

# WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



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## STAFF

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## SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

**Ex-officio Members for Boards and Commissions.**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to provide an update to Council on the assessment currently underway as it relates to whether or not adding ex-officio members to boards and commissions that do not have such members could add value to boards and commissions.

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## GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. Based on the feedback received, does Council have the information needed to consider the two current requests for ex-officio seats?
2. Does Council wish to pursue any broader policy changes regarding ex-officio members on boards and commissions?

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## BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

During the August 8, 2023 Council work session reviewing the recommendations from the Ad Hoc Council Committee on Boards and Commissions, there was discussion concerning the Housing Catalyst's request for ex-officio representation on the Affordable Housing Board. After the work session, direction was given for staff to craft criteria for Council to consider when a request is made to add an ex-officio, nonvoting member to a board or commission.

### **What is an ex-officio member?**

By definition, "ex-officio" denotes or relates to a member of a body who holds the role as a result of their status or another position they hold. Traditionally, for Fort Collins boards and commissions, ex-officio membership has been authorized when a board benefits from expertise from a member of a community organization. They typically do not have to interview for their seat on the board, rather the organization they are a part of appoints them at their discretion. It is the organization's responsibility to inform the City Clerk's Office if their representative no longer is a part of their organization and to appoint a replacement.

The following are common duties:

- **Attend Board Meetings:** Ex-officio board members should attend board meetings and participate in discussions. However, most ex-officio members are not authorized to vote on board or commission matters.
- **Provide Expertise:** Ex-officio board members are often chosen based on their experience or expertise in a particular area. For this reason, they should provide guidance and advice to the board based on their background and skills.
- **Represent the Organization:** Ex-officio board members are often seen as representatives of the organization or group they represent and are expected to act in the best interests of that organization or group as well as the City.
- **Report to the Board:** Depending on their role, ex-officio board members may provide regular reports to the board on the activities and progress of their organization or group.

### **What is currently in the Code?**

There are currently three boards that have ex-officio seats in the Code:

- **Women’s Advisory Board** has ex-officio seats for the County and Colorado State University.
  - Council adopted an ordinance to change the scope of this board to a Women and Gender Equity Advisory Board on September 19, 2023.
- **Art in Public Places Board** has an ex-officio seat for a Cultural Resources Board member.
- **Water Commission** has an ex-officio seat designated for a representative of the County’s Public Works Department for the purposes of representing the County coordination by the City and County of stormwater management matters.

### **Boards Requesting Additions:**

- **Active Modes Advisory Board** is recommending the additions of ex-officio seats from organizations to represent diverse individuals who use and need alternate modes of transportation. Their recommendation is for a member of the City’s Transportation Board, Colorado State University, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), and Bike Fort Collins to each have an ex-officio seat. These members would not have voting authority.
- **Affordable Housing Board** recommended approval of a request from the Housing Catalyst Executive Director to appoint a representative to serve as an ex-officio member.

### **Boards that have not identified a need:**

- Cultural Resources Board
- Human Services and Housing Funding Board
- Land Conservation and Stewardship Board
- Land Use Review Commission
- Transportation Board
- Water Commission

### *Summary of reasoning:*

- Never had one in the past
- The board feels that they have enough expertise for general business, and when special expertise is needed, they invite someone with that specific knowledge.
- Board members should already show an interest/experience with their board functions. They do not feel like there is any project, task, or other undertaking of the Board that would require the expertise of an ex-officio member.

### **Boards that are Still Considering:**

- Air Quality Advisory Board – Suggestion for CSU and Larimer Alliance, though the board has not had an ex-officio member in the past.
- Disability Advisory Board – need some more guidance
- Economic Advisory Board – Chamber of Commerce may be a good addition. Staff is checking if they are interested.
- Energy Board – Platte River Power Authority (PRPA) could have an ex-officio member on the board; however, they do already present to the board when needed.
- Historic Preservation Commission – Could be useful, but need to avoid selecting organizations that may polarize community partners and disrupt the Commission .
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board – Poudre School District (PSD) could be beneficial; however, staff need to check with PSD as to their interest.

### **Other Considerations:**

- It is a time commitment for the ex-officio members so need to check with the organizations as to their interest first.
- When an expert opinion is needed, the board invites the organization to present and speak at their meetings already.
- Coordination and collaboration between boards would be more important (liaisons between them).
- It is already difficult to recruit for boards and commissions, so this would be one more step. Also, with the widely varying issues that boards cover, it would be difficult to find an ex-officio member who met all the expertise needs.
- If Council or the community does not trust the expertise of the organization, it may create tension.
- May want to only consider public organizations that are either directly or indirectly accountable to the City. For example, some organizations like the DDA or Housing Catalyst have Council liaisons.
- May want to avoid advocacy groups and private nonprofits as it could be perceived as a conflict of interest

### **Boards whose feedback is missing:**

- Building Review Commission
- Citizen Review Board
- Human Relations Commission
- Natural Resources Advisory Board
- Planning and Zoning Commission
- Senior Advisory Board
- Youth Advisory Board

## **NEXT STEPS**

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Staff will continue to gather feedback with boards and commissions and staff liaisons. Any Code changes will be presented for Council consideration on December 5, 2023, for first reading and December 19, 2023, for second reading.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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1. Presentation