

The so-called Pre-Steering meeting - Leadership

From: Ryan, Kieran  
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2017 4:39 PM  
To: Skigen, Randall; Mitchell, Elaine; Fedeli, Mary Lisa; DePina, Gloria; McGarry, Marion; Cerasoli, Frank; Franzetti, Carl  
Cc: Rosenson, Valerie  
Subject: The so-called Pre-Steering meeting - Leadership

It seems to me the 'pre-steering meeting' (already highly suspect to me as an instrument of the legislative function because of systemic separation of powers issues) in the way it has operated on more than a few occasions, tends to demean the independent legislative function, and I think last night (6/12/17) was yet another particularly stark example of such.

Often times this meeting devolves into a one-sided harangue ('a lengthy and aggressive speech') from an inappropriately combative executive branch which emits and exerts, generally, its claimed administrative accomplishments, its personal animus toward the actions of other city boards or city officials, or which verbally emotes various needless partisan accusations, or the executive veers into an extemporaneous exogenous political monologue, or the meeting becomes a tense lobbying session for the prerogatives of the executive; all contrary to the intended purpose of this meeting - that we become informed about the "status of items" to be brought, or already before the board. 'Status of items.' Status.

Respectfully, I believe the President should take care to limit these meetings to their intended purpose, as underlined below, and endeavor more assertively to protect the interests and the independence of the legislative function, and the legislative prerogatives of all of his individual board members, from any undue executive branch incursions or encroachments, especially those of an aggressive or an accusatory nature. Failing that, I think these meetings should be discontinued.

One might reply 'well then, just don't go' - but that would be perhaps be an abdication of one's duty to shepherd/advance an agenda item of constituent concern, especially if such item could be of a controversial nature impacting the executive branch, and thereby be subject to unchallenged prejudicial executive branch scorn at a meeting one is purposely not attending.

I don't know if there is a perfect solution to all this, but I thought I would make my opinion known to the board leadership, for what it's worth. This is my person observation and opinion. Thanks for your consideration.

III. LEADERSHIP

A. The Leadership of the Board shall consist of the President, the Clerk, the Majority Leader, the Minority Leader, the Deputy Majority Leader(s) and the Deputy Minority Leader(s). The Leadership may meet with the Mayor or other City officials in order to become informed about the status of items being brought before the Board or updates to items currently before the Board, which information shall then be conveyed to the membership of the Board or committee(s) of the Board, as appropriate. Such meetings shall be held in public and shall be limited to the agenda of the Steering Committee. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the public shall be excluded from any discussion during such meeting which would fall under the exclusions requiring an executive session, as listed in CGS §1-200(6) of the Freedom of Information Act. The Leadership shall have no authority to act on behalf of the Board.

Please distribute this communication under the 'communications' section of the board's correspondence section, as from me, a private Stamford resident.

Thanks

Kieran M. Ryan