

To the Mayor and Members of the City Council

February 17, 2015

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**SUBJECT: Commission for Women**

The Commission for Women ("Commission") (originally known as the Commission on the Status of Women) was established by Ordinance No. 8911 in 1983 in order to "act in an advisory capacity to the City Council on matters of concern specifically referred to it for study by the City Council." In 2003, in addition to the name change, Ordinance No. 15477 instituted the following amendments:

- Increased membership from 9 to 19 members, adding representation of 10 organizations as recognized by the Commission;
- Increased quorum from 5 to 10 members present;
- Changed mission to advising City Council and studying of women's issues important to the community; and
- Added the requirement of the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present to approve any matter before the Commission.

Over the years, the Commission has helped bring awareness to community issues such as infant mortality and domestic violence, both through independent and collaborative efforts with local nonprofits. Additionally, since 1988, the Commission has acknowledged the contributions of women in the workplace and the community through its annual Outstanding Women of Fort Worth Awards. However, as these causes are being addressed by various nonprofits and other organizations throughout the City, the Commission has struggled to maintain active members, and ensure its contributions are not being duplicated elsewhere.

During this transition, the Commission has not formally convened since September 2013. Two meeting agendas were posted during 2014, but ultimately no meeting occurred due to a lack of a quorum. At the request of the Commission, staff has been working with Commission leadership to evaluate the composition and purpose of the committee. **As a result, staff will bring forward an ordinance amendment on March 3, 2015 that will reduce the membership to the nine Council appointees and eliminate the formal role of outside agencies, change the quorum to five, and change the voting requirements to a simple majority.** It is anticipated that this will result in the ability to achieve a quorum.

This spring, a formal meeting of the Commission will be convened to discuss how Commission members should serve the City regarding women's issues. Former agency appointees who remain active and other community leaders will be invited to provide input to the discussion. The Commission will be asked to provide a progress report to the City Council by May 2015 in order to determine if additional changes are appropriate.

David Cooke
City Manager