

# ALDERPERSON AGENDA ITEM MEMO

To: Government Affairs Committee

From: Andrew Meindl

Date: 11/10/2024

Subject: Proposal for 2026 City of Wauwatosa Legislative Branch Reorganization

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## A. Background/Rationale

In anticipation of the Wauwatosa Common Council's reduction in size in 2026, the Council and its committees and city commissions need to be restructured to enhance efficiency, transparency, and public engagement. This proposal outlines a comprehensive plan, led by the legislative branch in coordination with the executive branch and judicial, to streamline the committee and commission structure, improve public input processes, and ensure a balanced approach to governance while adapting to a smaller Council size. Rather than a piecemeal approach, an overall analysis, discussion, and proposal should be considered as 2026 approaches.

## B. Key Issues for Consideration

**Council Meeting Restructure:** Conduct bi-monthly Council meetings (first and third Tuesdays) with a public comment session and allow special meetings based on urgent needs.

**Public Agenda-Setting Meeting:** To increase transparency and collaborative planning, introduce a bi-weekly, open-to-the-public legislative agenda-setting session with the Council President, Mayor, City Administrator, and Committee Chairs. This meeting will also determine the routing of proposals before they go to the Aldermanic Committees and the Common Council.

**Committee Consolidation:** Replace the current aldermanic structure with two main committees comprised of 6 alders each appointed by the Council President who meet bi-weekly:

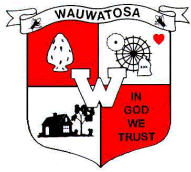
- **Policy and Finance Committee:** This committee handles financial, governmental affairs, legislative, and policy issues.
- **Community and Infrastructure Committee:** This committee, which includes six alderpersons, focuses on community affairs, zoning, transportation, and infrastructure.

**Strengthening Commissions:** Mandate city commission reviews as part of the legislative process with attached comments throughout proposal lifecycles.

**Resident Advisory Board:** Establish a resident advisory board chaired by two Wauwatosa residents that is open to participation by all Wauwatosa residents and small business owners.

**Zoning Hearing Process:** Restore the initial review of zoning matters to the Plan Commission for analysis before any Council hearing, ensuring informed public input.

**Public Comment:** Mandate public comment at Common Council meetings ensuring public input throughout the legislative process.



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**Streamline Citizen Committees, Commissions, and Boards:** The updated structure (attachment) aligns with state requirements, reduces redundancy, and streamlines the decision-making process to reflect the city's strategic goals and legal obligations.

## C. Fiscal Impact

The proposed reorganization is expected to improve efficiency and potentially reduce administrative costs by streamlining the committee structure and consolidating meeting schedules. As part of the phased implementation plan, a detailed fiscal analysis will be conducted.

## D. Requested Action

Approval of the reorganization plan and a directive for the City Attorney to draft the necessary ordinance changes to implement this proposal. The phased rollout will begin in June 2025, with full implementation by January 2026.

## E. Strategic Plan

**Economic Development and Financial Resilience** - The streamlined committee structure aims to enhance decision-making efficiency, reduce redundancies, and support timely reviews of policies that foster economic growth and resilience.

**Public Safety** - The proposal seeks to build trust and improve communication with residents by enhancing transparency through open agenda-setting meetings and clear public comment procedures, aligning with the goal of fostering a safe and engaged community.

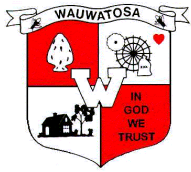
**Infrastructure and Resource Management** - Consolidating committee responsibilities into focused areas like infrastructure management supports better oversight and efficient use of city resources, contributing to sustainable infrastructure development.

**Housing and Inclusive Growth** - The emphasis on thorough commission reviews and public input in zoning matters aligns with strategic efforts to promote equitable and inclusive housing policies.

**Quality of Life and Public Engagement** - Establishing the Resident Advisory Board and standardizing public hearing schedules aligns with the strategic goal of enhancing public engagement and ensuring resident voices are integrated into decision-making.

## F. Attachments

1. Expanded Proposal Details



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Figure 1 2026+ Legislative Flow Chart

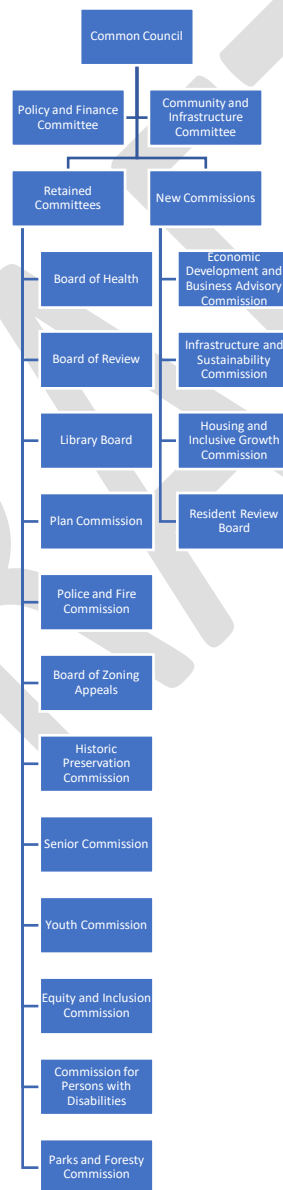
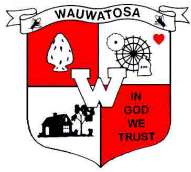


Figure 2 Draft Legislative Branch Org Chart



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## Overview of Current Structure

The current structure of Wauwatosa's committees and commissions consists of over 30 distinct bodies. This includes a mix of statutory commissions, advisory boards, and special-purpose committees. Many entities have overlapping functions, creating inefficiencies and complicating the decision-making process. The primary issues identified are:

**Redundancy:** Multiple committees review similar topics.

**Complexity:** The large number of committees makes it difficult for residents to understand the process and effectively participate.

**Inconsistent Oversight:** The lack of clear reporting lines often results in miscommunication and delays in decision-making.

**Scarcity:** Reduction in alders from 16 to 12 and city budget constrains city operations to accommodate the expansive legislative branch.

## Legal Compliance and Statutory Alignment

The proposed changes align with Wisconsin statutes governing municipal boards and commissions. The retained bodies fulfill statutory roles, while consolidated entities streamline responsibilities without sacrificing legal oversight. The new structure adheres to:

- Wis. Stat. § 66.0615 (Room Tax Administration): Integrated into the Economic Development and Business Advisory Commission.
- Wis. Stat. § 62.23 (Plan Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals): Retained without changes to comply with statutory land use planning requirements.
- Wis. Stat. § 27.08 (Parks Oversight): Incorporated into the Quality of Life and Public Engagement Committee.

## Implementation Plan

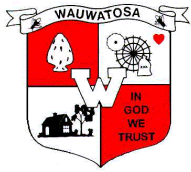
1. **Phase 1** (June 2025): Start merging existing committees into the new structure, establish the Resident Advisory Board, and initiate membership appointments.
2. **Phase 2** (January 2026): Fully transition to the new organizational setup, finalize ordinance changes, and implement standardized meeting schedules.
3. **Review** (December 2026): Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the new structure, gather feedback from residents, and adjust as needed.

## Anticipated Benefits

**Efficiency:** Streamlining the number of committees reduces redundancy and speeds up the review process.

**Transparency:** Clearer roles and responsibilities make it easier for residents to understand the decision-making process and provide input.

**Enhanced Public Engagement:** The Resident Advisory Board and early public hearings by commissions ensure robust community participation.



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## Reorganization of Citizen Commissions

This revised proposal for reorganizing Wauwatosa's citizen commissions ensures compliance with relevant Wisconsin state statutes while enhancing efficiency, transparency, and resident engagement. The updated structure aligns with state requirements, reduces redundancy, and streamlines the decision-making process to reflect the city's strategic goals and legal obligations.

### Objectives

1. **Ensure Compliance with State Statutes:** Align committee and commission roles with Wisconsin Statutes, including regulations for public safety, zoning, historic preservation, and health services.
2. **Increase Efficiency:** Simplify the committee structure, reduce overlap, and ensure a clear path for proposal reviews, from initial consideration to final approval by the Common Council.
3. **Enhance Public Engagement:** Create a streamlined process that facilitates resident input and integrates feedback throughout the lifecycle of proposals.

### Proposed New and Consolidated Committees/Commissions

#### 1. Tourism and Business Advisory Commission

- Focus: Rebranding tourism commission to include business growth, economic diversity, financial resilience, and alignment with Wis. Stat. § 66.1105.

#### 2. Infrastructure and Sustainability Committee

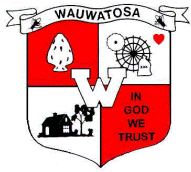
- Focus: Infrastructure planning, environmental sustainability, and resource management, aligned with Wis. Stat. § 66.0301 and § 62.15.
- Consolidates:
  - Public Works Committee
  - Environmental Sustainability Committee
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee

#### 3. Housing and Inclusive Development Authority

- Focus: Equitable housing policy, inclusive development, and neighborhood revitalization, consistent with Wis. Stat. § 66.1011.
- Consolidates:
  - Community Development Authority (CDA) as per Wis. Stat. § 66.1335
  - Appointed liaison from the Wauwatosa Affordable Housing Coalition

#### 4. Resident Advisory Board

- Focus: Providing non-binding recommendations on significant policy changes, budget allocations, and development projects. The resident advisory board will be co-chaired by an appointed representative from a representative from east of Mayfair Road and a citizen representative from west of Mayfair Road. Participation in the advisory board will be open to all residents and small businesses.
- New Body: Created to enhance resident input across all districts, ensuring compliance with public participation.



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## **Committees**

(Retained under State Statute)

### **Board of Health**

Mandate: Wisconsin Statute § 251.04

Current Members: 5 (including health professionals and 1 non-voting health officer)

Proposed Members: 5

Change: No change

### **Board of Review**

Mandate: Wisconsin Statute § 70.46

Current Members: 5 residents

Proposed Members: 5 residents

Change: No change

### **Library Board**

Mandate: Wisconsin Statute § 43.54

Current Members: 9 (8 appointed by Mayor, 1 by School District Superintendent)

Proposed Members: 9

Change: No change

### **Plan Commission**

Mandate: Wisconsin Statute § 62.23

Current Members: 7 (Mayor, 2 Alderpersons, and 4 citizen members)

Proposed Members: 7 (Mayor, 1 Alderperson, and 5 citizen members)

Change: Shifts from 2 Alderpersons to 1 Alderperson, increasing citizen members from 4 to 5.

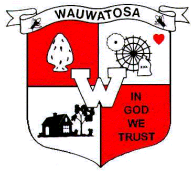
### **Police and Fire Commission**

Mandate: Wisconsin Statute § 62.13

Current Members: 5 residents

Proposed Members: 5 residents

Change: No change



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## Additional Commissions That Remain Unchanged

### 1. Board of Zoning Appeals

- Focus: Hearing appeals on zoning decisions, variances, and exceptions, aligned with Wis. Stat. § 62.23(7)(e).
- Rationale: The board's legal functions and authority require it to remain independent and unchanged.

### 2. Historic Preservation Commission

- Focus: Protecting and promoting historic resources, per Wis. Stat. § 62.23(7)(em).
- Rationale: The commission's mandate for historic preservation is vital for maintaining the city's heritage.

### 3. Senior Commission

- Focus: Advocating for the needs of older adults, consistent with Wis. Stat. § 46.82 (aging and disability resource centers).
- Rationale: The commission's focus on enhancing the quality of life for seniors aligns with state mandates for senior services.

### 4. Youth Commission

- Focus: Engaging young residents in local government, aligned with Wis. Stat. § 119.47 (youth programs).
- Rationale: The Youth Commission is critical in fostering civic engagement among young people.

### 5. Equity and Inclusion Commission

- Focus: Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in line with anti-discrimination laws under Wis. Stat. § 66.1011.
- Rationale: The commission's focus on systemic equity is essential for inclusive policymaking.

### 6. Commission for Persons with Disabilities

- Focus: Advocating for accessibility and addressing the needs of residents with disabilities, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Wis. Stat. § 46.295.
- Rationale: The commission ensures that city policies and projects are inclusive and accessible.

### 7. Parks and Forestry Commission

- Focus: The Parks and Forestry Commission's primary focus is to oversee the development, maintenance, and preservation of Wauwatosa's public parks, urban forests, and green spaces.
- Rationale: Retaining the Parks and Forestry Commission ensures specialized oversight of park development, urban forestry, and community engagement, supporting Wauwatosa's strategic goals for quality of life, environmental sustainability, and compliance with state statutes.

## Summary of City Commission/Committee/and Board Changes

The number of committees and commissions is reduced, streamlining the structure while maintaining compliance with state statutes. Funding of the committees and commissions will remain the same and for consolidated commissions and committees funding will be combined from the 2025 executive budget.

The new structure aligns with Wisconsin legal requirements, enhances public engagement, and centralizes citizen input's impact for a more efficient decision-making process.

This reorganization plan provides a balanced, compliant approach to restructuring Wauwatosa's citizen committees and commissions, ensuring legal alignment while fostering effective resident participation.