

RACIAL EQUITY POCKET QUESTIONS

Advisory Board Appointments

Following the Advisory Board Recruitment and Appointment Policy

What are the racial impacts?

- There continues to be a need for more diverse representation on advisory board and commissions, as well as interest. Some members of the community may not be able to participate on these boards and commissions due to limitations on transportation, lack of childcare and the affordability of each. Further, some members may not have adequate access to internet or equipment, which can cause them to miss out on announcements, recruitment efforts and participation in virtual meetings. Some community members may have jobs that cause them to work outside of “normal” business hours, which would prohibit them from attending meetings. Further, there may be a historical mistrust of government or fear of not being heard by others, which limit interest in applications to advisory boards and commissions by people of color and lower-incomes households.

Who is or will experience burden?

- Lower-income households and people of color are burdened by possibly not being able to participate on advisory boards and commissions due to limitations on child-care, transportation, internet access and job demands. Additionally, if these groups have a distrust of government or historical experience of not being heard, they will not choose to participate or even apply for advisory boards or commissions, when they could in fact be an exceptional asset to a board or commission and be the voice representing their particular demographic, which may not be as well represented.

Who is or will experience benefit?

- Lower-income households and people of color would benefit by the ideas of new initiatives to bolster participation which could include stipends for childcare/transportation, stronger community outreach and education about the important roles advisory board and commission members play in town recommendations & decisions. It further signifies the important need for all voices to have a seat at the table which in turn benefits all town citizens and the work of the boards and commissions.
- Further, if more equitable solutions aren’t present, those who do not have issues with childcare, transportation, highspeed internet, or who live in more affluent, “plugged-in” areas of town, are able to continue serving on boards and having a voice at the table much easier, thus possibly benefiting more on initiatives and recommendations to the governing board, because there would be less diversity and equity at the table of these boards & commissions, and further isolating those other important areas and voices of the community.

What are the root causes of inequity?

- Recruitment efforts in the past have relied on advertising (hanging posters, social media, etc.), and word of mouth to groups of people that may align with only a certain neighborhood(s) or demographic(s). These are mainstream, accepted practices in most communities that have been the same for many years. This has been unintentional. Further, up until the advisory board recruitment and appointment policy was created by the Town, there was less direction on the recruitment processes for advisory boards. The adoption and amendments to the advisory board recruitment and appointment policy over the past few years have worked to address historical inequities and making sure diverse applicant pools are being brought to Council.

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What might be the unintended consequences of this action or strategy?

- By considering new initiatives to possibly offer incentives to advisory board members, and for recruitment efforts, a distrust of government or missing educational component may still exist within some communities and may keep qualified citizens from applying to these boards and commissions.