

# Advisory board policy debated

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The first attempt at creating a set of policies and procedures for Carson City's 43 advisory boards was sent back to city staff for revision Thursday after it generated nearly two hours of discussion between the public and the Board of Supervisors.

The document addresses such things as the purpose and authority of the city's various boards, committees and commissions, appointment procedures, the Open Meeting Law, assignment of city staff support and operational procedures. But it was deemed restrictive by many who serve on city boards.

Jed Block, who serves on the Historic Resources Committee and Redevelopment Authority Citizens Committee, said he doesn't think that city supervisors should sit on the boards.

"People sometimes feel steamrolled or intimidated" by supervisors' presence, he said.

Donna Curtis, who serves on the Parks and Recreation Commission but was unable to attend Thursday's meeting, has many concerns and asked that her written comments be read into to the record by Supervisor Molly Walt. Among her objections was one concerning lobbying at the Legislature. Curtis objected to a portion of the document

that says, "(I)ndividual appointees that choose to lobby or give legislative testimony as a private citizen shall not refer to any appointment to a Carson City public body in a way that implies unauthorized authority to speak on behalf of the city or the public body to which they are appointed."

Curtis said that members of the commission do not lobby that way now, and called the policy a bit confining.

"We say, 'Although I am on the PRC, I am speaking as a private individual and not for the PRC.' This is a more positive way to say this, and most times, it is important for listeners to know that the person is on the public body in order to better understand the context of his or her remarks," she said.

Probably the most frustrated by the new document Thursday was Donna DePauw, chairwoman of the Charter Review Committee.

"I'm not real happy with this. I feel it discourages people from participating," DePauw said.

"None of the citizen committees got to see this, and we are the ones sitting on these boards. That's obscene. I'm saddened that this has been in the works for two years. I would have liked to have been involved."

Resident Ande Engleman said involving others is a frequent practice in the Legislature, where a proposal

is "floated" for feedback before final preparation.

Several at the meeting also had strong feelings about having applicants submit to a background check — some thought background checks were unnecessary, while others believed they were needed only for those serving in specific positions, such as working with children.

Supervisor Shelly Aldean said the document provides consistency and structure.

"This document elevates the importance" of those who serve the city, she said. "These committees are a proving ground for future elected officials."

Every supervisor currently in office has served on a city board or commission.

Aldean agreed that some language could be revised but reiterated that the document is a sum of current policy.

Mayor Bob Crowell said the best forum for discussing policies and procedures such as this is at the Board of Supervisors level.

"That's what transparency means," he said. "Let's do it here, because that's what transparency is all about. There are a lot of suspicions out there, but this is how we make decisions and provide clarity and participation."

City Manager Larry Werner said he plans to bring a revised document in June.