TO: **Mayor and City Council**

FROM: **Melissa R. Marsh, City Manager**

DATE: **November 2, 2026**

SUBJECT: **Revised Boards and Commissions Handbook and Annual Workplan Template**

At the October 5, 2026, City Council Special Workshop, Council discussed the City's boards and commissions, including opportunities to improve accountability, strengthen coordination, and establish clearer expectations for volunteer members and City staff.

Following that discussion, staff has incorporated several revisions into the Boards and Commissions Handbook and developed a standardized Annual Board and Commission Workplan Template. These updates reflect the direction provided by City Council and are intended to improve consistency, accountability, and coordination while ensuring that board and commission activities are aligned with City priorities and can be effectively supported by City staff.

The primary revisions include the following:

1. Attendance and Member Accountability

The revised handbook establishes a consistent attendance standard allowing removal of any board or commission member who accumulates three (3) absences within a rolling twelve-month period, regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused, subject to any different process required by applicable law, ordinance, charter, or other controlling authority.

This provision is intended to promote consistent participation, maintain meeting quorums, and ensure that appointed members are actively engaged in their responsibilities.

2. Annual Workplans and Priorities

The new standardized Annual Board and Commission Workplan Template provides a consistent format for boards and commissions to identify their mission, legal responsibilities, alignment with City priorities, annual objectives, anticipated resources, and measures of success.

The workplan also requires an annual calendar identifying anticipated events and major public programs, including proposed dates and locations. This will provide City Council and staff with better visibility into planned activities and allow for improved coordination among boards, commissions, and City departments.

Council approval of a workplan does not constitute authorization for expenditures, facility use, permits, contracts, staffing commitments, or event execution. All activities remain subject to applicable City approval processes.

3. Event Planning and Submission Deadlines

The revised handbook establishes a minimum requirement that all event details and required documentation be submitted and finalized at least two (2) months before the scheduled event date. The Madison Heights Event Guide will serve as the City's reference for event planning procedures, submission requirements, and applicable deadlines.

Required information may include event applications, site plans, permits, staffing arrangements, facility reservations, vendor information, budgets, insurance documentation, and other operational details necessary for review and coordination. The two-month requirement is intended to provide adequate time for departmental coordination, permitting, staffing, facility reservations, and other operational considerations. Earlier deadlines may be established by the Staff Liaison based on the size, scope, or complexity of an event.

Inclusion of an event in an approved annual workplan, or a vote by a Board or Commission to pursue an event, does not constitute authorization to proceed. The City Manager is authorized to cancel an event or determine that it may not proceed when required information, applications, permits, approvals, or supporting documentation are not submitted and finalized by established deadlines.

4. Communication and Coordination

The handbook clarifies the respective roles and responsibilities of City Council, board and commission members, Staff Liaisons, and Council Liaisons.

Consistent with Council's October 5 discussion, operational questions and concerns regarding board and commissions from Councilmembers should be directed either to the Council Representative or through the City Manager or Mayor rather than directly to individual board members or City staff. This approach is intended to provide consistent communication and ensure that operational matters are appropriately coordinated.

5. Ongoing Review and Accountability

The revised handbook reinforces the expectation that boards and commissions remain focused on their established legal responsibilities and approved workplans. Annual reporting will provide an opportunity to evaluate accomplishments, outstanding priorities, resource utilization, challenges, and recommendations for the upcoming year.

Council also expressed support for allowing inactive advisory bodies to sunset naturally as member terms expire. The handbook reinforces the importance of evaluating board and commission activity, effectiveness, and continued relevance to the City's needs and priorities.

The existing independent board and commission structures will remain in place. The revisions are focused on establishing consistent administrative expectations and operational guardrails rather than restructuring the City's advisory bodies.

Recommended Action

Staff is providing the revised Boards and Commissions Handbook and standardized Annual Board and Commission Workplan Template for City Council review and approval.

Upon approval, the City Manager will meet with staff liaisons, staff will distribute the updated handbook to current board and commission members, obtain updated member acknowledgments, and implement the standardized workplan process.

These changes are intended to strengthen the City's boards and commissions, support the important contributions of community volunteers, and ensure that board activities are planned responsibly, aligned with City priorities, and coordinated effectively with City staff.