they are cumbersome or burdensome, we are all grown up enough to take the suggestion from her. I would hate to see us have a policy that says you need a majority vote of Council before you can request information.

Pamela Benjamin, Assistant City Manager for Administrative Services said the impetus was for staff to provide you all with information. We looked at the city of Lawton. They have a formalized process that lists matters on the council agenda. We created a request form years ago and it can be used if city council wants to move forward. The city manager could use the form to track requests.

Councilor Bussells said there does not need to be a formalization of requesting information from our staff. We are not even six months into our new positions. I have a lot of questions. There's a lot of context I'm asking about and there are a lot of things I am learning as I go. The flexibility that city manager Wilson has provided for me to be able to talk to her staff directly while



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keeping her informed has been the best way for me to understand. My recommendation would be not to pursue this.

Councilor Taylor said we should vote to move it Council or end it at the committee level. He asked Ms. Wilson if the information requests from city council have been an issue.

Teresa Wilson, City Manager said it is my job to provide information to the council. It staff's job through the assistant city managers to help me do that. The historical context is not always there for newly seated councilmembers. If you ask me for something, I am going to be very thorough in what I give you. It can be time consuming and voluminous at times but that is our job. We were asked to do this and we tried to give you a flavor for what other cities, counties and towns do. It ebbs and it flows. Mayor Rickenmann asked for that form to be made when there was a seasoned Council. I am used to and not alarmed by what we have going on right here. Whether there is a process or not, we are going to keep on trying to do what we are doing. It is your decision to make.

Councilor Taylor said I would not like to move this forward. It is based on an incorrect statement of a councilmember. I recommend that we not move it forward.

Councilor McDowell said this is not a vote. At some point and time, this may be revisited.

4. Creation of a Columbia Clean Division under Columbia Water to focus on servicing litter, beautification, and clean water initiatives within the six water districts - The Honorable Edward H. McDowell, Jr.

Councilor Brennan said we all drive around this beautiful city and we see the litter and landscaping that needs to be done. I would like for us to take ownership beyond the municipal boundaries to own a lot of the beautification, litter pickup, and storm water and water cleaning activities for gutters, storm drains, and drainage ditches. I wanted to bring the concept forward and seek your feedback. I put together a general task list, reasoning, and funding. Bolting it to Columbia Water is a natural fit to reach outside the city's boundaries. We talked about 20 to 40 temporary hires during the peak season of yard waste. Why not keep those folks on a year-round career path and start the Columbia Clean Team in the four water districts. Then we get into the equipment that's needed. Salaries would be comparable to entry-level positions. These are the general topics we've discussed. Justifying the revenue to make a difference is important.

Councilor McDowell asked if additional information can be prepared for the next meeting. We would like to have something beneficial and unified going into the summer.



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Councilor Brennan said the mayor mentioned a youth cleanup program that can be managed by the Columbia Clean Team.

Councilor Taylor asked about the budget.

Councilor Brennan said it will be for 24 Columbia Water employees out of the water and sewer fund. We can get feedback on that.

Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water said we have a storm water fund that could potentially support activities in the city. We can take these points and put costs and ideas with them. We were working on a program with Transitions prior to the pandemic. The idea was to employ homeless individuals to help us with litter collections and beautification efforts. We would like to resurrect that as a possible option. We can come back with proposals.

Councilor Taylor said I am in favor of improving the appearance of the city. I would add painting the curbs and medians as a key part of this. I have a real concern about taking funding out of the water department. You will have an issue with the rating. Be cautious with the storm water fund. It has turned into a de facto property tax. The appearance of the city needs to be one of our three top priorities. How do we amplify the current street sweeping program? I would caution against us providing services outside city limits.

Councilor Brennan said we service our water system outside of the city. We protect our storm water and waterways outside the city.

Clint Shealy, P.E., Assistant City Manager for Columbia Water said overall pollution prevention and source water protection ties in with storm water.

Councilor Taylor said it is a big enough priority where you should think bigger in the city. Street sweepers, painting the curbs and medians, buying roundup by the tanker load, and designs that require less manual labor.

Teresa Wilson, City Manager recommended including the Public Relations, Media and Marketing Department as this discussion evolves.



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Councilor Taylor said we need to build it as a community pride program where we recognize businesses and homeowners who do an exceptional job of showing pride in their place. How do we create incentives for people who aren't taking care of their stuff? The PR side to inspire others is just as important as the city taking of theirs.

Councilor McDowell said Clint and Robert are at the cutting edge of this thing. Will's leadership will help us concretize this at the next meeting and be ready for the summer.

ADJOURNMENT

The committee adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Erika D. Moore Hammond, CMC
City Clerk