



MID-COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Luisa Montero-Diaz
Mid-County RSC Director

December 17, 2015
The Honorable Isiah Leggett
County Executive
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Leggett:

The Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) asks that you consider ways to streamline the process for filling board vacancies. The need for change has become apparent to us in our recent experience.

Problems with Delays in Filling Vacancies. Four months is too long to complete the process from advertising vacancies to having the Executive's recommendations approved by the County Council prior to new members beginning to serve. The delay reduces the effectiveness of the group. It frustrates and discourages the continuing members. We urge you to turn your attention to ways of streamlining the process of filling vacancies and would be glad to work with you on it.

By the end of May 2015, the MCCAB, consisting of 15 members, had three vacancies. The number of vacancies increased to four in June. We could not even convene a meeting since our bylaws require that any action have the affirmative vote of a majority of the Board membership, i.e., eight members. During June, July and September, we had eight of the 11 continuing members present at a regular business meeting only once (with members taking vacations, being ill or having conflicting obligations). When we are at full strength, we regularly exceed 12 members attending.

The handicap of being short four members complicated efforts to elect officers for the coming year, organize sub-committees, and offer formal responses to you and the County Council on matters before you. The situation was further complicated by the denial of reappointment of a valued Board member whom we had expected to take on leadership responsibilities. It was not until our mid-October meeting that we had a full contingent of members and could continue to function fully, electing committee chairs and setting an agenda for the issues in which we wanted to become involved. Steps should be taken to speed the process of filling vacancies.

Problems with Lack of Communications to the Board on Filling Vacancies. Our second concern was occasioned by the denial of reappointment to one of our members. In our experience, reappointment to a board or commission is hardly ever denied to a person eligible for it. We remain confused by the negative decision in this case and discouraged by the loss of a highly valued member of MCCAB whom we had expected to take on a leadership position. Whoever is operationally responsible for such a decision ought to consider the fact that the board or commission has a stake in its own membership.

Denial of reappointment is so rare that consultation with the board's chair before making a final decision would add little to the workload of those conducting the process. The currently one-sided decision is fair neither to the individual concerned nor to the body of which he or she is a member. We hope you will consider a modification of the process to require communication with the board or commission chair before a reapplication is denied.

Respectfully,


Gregory F. Intoccia, Chair
The Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board