TO: All City Boards and Commissions & City Staff Liaisons

FROM: Alex Voigt, Deputy Chief of Staff

DATE: July 29, 2020

SUBJECT: COVID 19 – Boards and Commissions Meetings - UPDATED

Thank you for your continued service as a valued member of one of the City’s Boards or Commissions or a staff liaison for a Board or Commission. Please see the important message below regarding the ongoing efforts regarding COVID-19.

In June, Governor Pritzker signed a bill amending the Open Meetings Act and implementing very strict guidelines on how and when public bodies, such as our boards and commissions, can meet remotely. Specifically, we must ensure that a verbatim record of every meeting be maintained of every meeting and that we provide the public with a real-time opportunity to hear everything that occurs during the meeting. In many cases, public bodies must also have at least one of its members present at the meeting location even if no one else is there. When the state moved to Phase 4 last month, the Governor's new disaster proclamation specifically re-enforced this point. These rules were developed for governing bodies like city councils, but unfortunately, neither the Governor nor the legislature made any exceptions for advisory bodies such as yours.

As a result of these changes, we are asking each city board and commission to determine whether it needs to meet to conduct business from now until the end of August. If your board or commission determines that it is necessary to conduct business, please communicate this to the Mayor’s Office ASAP as it may be necessary to identify an alternative physical meeting location that can accommodate your members and the public with appropriate social distancing measures.

Additionally, if your board or commission has mandatory duties under Illinois law or our local ordinances that cannot be deferred - for example, the Planning and Zoning Commission - we will make separate arrangements to facilitate virtual meetings during July.

We will be scheduling a virtual meeting for all Boards & Commissions’ Staff Liaisons and Chairs in early August to review this information in more detail and answer any questions you might have. Look out for this calendar invitation by the end of the week.

Any Board or Commission still planning on meeting for the month of August (other than Planning and Zoning Commission), please communicate this to the Mayor’s Office ASAP, otherwise, please post your own cancellation notice for next month.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Mayor’s Office.