

Fellow Commissioners,

7/23/2013

Thank you for selecting me as your chair. I am honored to accept this role and I look forward to a positive and delightful journey with each of you on our quest to redistrict Austin. I am highly optimistic that we will meet our deadlines and allow for sufficient feedback from the public. I will work hard to be fair, to listen, to include each of you, to ensure there is respect and positive camaraderie, and that we progress forward.

I wanted to share my vision for this commission with you. We need to hire legal counsel quickly. We have made our first step in the right direction by getting our executive director position posted; however, I feel that we have tapped out the City resources and we are getting into more detailed meetings where we definitely need legal counsel to advise us so we may make sound decisions. One of the most frustrating aspects of my service on this commission is my feeling of isolation from the rest of you. We have received various conflicting statements about our ability to communicate, which only complicates and exacerbates the situation. Until we hire legal counsel and are properly advised of what we can and can't do under the open meetings act, I will attempt to communicate with you through these letters.

My visions of next step action items, which may be completed concurrently, include:

1. Post for Legal Counsel
2. Establish a meeting format
3. Interview and hire Executive Director
4. Interview and hire Legal Counsel
5. Meeting formats for public forums
6. Establish a Policy Manual
7. Training

I plan to test out a few meeting formats over the next 2-3 meetings to determine the best format for conducting our meetings. This may include switching the speakers around, time for commissioners to ask questions, time limits on discussion items, and conduct. If you have any recommendations or insight, do not hesitate to pass your idea along.

We have 17 weeks until December 1, which is when the commission shall adopt the final plan. So pull your bootstraps on and let's get moving. With that said, I leave you with this quote to reflect upon:

“When we are debating an issue, loyalty means giving me your honest opinion, whether you think I'll like it or not. Disagreement, at this stage, stimulates me. But once a decision has been made, the debate ends. From that point on, loyalty means executing the decision as if it were your own”

-Colin Powell

Best Regards,

Magdalena Blanco