



AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: May 23, 2023

Subject: Los Altos Commissions

Prepared by: Anthony Carnesecca, Assistant to the City Manager

Reviewed by: Jon Maginot, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Gabriel Engeland, City Manager

Attachment(s):

1. City of Los Altos Ordinance No. 2023-XX
2. City Council Study Session Agenda Report 4/25/23
3. City Council Study Session Agenda Report 3/28/23
4. City Council Retreat Agenda Report 2/21/23

Initiated by:

City Council

Previous Council Consideration:

February 21, 2023, March 28, 2023 & April 25, 2023

Fiscal Impact:

None

Environmental Review:

Not applicable

Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:

- How does the Council wish to adjust the City of Los Altos Commissions?

Summary:

- City Council provided feedback on Commissions during the City Council Retreat on February 21, 2023.
- City staff met with Commission Chairs and liaisons to discuss their roles.
- City Council provided feedback during the City Council study session on March 28, 2023.
- City Council provided feedback during the City Council meeting on March 28, 2023 and directed staff to return with the proposed changes to the Los Altos Municipal Code Sections 2.08 and 2.12.

Reviewed By:

City Manager

City Attorney

Finance Director

GE

JH

JD



Subject: Los Altos Commissions

Staff Recommendation:

- Staff recommends providing direction on the number of meetings for the Complete Streets and Environmental Commissions and introduce and waive further reading of Ordinance No. 2023-XX that amends Los Altos Municipal Code Chapter 2.08 Commissions Generally and Chapter 2.12 Historical Commission to modify membership, meeting frequency, and powers and duties of City Commissions

Purpose

Provide direction on the number of meetings for the Complete Streets and Environmental Commissions and introduce and waive further reading of Ordinance No. 2023-XX that amends Los Altos Municipal Code Chapter 2.08 Commissions Generally and Chapter 2.12 Historical Commission to modify membership, meeting frequency, and powers and duties of City Commissions.

Background

The City of Los Altos has guidelines for the 11 Commissions regarding their scope of work, number of Commissioners, and frequency of Commission meetings within Los Altos Municipal Code Chapters 2.08 and 2.12.

During the City Council retreat on February 21, 2023, the Council received a presentation from staff highlighting that Los Altos, when compared to other cities in the county, has more Commissions, with more members, that meet more frequently than is average. Additionally, Commissions in other cities have membership and meeting frequency based on the workplan or powers and duties of the Commission, as opposed to a standard for meetings and member composition.

The primary focus area for potential changes to Commissions is in the establishment of powers and duties in the municipal code and the creation of work plans that align with Council priorities, budget, and available resources. Currently, many Los Altos Commissions have powers and duties that lack definition and work plans that are not aligned as described above.

At the direction of City Council, staff met with individual Commission Chairs and liaisons to discuss the role of the Commission, the workplan, the meeting frequency, and member composition. These meetings were intended to receive direct feedback on areas that have worked well, areas that could be improved, and potential changes that could be incorporated to improve the effectiveness of the Commissions and city staff.



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After the meetings, it became evident that the Commissions who had the most well-defined roles, either through work plans or powers and duties in the Municipal Code, were positioned the best to continue their roles, even when changes were applied, without decreasing effectiveness. City staff divided the Commissions into three categories.

The first category was the Commissions that do not require change, Planning, Senior, and Youth, which are operating in line with their objectives and meet with an appropriate frequency and have an appropriate member composition to meet the powers and duties as assigned by the City Council.

The second category was the Historical Commission that agreed with the adjustments to lessen meeting frequency and lowering the number of Commission members to better match the objectives of the Commission and Council expectations.

The final category was the remaining Commissions that did not have their powers and duties clearly defined, have work plans that are not in line with Council goals, budget, and resources, and/or role confusion between the Commissions and staff. These Commissions were the Complete Streets, Environmental, Financial, Library, Parks and Recreation, and Public Arts Commissions.

The City Council discussed each of the Commissions during the Study Session on March 28, 2023 and provided direction, feedback, or general thoughts. Based on this discussion, staff made recommendations for changes to membership, meeting frequency, and powers and duties of each of these Commission.

During the regular City Council meeting on April 25, 2023, City Council provided direction to City staff on the proposed changes. City staff has made the changes provided by City Council during the meeting to the Los Altos Municipal Code Chapters 2.08 and 2.12. However, City staff did not receive sufficient direction on the number of meetings proposed for the Complete Streets and Environmental Commissions during this meeting.

Discussion/Analysis

After reviewing the meeting frequency, member composition, and powers and duties in peer cities, feedback from Commission Chairs, and direction from the City Council Retreat, the City Council Study Session, and direction from the April 25, 2023 Council meeting, City staff proposes the following changes to Los Altos City Commissions:



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Commission	Meetings Current	Meetings Proposed	Membership Current	Membership Proposed	Proposed Changes to Powers and Duties**
Complete Streets	12	XX	7	7	Yes
Environmental	12	XX	7	7	Yes
Financial	12	8	7	5	No
Historical	12	4	7	5	Yes
Library	12	6	7 (2 LAH)	5 (1 LAH)	Yes
Parks and Recreation*	12	10	7	7	Yes
Planning	24	24	7	7	No
Public Arts*					
Senior	12	12	7 (2 LAH)	7 (2 LAH)	No
Youth	12	12	11	11	No

* Recommended consolidation to Parks, Recreation, Arts, and Culture Commission

**Please see draft ordinance for specific recommendation to Powers and Duties

For any Commission moving to five members, staff recommends that all current members on the Commission(s) continue to serve through the end of their term and are eligible for reappointment. Commissions with membership greater than what is established by these changes will not complete recruitments until their membership falls below the new standard.

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