



## MEMO

TO: Sandpoint City Council  
FROM: Mayor Jeremy Grimm  
DATE: September 17, 2025, Council Meeting  
SUBJECT: Citizen Advisory Boards

This memo will summarize and provide follow up to our September 3, 2025, conversation regarding the City's citizen advisory boards (commissions and committees), at which time I relayed my concerns about the manner in which the boards are operating without clear direction from us, proceeding with work that may not necessarily be aligned with the priorities established by the City's elected leadership and straining staff resources. My objective is to seek to confirm and reestablish the Council and Mayor as the accountable authority for directing board work, with scope and assignments provided up front to ensure a focus on the City's priorities.

Based on our discussion and the feedback received, I plan to proceed with a request of each board, by the end of this year, a list of three to five projects or objectives they deem as priorities for their particular board to undertake. Once our new Council is seated in January, then we can take the boards' stated priorities into consideration as we make some determinations as to the projects we wish our advisory boards to focus on in 2026. Once this direction is relayed to the boards, then they will have the information they need to move forward with confidence and a sense of purpose, knowing they have the full support and direction of the Mayor and City Council.

For those ideas and suggestions that grow from our boards throughout the year, I will direct our staff liaisons and clerks to ensure that each board has a "roundtable" discussion item on their meeting agendas (most already do), which will provide an opportunity during each meeting for board members to suggest topics for a future board agenda, at which time the board can then make a decision whether it's an idea that should be elevated to City staff and/or Council for consideration. As a flow for such suggestions, the board member would first bring their idea to the board during their roundtable session, at which time they could request placement on a future board meeting agenda for either discussion or an action item, then the board can determine as a body, through a vote, whether to elevate the idea to City staff or the City Council for further direction and guidance.

To circle back on the topic of subcommittees: As mentioned during our discussion, City Code calls for the creation and use of subcommittees within the Arts, Culture, and Historic Preservation (ACHP) Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission. These commissions, guided to a great extent by adopted master plans, each have a similar but disparate function, where, for instance, a specific Parks subcommittee may be assigned with research or a task specific just to Parks, as opposed to Recreation, and vice versa. ACHP functions in this exact manner, with separate teams assigned tasks specifically for arts or culture or historic preservation. Since our committees were reinstated last year, some have created their own subcommittees, which, as Council President Ruehle pointed out, have the potential to actually slow the progress of committee work as opposed to supporting it. Additionally, these subcommittees do add at least some additional strain on resources, and they were not specifically endorsed or requested by the Mayor or City Council. I do believe that subcommittees can be a useful tool in an *ad hoc* manner, where a subcommittee is formed on a temporary basis to conduct research and gather information on a specific topic when needed, then disbanded, which is a process that I would support.

At this time, with the exception of ACHP, I would like to ask our boards to pause the meetings of the standing subcommittees they have created and focus on the topics currently before them as a full committee. For the Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee, for instance, which has formed several subcommittees, City staff truly values this board's input and has, just in the past few days, brought to my attention a number of projects and issues for which they would like to seek the recommendation of this Committee currently and in the near future, providing ample directed work for the attention of the full committee.

Finally, as we discussed previously, it is possible that certain of our boards may not see a need to meet each and every month and should not feel an obligation to do so; further, in consideration of our limited staff resources, a board should not seek to meet absent a pressing topic for the agenda. Our City Code does not necessarily envision a monthly meeting, as is evident by the absence of such requirement and specific direction for most boards to simply meet at least four times per year. By the same token, there may be instances when a board is specifically *requested* to call a meeting in order to convene for the purpose of reviewing and providing their recommendation on a particular project or issue.

Council, thank you again for your time and attention to this topic. I look forward to your additional feedback and feel we are making great progress toward efficient and effective use of our citizen advisory boards and our incredible citizens who have volunteered to serve on them.