



AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: February 14, 2023

Subject: Los Altos Commission Appointment Process

Prepared by: Anthony Carnesecca, Economic Development Administrator

Reviewed by: Jon Maginot, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Gabriel Engeland, City Manager

Attachment(s):

None

Initiated by:

City Council

Previous Council Consideration:

None

Fiscal Impact:

None

Environmental Review:

Not applicable

Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:

- Does the Council wish to provide direction on the commission appointment process?
- How does the Council wish to appointment individuals to serve on commissions?

Summary:

- City Council directed city staff to come back with an analysis of the commission appointment policy.
- City staff has incorporated feedback from the January 10, 2023 Study Session.

Staff Recommendation:

City staff recommends amending the “Membership on City Commissions” section from the Los Altos Commission Handbook.

City Manager

GE

Reviewed By:

City Attorney

JH

Finance Director

JD



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Purpose

Provide direction on the commission appointment process that governs the process for individuals to be appointed to serve on a City of Los Altos Commission so staff can return with an updated policy.

Background

The City of Los Altos has guidelines on the procedures for the appointment process. These procedures for commissions have changed at the direction of the City Council to improve the appointment process for Council, commissioners, applicants, and staff.

The current commission appointment process is the following:

- “The City Council accepts applications for Commission positions year-round. Two times per year, formal recruitments are conducted for those positions which are or will become vacant (including those for which an incumbent is eligible for reappointment). With the exception of the Youth Commission, interviews are scheduled before the entire City Council at a special meeting. Between the two formal recruitments, the City may conduct recruitments for vacant positions as they arise. Interviews for these positions may be held either immediately before or during a regular Council meeting. Appointments are made by written ballot during a regular City Council meeting.

Youth Commission applicants are interviewed by the City Council Youth Commission Interview Committee which then makes appointment recommendations to the full City Council at a regular Council meeting.”

Discussion/Analysis

City staff presented a number of proposed improvements to the above process for review by City Council at the January 10, 2023 Study Session. City staff has taken that feedback and incorporated it into the below amended section from the Los Altos Commission Handbook.

During the last discussion with City Council, there was some confusion regarding the frequency of current appointments for commissions. Under the current process, there is only one recruitment for each commission annually with half of the commissions in March and the other half of commissions in September. Previously the City had done one recruitment annually for all commissions, but shifted to two recruitments due to the large number of commissions and commissioners. This proposal aims to consolidate the two periods of recruitment into one without changing the quantity of annual recruitments for any commission.

The updated process allows flexibility for future unexpected vacancies as a commission chair or commission liaison is able to request a specific vacancy recruitment.



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City staff has added some elements to the outreach component of the recruitment process outlined below and plans to provide a FAQ on commissions for residents to easily understand what commissions do, how to apply for commissions, and how they can stay engaged in the commission process within Los Altos.

The amended process is very equitable as candidates will only be allowed the same list of questions and allotment of time.

The proposed commission appointment process is the following:

- “The City Council accepts applications for Commission positions only during the formal recruitment period. Once per year in September, formal recruitments are conducted for those positions which are or will become vacant (including those for which an incumbent is eligible for reappointment). The City may conduct a recruitment for specific vacancies between formal recruitments if there is a vacancy that causes a commission to fall below quorum or at the direction of City Council after a request from a commission chair or commission liaison.

With the exception of the Youth Commission, recruitment will follow the same process. Youth Commission applicants are interviewed by the City Council Youth Commission Interview Committee which then makes appointment recommendations to the full City Council at a regular Council meeting.

The City Clerk announces that formal recruitment for commissioners is currently open so interested individuals should submit their application to the City for review. The City Clerk works with other City staff, City Council, and community groups to conduct as much public outreach as possible. This public outreach will include, but is not limited to posting on the City website, City social media, local newspapers, and email notifications to previous commissioners or applicants.

City Council may only review applications for appointment once the application period ends and there have been one more application than the vacancy total on the commission. Should the application period not yield enough applicants for a specific commission, the formal recruitment period will re-open and will remain open for another period of time until one more application than the vacancy total is received.

Interested applicants submit their complete application to City staff, where they will indicate their desired commission(s). City staff verifies that the individual lives within the City of Los Altos and may serve on the desired commission(s).



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All applicants receive a list of the same standard interview questions two weeks prior to the City Council review.

City Council holds one special meeting that will include interviews and voting on commissioners. All applicants are asked the same standard interview questions and allotted the same amount of time to ensure that all candidates are given equal treatment.

After all interviews are completed, the City Council submits a ballot with their appointees.

Incumbent applicants will have their attendance record included as part of their application packet for review by the City Council.”

Recommendation

City staff recommends amending the “Membership on City Commissions” section from the Los Altos Commission Handbook.