

Citizens League
545 Mobil Oil Building
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STATEMENT

PREPARED BY: Citizens League Executive Committee as authorized by Board of Directors

SUBJECT: Suggested Criteria for Chairman of the Metropolitan Council

The 1967 Legislature established a Metropolitan Council of 15 members appointed by the Governor. Governor Harold LeVander has said he intends to make his appointment of the chairman of the Council first, with the other appointments to follow later.

The Citizens League early in 1967 published a comprehensive report on the need for a Metropolitan Council for the Twin Cities area and supported proposed legislation to this end. Consequently, the League is deeply concerned with the criteria which are followed in making appointments. The following criteria are those which the Citizens League believes the Governor should follow in appointing a chairman.

1. He must have an awareness and understanding of the areawide governmental problems facing the Twin Cities area and the need for the Metropolitan Council to play a positive role in solving these problems.

It is of greatest importance that the chairman, through his present or past activities, exhibit general knowledge of areawide problems, such as transportation, water supply, refuse and sewage disposal, taxation, land use and parks and open space and recognize the need for the Metropolitan Council to provide leadership in seeking solutions.

2. He should have exhibited a general sympathy with the need to look at the entire metropolitan area in solving these problems and seek solutions which are in the best interests of the metropolitan area as a whole.

The chairman should not have attempted, either actively or passively, to resist efforts to look at the metropolitan area as a whole in solving problems which transcend municipal or county boundaries.

3. The chairman should have demonstrated qualities of leadership, either because of present or past activities. It is desirable, although not essential, that he be generally recognized as a leader in the metropolitan area at the time of his appointment.

The chairman of the Metropolitan Council will need to exercise positive leadership in directing the activities of the Council. He should have already demonstrated leadership ability. It would be advantageous, also, from the standpoint of the respect and support which the Council will need, to appoint a chairman who has already become generally known and respected among those who are actively involved or interested in governmental affairs in the Twin Cities area.

4. The chairman should be willing and able to make this position his primary civic responsibility and devote substantial amounts of time to the Council's work.

The responsibilities of the chairman of the Metropolitan Council are so extensive and of such importance that the chairman cannot be tied to other activities which would place demands upon his time so that he could not carry out his Council responsibilities adequately.

5. Clear conflicts of interest are to be avoided.

The chairman of the Metropolitan Council will need the widespread confidence of the other members of the Council, public officials, the Legislature, civic groups and the general public. He should not have nor give the appearance of having potential conflicts of interest. This means that he should not have commitments, because of economic interests, regular employment or other activities, which would interfere with his ability to see the problem of the metropolitan area in full perspective and be guided by independent judgments.

6. The chairman should not, by previous manifestations or actions, hold viewpoints on the most desirable long-range structure for the Metropolitan Council which are in conflict with those of the civic and governmental leadership of the metropolitan area.

In three important respects the Metropolitan Council, as established by the Legislature, was in conflict with the wishes of major civic and governmental organizations and a majority of metropolitan legislators. They were as follows: (a) the powers of the Council, (b) method of selection of members, and (c) whether the Council should be a local or state agency. The consensus of the organizations and legislators in the metropolitan area was for giving the Council operating responsibilities, electing members of the Council by popular vote of the people, and establishing a local, not a state, agency. The chairman should concur generally with these views or at least not hold viewpoints clearly in conflict with them.