



STAFF REPORT	
SUBJECT: Consideration of Continuation of Allowing Virtual Public Comment at City Council, Planning Commission, and other Brown Act Meetings	MEETING DATE: Feb. 1, 2024
SUBMITTED BY: Alan D. Flora, City Manager	
PURPOSE OF REPORT: <input type="checkbox"/> Information only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Action Item	

WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF THE CITY COUNCIL:

The City Council is being asked to consider eliminating virtual public comment at meetings.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

In the spring of 2020 the City began allowing virtual public input at its meeting in response to the COVID pandemic. This was made possible by emergency orders from Governor Newsom related to the Brown Act, California’s transparency laws. As you know, the emergency orders were rolled back and virtual participation by City Council, Commission members, etc. is no longer allowed, except under very specific circumstances. Many jurisdictions, including Clearlake, have continued the use of Zoom to allow more flexibility for public comment.

Beginning largely in the fall of 2023 many jurisdictions eliminated a virtual option for public input due to the rise in inappropriate and racist comments at public meetings.

At the City Council’s January 18th meeting there were multiple virtual attendees that made disparaging, even racists comments which were both inappropriate and unrelated to City business. Staff would like to discuss the discontinuation of allowing public comment on City business virtually. Staff recommend the Council continue to allow the use of Zoom for City consultants and contractors as appropriate.

OPTIONS:

1. Discontinue the Use of Virtual Meetings for Public Comment.
2. Provide alternative direction to staff.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None \$ Budgeted Item? Yes No

Budget Adjustment Needed? Yes No If yes, amount of appropriation increase: \$

Affected fund(s): General Fund Measure P Fund Measure V Fund Other:

Comments:

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACT:

- Goal #1: Make Clearlake a Visibly Cleaner City
- Goal #2: Make Clearlake a Statistically Safer City
- Goal #3: Improve the Quality of Life in Clearlake with Improved Public Facilities
- Goal #4: Improve the Image of Clearlake
- Goal #5: Ensure Fiscal Sustainability of City
- Goal #6: Update Policies and Procedures to Current Government Standards
- Goal #7: Support Economic Development

Attachments: