

# Memorandum



**TO:** Planning Advisory Board/Zoning Commission Mem

**FROM:** Craig Raymond, Director, Planning and Community Development

**DATE:** June 22, 2017

**SUBJECT:** PAB/ZC Membership Size

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Between January and June 2017, seven Planning Advisory Board meetings have been cancelled due to a lack of a quorum. This has had a significant effect on the flow of project review and approval on the front end of some major projects.

This memo is not intended to provide answers to an ongoing issue or problem. Nor is it intended to put undue pressure on a group of volunteers to respond in a way that would endanger or compromise their primary individual priorities. Rather, it is intended to serve as a primer and a starting point for group discussion on how best to ensure that the business of the City serving its citizens can remain as seamless and efficient as possible.

Staff is uncertain what is causing this phenomenon at this point in time, and thought has been put into whether reducing the size of the PAB/ZC will effectively help remedy the problem. While this can and should be part of the discussion, staff is no longer certain that board size is a part of the problem or solution. Staff research indicates that the size of Planning Board membership varies anywhere from seven to twelve in Montana cities and counties. There are a few with seven members, but the majority of boards have nine members.

There may be other scenarios which may be affecting quorum reliability at this time. Staff offers the following for discussion purposes:

- PAB/ZC membership is heavy stocked in development industry professionals during a "boom" period of growth
- Lack of more interesting long term comprehensive growth planning projects
- Lacking sense of purpose or value to the City Commission or community

Possible ideas or solutions to stimulate more reliable attendance at PAB/ZC meetings:

- Monthly or weekly calendar reminders from staff
- Take on more challenging and in-depth long term projects
- Commit to a greater sense of accountability to each other and the City Commission
- Focus on new member recruitment from other sectors when openings occur
- Reduce meeting frequency to one per month

City staff can appreciate the challenges that board members face when investing time in voluntary boards or committees. Often, we all struggle to juggle priorities between personal and professional needs or demands. We hope that this provides a good starting point for discussion on how to obtain better PAB/ZC quorum reliability.