

Town of Carrboro

301 W. Main St., Carrboro, NC 27510



Meeting Agenda - Final

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

7:00 PM

COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Council Chambers - Room 110

Town Council

7:00-Until**TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION**

The Council occasionally holds work sessions to allow time for in-depth consideration of certain topics and to provide feedback to the town manager. The Council does not take formal action or receive public comment during work sessions.

[24-031](#) Evaluation of Boards and Commissions

PURPOSE: This item is for the council to review the number and composition of the Town's advisory boards and commissions for consideration of restructuring and consolidation.

Attachments: [A - Advisory Board Information](#)
[B - Pocket Questions - Advisory Board Consolidation](#)



Agenda Item Abstract

File Number: 24-031

Agenda Date: 2/13/2024
In Control: Town Council
Version: 1

File Type: Agendas

Evaluation of Boards and Commissions

PURPOSE: This item is for the council to review the number and composition of the Town's advisory boards and commissions for consideration of restructuring and consolidation.

DEPARTMENT: Town Manager's Office and Town Clerk's Office

CONTACT INFORMATION: Marie Parker, Interim Town Manager, 919-918-7343, mparker@carrboronc.gov; Wendy Welsh, Interim Town Clerk, 919-918-7310, wwelsh@carrboronc.gov

INFORMATION: During the closed session on November 29, 2023, town council expressed an interest in pursuing the consolidation of some of the town's advisory boards and commissions to address efficiencies. Currently the town has fourteen advisory boards/commissions, two committees, and one task force. Almost all boards have vacant seats; some have vacancies so extensive that they cannot meet quorum to conduct business. Attracting and keeping engaged volunteers has been increasingly challenging. Of the 133 seats on boards/commissions, 43% are vacant; 9 of the 16 boards/commissions have vacancy rates at 40% or higher. There is an increased trend of board vacancies that reflects the continued difficulty to fill the seats of the various advisory boards of Carrboro.

FISCAL IMPACT: N/A

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Town Council discuss the possible advisory board consolidations and provide feedback and guidance to staff



TOWN OF CARRBORO • NC

ADVISORY BOARD CONSOLIDATION

Offices of Town Manager and Town Clerk

POSSIBLE ALIGNMENT OF ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

NINE (9) ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

- **Affordable Housing Advisory Commission**
 - *Human Services Advisory Commission (subcommittee)*
- **Board of Adjustment**
- **Economic Sustainability Commission**
- **Environmental Advisory Board**
 - *Climate Action Team*
- **Planning Board**
 - *Appearance Commission*
 - *Northern Transition Area Advisory Committee (subcommittee)*
- **Racial Equity Commission**
 - *Truth Plaque Task Force*
- **Recreation, Parks, & Cultural Resources Commission**
 - *Arts Committee*
- **Stormwater Advisory Commission**
- **Transportation Advisory Board**
 - *Greenways Commission*
 - *Safe Routes to School (subcommittee)*



CURRENT STATUS OF ADVISORY BOARDS

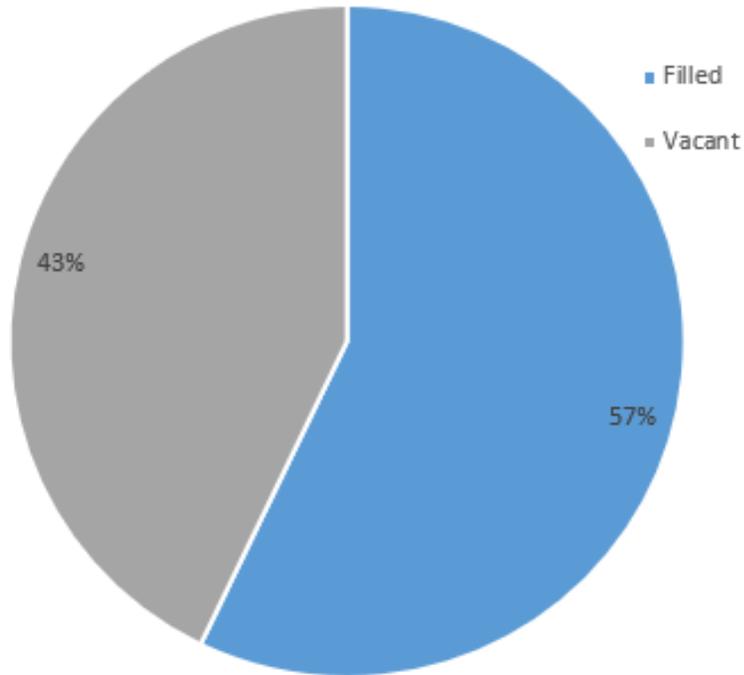
- *Affordable Housing Advisory Commission*
 - Seven members
 - Four active members
 - One to be reappointed for 2nd term
 - Three vacancies
- *Human Services Advisory Commission*
 - Seven members
 - Three active members
 - all require reappointment in June for their 2nd terms
 - Four vacancies
- *Board of Adjustment*
 - Nine members
 - Six active members
 - One to be reappointed for 4th term
 - Two term out
 - Three vacancies
- *Economic Sustainability Commission*
 - Ten members
 - Six active members
 - Four to be reappointed for second term
 - Five vacancies
- *Environmental Advisory Board*
 - Seven members
 - One active members
 - six vacancies
- *Climate Action Team*
 - Thirteen members
 - Six active members
 - Two to be reappointment for 2nd terms
 - Seven vacancies
- *Planning Board*
 - Eleven members
 - Seven active members
 - Two to be reappointed for 2nd term
 - Four vacancies
- *Appearance Commission*
 - Nine members
 - Six active members
 - One terms out
 - Three vacancies
- *Northern Transition Area Advisory Committee*
 - Five members
 - Five active members
 - One to be reappointed for 2nd term

CURRENT STATUS OF ADVISORY BOARDS

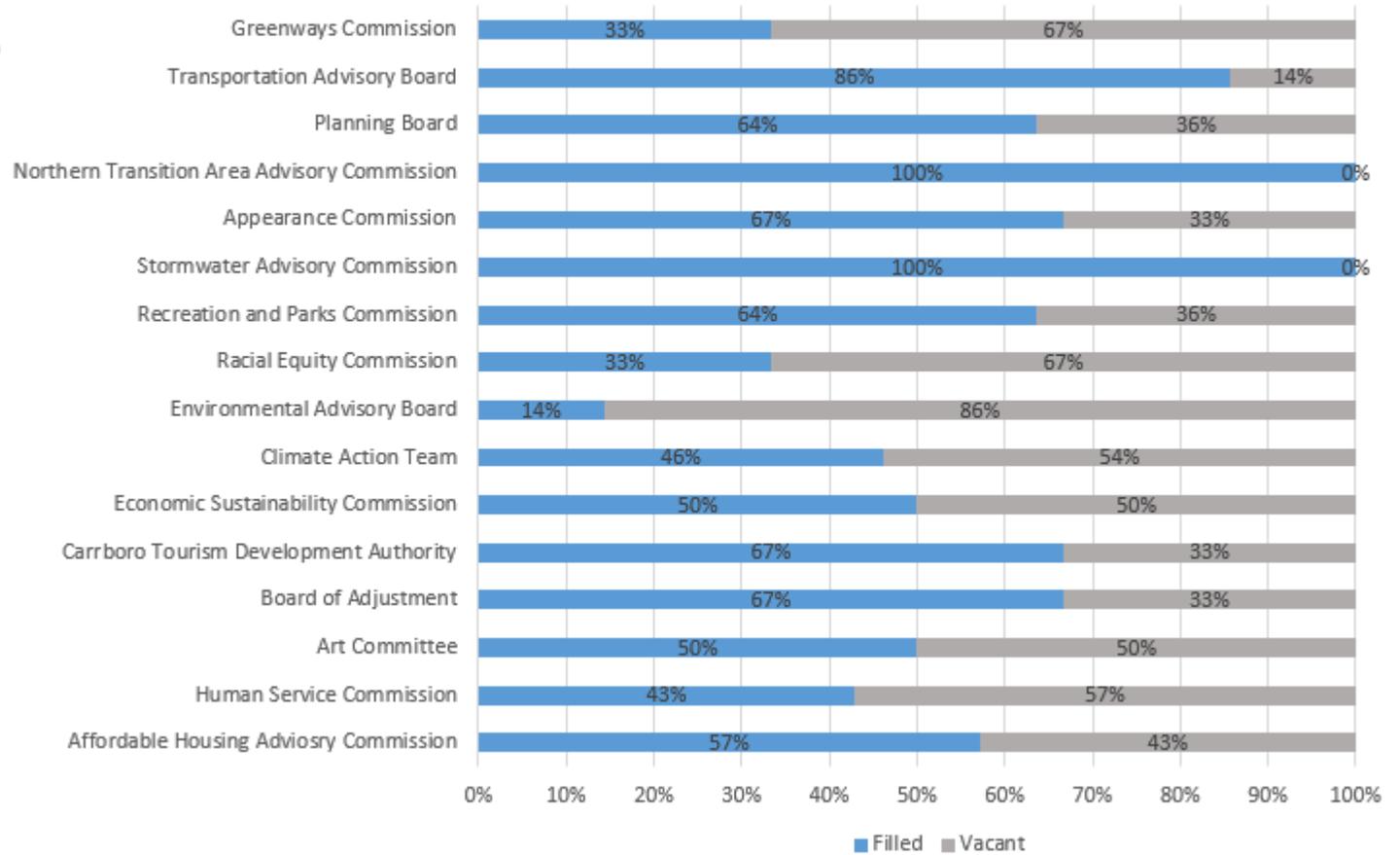
- **Racial Equity Commission**
 - Nine members
 - Three active members
 - Six vacancies
- *Truth Plaque Task Force*
 - Ten members
 - Ten active members
 - No official charge or terms established
- **Recreation, Parks & Cultural Resources Commission**
 - Eleven members
 - Six active members
 - One to be reappointed for 2nd term
 - Four vacancies
- *Art Committee*
 - Twelve members
 - Six active members
 - Two to be reappointed for second term
 - Six vacancies
- **Stormwater Advisory Commission**
 - Seven members
 - Seven active members
 - Three term out
- **Transportation Advisory Board**
 - Seven members
 - Six active members
 - One to be reappointed for 2nd term
 - One terms out
 - One vacancies
- *Greenways Commission*
 - Six members
 - Two active members
 - Four vacancies
- *Safe Routes to School*
 - Four members
 - One active members
 - Three vacancies

VACANCIES IN ADVISORY BOARDS

Vacancies in Carrboro Town Boards (Feb 2024)

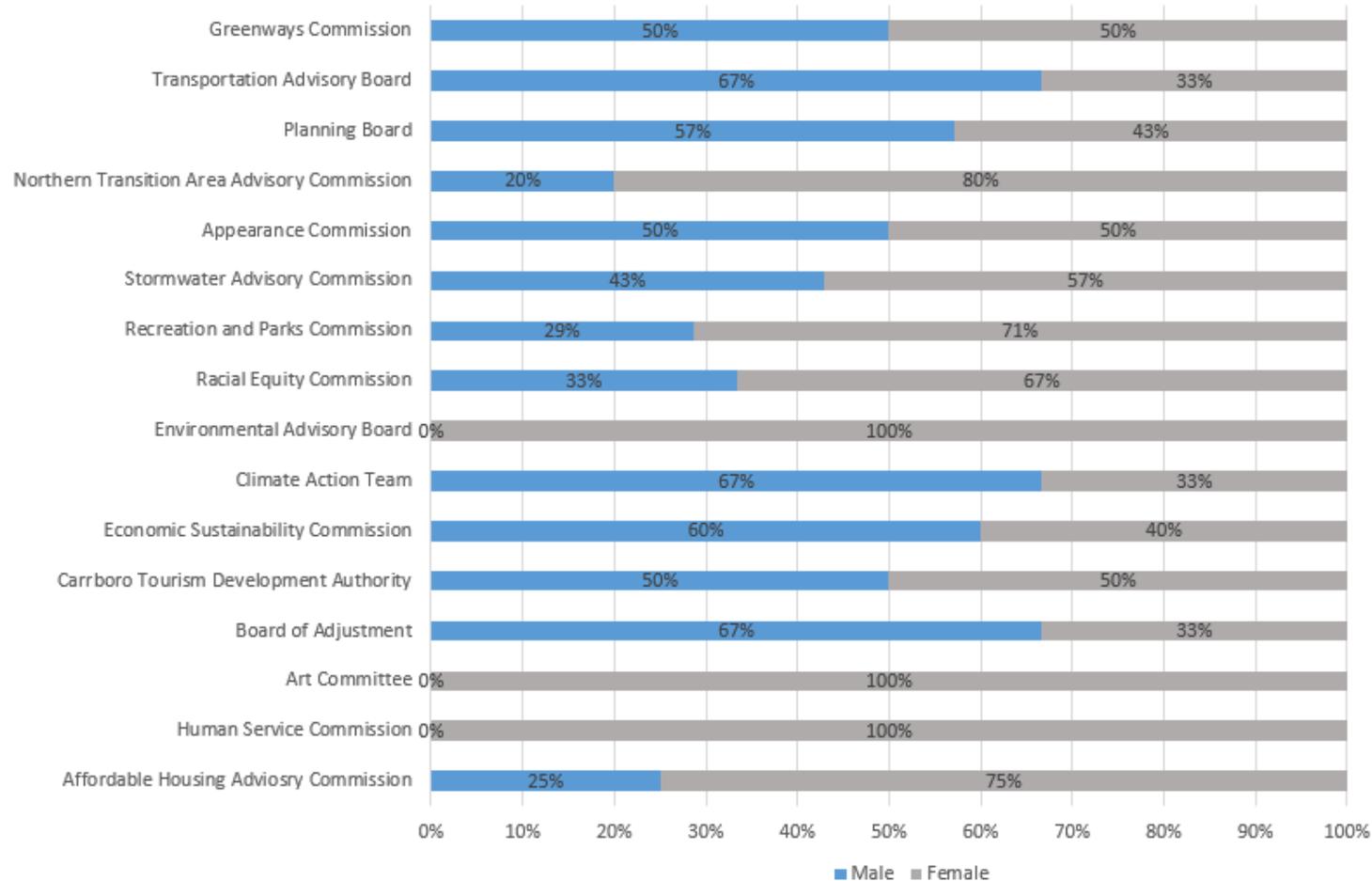


Vacancies in Carrboro Town Boards (%)



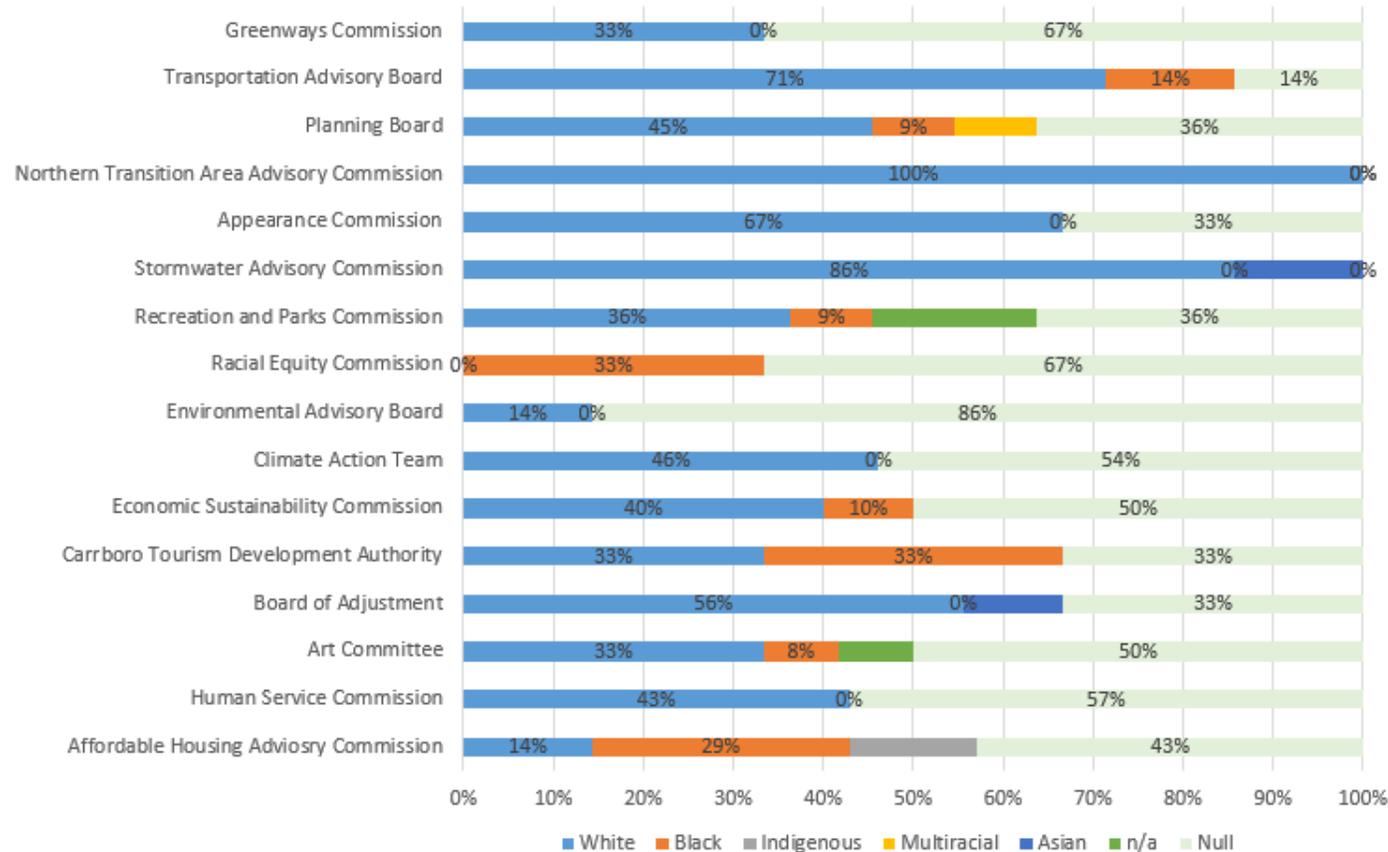
COMPOSITION OF ADVISORY BOARDS BY GENDER

Composition of Carrboro Town Boards by Gender (%)



COMPOSITION OF ADVISORY BOARDS BY RACE

Composition of Carrboro Town Boards by Race (%)



*Null denotes vacant positions



Race and Equity Pocket Questions

Title and purpose of this initiative: Advisory Board Consolidations

Department: Town Manager’s Office and Town Clerk’s Office

What are the racial and equity impacts?

There could be reduced representation and voice due to eliminating and consolidating some of the boards. Many of the boards, in particular the Truth Plaque Task Force contain many African American residents. By reducing the number of boards, we may also be losing institutional knowledge and expertise of our diverse residents.

Who is or will experience community burden?

The residents who will no longer be on the board will experience the burden of not serving anymore and having a reduced opportunity to contribute to the governance of Carrboro. The staff who have to manage this consolidation effort also will experience some burden related to the actual work of overseeing and implementing the change.

Who is or will experience community benefit?

Staff will experience the primary benefit as it decreases the number of boards and commissions that they will have to manage. Boards and commissions tend to meet outside of normal working hours, meaning that staff who serve as liaisons to these boards must work additional hours. At the time, the Town does not offer additional compensation to staff liaisons, meaning that these liaisons are performing more work for less pay. Town Council members will also experience a benefit in the sense that the boards and commissions are more streamlined. The Town Council values the input of residents and community input, however an overabundance of participation can at times create an “analysis paralysis”. The Town Council will benefit from concise and focused recommendations of the advisory boards.

What are the root causes of inequity?

Advisory boards and committees are an avenue for residents to participate in the local government process. Historically, this process has been limited only to those who hold the power and are the majority. In North Carolina, along with most of the country, this was always White Males who were property owners. As the country evolved and enacting legislation to protect the rights of all persons, mainly the 13th-15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Voting Rights Act of 1965, the process for racial minority local government participation gradually became easier. However, these laws could not, and did not simply erase centuries of suppression and limitations on voting and participation. Advisory boards help local governments to make solid decisions that take into account the backgrounds and life experiences of diverse persons.

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

By reducing the number of advisory boards and commissions it may reduce the amount of people who can participate in local government decision making. With fewer boards and commissions overall, there are less people on the boards. This means that fewer people will have the opportunity to participate in local government and have their voices heard. Additionally, Town Council members may not be as well informed about the decisions they are making because they are no longer receiving the feedback they are used to receiving.

How is your department planning to mitigate any burdens, inequities, and unintended consequences?

The Town Manager and Clerks' office is committed to making this process open and transparent. Even as the number of boards and commissions change, our focus on inclusivity remains constant. We will work diligently to dismantle participation barrier and ensure that with fewer groups, there are more transparent and meaningful options for residents to engage in town affairs. This item will be presented before a work session to allow for open discussion with the council members. Following this open discussion, the Council will give the staff direction. It is likely that the next steps will including discussion with the various boards and commissions about what their future looks like and how we can make the transition as easy as possible for them. Staff will ensure that all decisions are taken only after careful consideration.