

# Information Brief for Citizens' Efficiency Commission



September 15, 2011

## Concerning Efficiency Commission Committee or Taskforce Structure

### Key Findings:

After reviewing five similar commissions, the SSCRPC found:

- The commissions developed a mix of subcommittee and taskforce structures, usually to highlight specific efficiency issues affecting a single jurisdiction.
- Since they were most often issue-based, the committee and taskforce structures were somewhat fluid over each commission's life.
- The rigidity of their subcommittee or taskforce structures appears to be based upon the commissions' size, scope, and meeting/reporting requirements, and therefore varied by jurisdiction.
- How comprehensive or permanent a commission's subcommittee or taskforce structure was, appears to be dependent on the ordinance requirements and/or funding.
- Most commissions reviewed addressed matters pertaining only to a single jurisdiction, but for the Polk County, FL, commission, which was very narrow in focus.

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### Comparable Commission Committee Structures

In order to help the Sangamon County Citizens' Efficiency Commission (CEC) consider how it might use committees or taskforces to organize its work, Commissioners requested that further information be provided on comparable commissions' organizational structures: particularly that of the Los Angeles County (CA) Efficiency Commission. In response to this request, staff of the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) reviewed the committee structures of five similar bodies, including that for Los Angeles County. A very brief outline of what the SSCRPC's review found is presented on the following pages.

The SSCRPC found that these bodies tended to develop a mix of subcommittee and taskforce structures. Both taskforces and subcommittees were commonly organized to highlight programs or activities of particular interest to the specific jurisdictions. Since they were focused on specific programs or issues, the establishment of committees and taskforces was somewhat fluid throughout each organization's tenure.

The rigidity of subcommittee and taskforce structure appears to vary based upon the commissions' size, scope, and meeting/reporting requirements. Commissions with more stringent requirements by ordinance or with more funding, generally had more comprehensive and permanent subcommittee structures. This should not be surprising as the ordinances may specify functions to be considered, and the presence of funding allows for a commission to obtain the staff resources necessary for on-going committee activities.

However, the SSCRPC review also found that the structures of the commissions reviewed may not be directly applicable to the CEC's work, as these other commissions were typically not multijurisdictional. That is, they were only considering the activities and performance of a single jurisdiction; for example in the case of the Los Angeles County commission, that single unit of government. Only one commission found in our review might be considered to be multijurisdictional, but its scope appears to be very narrow.

CEC members should note that in an earlier review of such efforts, the SSCRPC found examples of commissions that did address the activities of two jurisdictions, however these were bodies established for the consolidation of the two municipalities into a single one. These were not included in this review as they were seen as less relevant to the CEC's work and were often an outcome of some state-sponsored and funded consolidation effort.

***Los Angeles County Citizen's Economy & Efficiency Commission*** (Los Angeles County, CA)

The Economy & Efficiency Commission (EEC) is made up of 21 appointed members and has been in existence in some form since 1964. It is a single jurisdiction commission focused on LA County. The EEC apparently has no standing committee structure, but instead appoints members to taskforces based upon the current projects or issues at hand.

Task forces in recent years have included the following:

- Child Care Fraud Task Force
- Civil Service Reform Task Force
- Strategic Planning Project Task Force
- Civil Grand Jury Video Task Force
- Succession Planning Task Force
- Organization and Accountability Task Force
- Governance Task Force
- Economic Development Task Force
- Sherriff's Transportation Task Force
- Asset Management Task Force
- Finance Task Force

These taskforces report to the commission at-large throughout the tenure of their respective projects. The EEC generally also receives liaison reports at its meetings from bodies such as LA County's Local Government Service Commission or the Countywide Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee.

***Maui County Cost of Government Commission*** (Maui County, HI)

A nine-commissioner body, the Cost of Government Commission (CGC) creates annual reports on economy, efficiency, and improved services for the county, making it a single jurisdiction commission. The CGC does have a subcommittee structure. Some subcommittees are retained from year-to-year, but others seem to develop in a project-specific manner. Subcommittees provide the structure for the annual report by creating areas of emphasis. In recent years, the subcommittees established have included the following:

- Boards and Commissions Subcommittee
- Department of Management Subcommittee
- Energy Subcommittee
- Waiehu Golf Course Subcommittee (in conjunction with Department of Parks and Recreation)

The Cost of Government Council is intended to look only into the legislative and executive branches of county government, and its breadth of study may therefore be limited in comparison to the CEC.

***Broward County Management and Efficiency Study Committee (Broward County, FL)***

Broward County appoints a 17 member commission to meet every ten years, tasked with providing an interim report on effective and cost-efficient service provision within a year of appointment, and a final report before the end of their two-year terms. The MESC has the capability to hire an executive director or staff if it so chooses. After a workshop concerning suggested changes and projects, the MESC created subcommittees for study. Their subcommittees were:

- Procurement Procedures
- Technology
- Capital Asset Allocation (later renamed Management and Administration)
- Broward Sheriff's Office
- Service Delivery within Broward County

***Miami-Dade County Performance and Efficiency Commission (Miami-Dade County, FL)***

The Performance and Efficiency Commission (PEC) works under the Miami Dade Commission Auditor and also receives support staff from the Mayor's office, in keeping with its more extensive objectives. The PEC is required by ordinance to provide quarterly reports. It also reports on business plans and conducts formal assessments on every department or function the county oversees. Its broad categorical service areas include:

- Public Safety
- Health and Human Services
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Recreation and Cultures
- Neighborhood & UMSA
- Enabling Strategies

Because this body functions in an auditing and assessing capacity, its subcommittee structure appears to be more formal and less organic than those of other bodies. It does not have multi-jurisdictional scope, but is deeply involved in the substance of the county's governance through its role in the Auditor's office.

***Polk County Efficiency Commission (Polk County, FL)***

The Polk County Efficiency Commission convenes only once every eight years, and has, in the eyes of its citizens, lacked a certain degree of focus in its past efforts. Polk County has a charter form of government, meaning that its Charter Review Commission must make recommendations for referenda to change the county government every eight years. Accordingly, the Efficiency Commission has faced the prospect of a public mandate to have its functions clarified within the County Charter.

In 2004, the PCEC spent \$450,000-\$500,000 hiring a consulting firm, rather than developing adequate measures of agency effectiveness. The PCEC has focused primarily on very specific county activities, such as auto maintenance contracts and paper purchasing. With this understanding, the Polk County commission appears to not have an established committee structure. However, its purposes are to determine whether adequate measures of effectiveness for various units of government within the county exist. This appears to give it a more multi-jurisdictional scope, but the focus of its work is so narrow that it may not be comparable to the Sangamon County CEC.

**Implications:**

As suggested by common practices of similar bodies, at this time the Sangamon County CEC may benefit from considering a fluid taskforce structure to deal with concerns and projects as they arise. Were it to attempt to set up a standing subcommittee structure, the CEC would potentially face limitations including lack of staff support, multi-jurisdictional challenges, and fluid or yet underdeveloped project goals. A taskforce structure would allow the Commission to avail itself of the opportunities for flexibility afforded by its establishing resolution, better equipping it to identify efficiencies in service of the citizens of Sangamon County.

**Information compiled by Amy Uden, SSCRPC, and prepared for the Sangamon County Citizens' Efficiency Commission.**

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**Sources:**

County and commission websites, agendas, and minutes for the respective bodies.

**See also:**

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Management and Efficiency Study Committee, Broward County, *Final Report*,  
<http://www.broward.org/Efficiency/Documents/BrowardCountyMESCFinalReport.pdf>.

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The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) serves as the joint planning body for Sangamon County and the City of Springfield, as well as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation planning in the region.

The Commission has 17 members including representatives from the Sangamon County Board, Springfield City Council, special units of government, and six appointed citizens from the city and county. The Executive Director is appointed by the Executive Board of the Commission and confirmed by the Sangamon County Board.

The Commission works with other public and semi-public agencies throughout the area to promote orderly growth and redevelopment, and assists other Sangamon County communities with their planning needs. Through its professional staff, the SSCRPC provides overall planning services related to land use, housing, recreation, transportation, economics, environment, and special projects. It also houses the Sangamon County Department of Zoning which oversees the zoning code and liquor licensing for the County.

The Commission prepares area-wide planning documents and assists the County, cities, and villages, as well as special districts, with planning activities. The staff reviews all proposed subdivisions and makes recommendations on all Springfield and Sangamon County zoning and variance requests. The agency serves as the county's Plat Officer, Floodplain Administrator, Census coordinator, and local A-95 review clearinghouse to process and review all federally funded applications for the county. The agency also maintains existing base maps, census tract maps, township and zoning maps and the road name map for the county.

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