City of Los Altos

Commission Handbook

September 2023

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INTRODUCTION

This manual functions as an introduction to service as a Commission or Committee member in Los Altos. For the purposes of this manual, the terms Commission member and Committee member are interchangeable. For those instances not covered in this manual, refer to the City Council Norms and Procedures and the Los Altos Municipal Code for additional guidance.

If there is any conflict between the rules set forth in this handbook and the Los Altos Municipal Code or the City Council Norms and Procedures, the Code and then the Norms and Procedures shall govern.

THE BASICS

Government in the City of Los Altos

The City of Los Altos operates under the Council-Manager form of government. The City Council sets policy for the City which is then carried out by the City Manager and staff.

Commissions are integral to the City's commitment to developing policies which reflect the needs and values of the community. Commissions work closely with staff and the Council to carry out the duties and responsibilities assigned by Council.

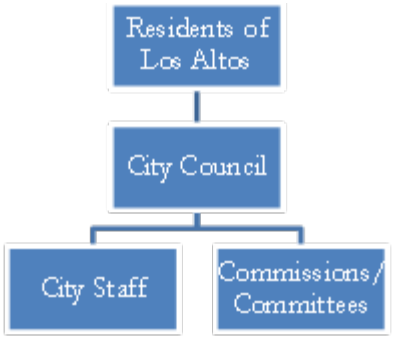

Figure 1: City of Los Altos organization

City Council

The City Council is elected by registered voters of the City of Los Altos and serves as the 'Board of Directors' for the City. The Council is the legislative body of the City. It sets policy and establishes the City's overall priorities, direction and financial plan. The Council appoints the City Manager, who is responsible for the administration of City business, and the City Attorney.

Council Liaison

The City Council relies upon the expertise and recommendations of the Commissions and Committees in advising the Council as it sets City policy. The Council liaison function serves to facilitate and enhance this work. Their principal function is to provide a wide range of information to the advisory body, such as information about Council discussions, policies and actions. This helps provide an historical perspective and thereby place their work in context. However, the Commissions and Committees should act independently in formulating recommendations for the City Council to consider. Therefore, it is inconsistent for Council liaisons to direct, guide or unduly influence the policy making work of the City's advisory bodies. Council liaisons are not required to attend their Commission or Committee meetings. Council liaisons will meet, at a minimum with the Commission Chair and Staff liaison once per year individually and once per year at the joint meetings of the City Council and the Commission. These meetings can be more frequent and will be based on the specific Commission.

Commissions/Committees
Members are appointed by a majority vote of the City Council to serve on Commissions and Committees to advise and make recommendations to the Council and staff. Commissions focus on specific policy issues and provide additional opportunity for community participation in decision making.

From time to time, there may be instances when staff's recommendations on an issue may differ from that of the Commission. If this occurs, staff will inform the Commission of this in advance of the Council meeting and both recommendations will be presented to the Council for consideration.

As appointees of the City Council, members of Commissions are public officials and are appointed to represent all residents of the City, not individual organizations or special interest groups. Care should be taken to ensure that viewpoints expressed as public officials are consistent with City Council policy and the position of the majority of the Commission. Minority opinions are allowed but Commissioners acting in the role of a Commissioner should support actions taken by a majority of the Commission.

Unless speaking as the official spokesperson for the commission at a City Council or other public forum, commissioners should begin all written or verbal comments with "I am a commissioner for the [insert commission name here], but I am speaking on behalf of myself and my own personal beliefs."

Each Commission is established by Chapter 2.08 of the Los Altos Municipal Code, which includes the powers and duties of each Commission. Committees, both standing and ad hoc, are created by Council action and typically are assigned to focus on a specific topic for a short duration. Ad hoc Committees (sometimes referred to as Task Forces) may include Commissioners.

Staff
The City Manager serves as the 'Chief Executive Officer' for the City and implements policy set by the City Council, manages the day-to-day affairs of the City, appoints and removes employees, prepares the budget, enforces laws and ordinances, and makes recommendations to the Council on the general welfare of the City. He/she hires professionally trained staff to assist in carrying out his/her responsibilities.

The City Manager assigns staff members to assist the various Commissions in carrying out their responsibilities. These staff liaisons, by virtue of their technical training

Role of Staff Liaison

- Attend all meetings of the Commission
- Prepare agendas in collaboration with the Chair
- Work with the Commission in the development of a work plan for the coming year and a summary of accomplishments for the previous year
- Research and prepare reports for the Commission, as is consistent with the work plan and/or Council direction
- Ensure agendas and reports are posted in compliance with State law and City protocols
- Prepare action minutes for approval by the Commission
- Prepare reports from the Commission to the Council, ensuring that reports represent the majority view and recommendation of the Commission
- Serve as the liaison between the Commission and City staff
- Submit all budget requests from Commissions to cover costs associated with accomplishing its mission as well as to attend training sessions related to accomplishing the work of the Commission
- Communicate directions from the City Council to the Commission
- Stay apprised of new laws and City protocols related to their assigned Commission or Commissions generally

Figure 2: Role of Staff Liaison

and experience, are competent to provide such assistance.

Commissions shall work closely with the staff liaisons; however, they do not have the authority to supervise or direct the work of staff.

Requests by a commission or commissioner for assistance in completing research or analysis for the benefit of a commission may be directed towards the Department Head which oversees the assigned Staff Liaison.

MEETING DAYS AND TIMES

Regularly scheduled commission meeting days and times are established by the City Council. To facilitate and encourage public participation no commission meeting can be held during the same meeting time as a City Council meeting and commissions should strive to not have any overlapping commission meeting with another commission's regular meeting. Additionally, commission meeting times are typically scheduled for later in the day to not impede on normal city business hours effectively ensuring services are available until the close of business each day.

Commission special meetings shall be held in accordance with the provisions of regularly scheduled meetings to not impede city services and operations.

With majority support of commission members any commission can request a change in the approved day and time for a commission regularly occurring meeting. A request for a change in meeting day and time shall be respective of city business hours to ensure that staff and services are provided throughout the day. Such request shall be included in an agenda report prepared by the staff liaison and placed on the Commission's agenda as a Discussion Item.

A complete calendar of all regular commission meetings can be found on the City website.

COMMISSION WORKPLANS

When a commission workplan is necessary each commission shall discuss and prepare its annual work plan based upon the City Council annual priorities and budget, which shall be submitted and approved by the City Council. The work plan is a list of the anticipated topics, assignments and goals that the Commission will focus on over a 12-month period. From time to time the City Council may amend the approved commission work plan in order to achieve the goals of the city. Any requested modifications should be in line with the goals and objectives of the commission and the city.

MEMBERSHIP ON CITY COMMISSIONS

Unless otherwise directed, Commission members must be residents of the City of Los Altos. If, at any time during their term, a member moves to a principal residence outside the City, they shall become ineligible to continue as a member of that body and shall notify the Commission's assigned staff liaison as soon as possible. It is expected that when a Commissioner moves to a principal residence outside the City, they will submit a letter of resignation to the assigned staff liaison and the City Clerk..

Members are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the City Council. With the exception of Senior and Youth Commissioners, members serve for a term of four years and may serve a total of two, four-year terms, plus any portion of an unexpired term for which they have been appointed. Senior Commissioners may serve four, two-year terms. Youth Commissioner may serve two-year terms through the conclusion of their final year in high school.

No Commissioner shall serve simultaneously on two, separate Commissions. When a Commissioner ends their service on one Commission, the individual can then be appointed to a different Commission.

Ad hoc Committee members are appointed and shall serve until the task of the ad hoc committee has been completed at which time the Committee shall be disbanded. Council members and Commissioners may serve on ad hoc committees.

Two members of an immediate family, or persons residing in the same household, are not allowed to serve simultaneously on the same Commission or Committee, including ad hoc Committees. Immediate family members of City Council members are not eligible for appointment to any Commission or Committee during the term of the elected Councilmember.

Appointment

The City Council accepts applications for Commission positions 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, all other commission recruitments 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.

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).

City Council holds one special meeting that will include interviews and voting on commissioners. All applicants are 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.

Reappointment

Upon completion of the first four-year term, or an unexpired term, Commissioners shall notify the City Clerk that they have an interest in continuing on the commission and complete a new application for re-appointment to the Commission for another four-year term. In order to qualify for reappointment a Commissioner shall have met the minimum attendance requirements during the duration of their previous term. Commissioners requesting reappointment will be interviewed by the City Council. Reappointments will occur at the same time as new appointments to the Commission.

Upon completion of their service, Commissioners are encouraged to meet, either in person or via telephone, with the Council Liaison assigned to their respective Commission or another Councilmember. The purpose of this meeting is to provide Commissioners with a chance to offer feedback to the Council regarding their time on the Commission.

Resignation/Removal

In the event a member is unable to continue serving because of change of residence, health, business requirements or other personal reasons, a letter of resignation must be submitted to the City Clerk.

Members of Commissions serve at the pleasure of the City Council. The City Council shall review members' performance and fulfillment of Commission member obligations and may remove a member from a Commission based upon that review. The City Council may discipline or remove a Commissioner at any time solely at the discretion of the Council. Any proposed removal can be with or without cause. A Councilmember who wishes to discipline or remove a Commissioner shall indicate their desire to place the discipline or removal on a future agenda at the end of a regular Council meeting. If three or more Councilmembers wish to agendize the discipline or removal of a certain Commissioner, the item will be placed on a future Council agenda.

Commission Member Responsibilities

- □ Prepare for and participate in Commission meetings
- □ Attend at least 75% of regular meetings annually
- □ File Form 700 on time, if required
- □ Complete Brown Act Training within 60 days of beginning service
- □ Complete two hours of Ethics Training within 30 days of assuming office and every two years thereafter
- □ Attend Annual Commission Training upon appointment and every two years while seated as a Commissioner

Figure 3: Commission Member Responsibilities

Attendance and Participation

A majority of members is necessary to conduct business. As such, Commission members are expected to attend no less than 75% of the regularly scheduled meetings annually during their term of office. At the end of each year, the City Council reviews an annual attendance report for each Commission. A Commissioner may be removed for failing to attend the required minimum number of meetings or after a third consecutive absence. If a Commissioner must miss a meeting, they shall inform the staff liaison a minimum of two weeks notice prior to the regularly-scheduled commission meeting whenever possible. If a Commission meeting is cancelled due to a lack of quorum, that meeting will still be considered a regularly scheduled meeting for purposes of calculating attendance, and those members whose absence caused the cancellation shall be charged with an absence for that meeting.

Commissions benefit from the informed input of each member of the body. Each Commission member is expected to exercise judgment in formulating recommendations to the City Council. Members are expected to be prepared for meetings and to participate and vote on every issue before the Commission, unless they are legally prohibited from participating. Lack of preparation and participation can be grounds for removal from a Commission. Each commission is to keep a rotation schedule for representation at City Council meetings by one of its members. Attendance is required when a commission has an item of interest on the Council agenda, so as to be available to answer Council questions.

Statement of Economic Interest

The Statement of Economic Interest (Form 700) is a form on which designated employees and officials disclose certain financial interests. State law dictates that members of the Planning Commission must

file Form 700s. In addition, the City identifies those positions which are subject to the City's Biennial Conflict of Interest Code. Those individuals appointed to positions identified in the Conflict of Interest Code are required to file Form 700s. Commission members not identified in the Conflict of Interest Code are not subject to these regulations.

Commissioners are responsible for ensuring that statements are filed properly and on time. For assistance in completing the forms, contact the City Clerk's Office or the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC). Non-compliant Commissioners shall receive a letter from the City Clerk notifying them of their non-compliance and are subject to monetary fines. Continued non-compliance shall be grounds for removal from the Commission.

All statements filed are maintained in the City Clerk's Office and are available for public review.

Type of Filing	Occurrence
Assuming Office	Within 30 days of assuming office
Annual	Each year on or before April 1
Leaving Office	Within 30 days of leaving office

Table 1: Deadlines for filing Form 700

Ethics Training

All those appointed by the Los Altos City Council to serve on Commissions shall complete at least two hours of public service ethics training every two years. New members must receive this training within 30 days of assuming office. Ethics training courses must have been reviewed and approved by the FPPC and the California Secretary of State. Members shall attend training sessions that are offered locally or by completing online training. Non-compliance shall be grounds for removal from the Commission.

It is the responsibility of a Commissioner to provide proof of completion of the ethics training program to the City Clerk. These documents are public records and are subject to public review.

The City Clerk provides periodic reports of Form 700 and Ethics Training compliance to the City Council. The Council may remove any non-compliant Commissioner.

THE BROWN ACT

Figure 4: Ralph M. Brown

The Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act) is the State of California's open government law. Its purpose is to ensure that deliberations and actions of local agency bodies are open to the public and that there is meaningful public access to a local agency's decision-making process. All City Commissions are subject to the Brown Act. Staff liaisons to Commissions are versed in the elements of the Brown Act and will help Commissioners understand their obligations related to the Brown Act. In addition, certain Ad Hoc subcommittees may be subject to the provisions of the Brown Act. Commissioners should consult with their staff liaison regarding questions of the Brown Act. Ultimately, it is up to the individual Commissioner to ensure that they are complying with the Brown Act.

A major element of the Brown Act relates to meetings of legislative bodies. A meeting is defined as the coming together of a majority or more of a particular body (also known as a quorum) where the business of that body is discussed. Meetings must be properly noticed and held in facilities that are open and accessible to all. All meetings must be held within the City of Los Altos. A discussion which occurs outside of a properly noticed meeting and which involves a majority or more of a body is a

violation of the Brown Act. This includes serial discussions which involve only a portion of the Commission, but eventually involve a majority. The two most common serial discussions are daisy chain and hub and spoke.

Daisy Chain
A daisy chain is when Member A contacts Member B who then contacts Member C who then contacts Member D and so forth, until a majority of members has discussed an item within the Commission's subject matter jurisdiction.

Hub and Spoke
A hub and spoke meeting is when one individual (the hub) contacts members individually (the spokes) until a majority has been achieved. The hub could be a Commissioner, staff member or member of the public.

To attempt to avoid serial meetings, emails from Commissioners that are intended for fellow Commissioners should be sent through the staff liaison. Commissioners should take care to not 'reply all' on emails.

Violations
Penalties for Brown Act violations can range from invalidation of an action taken to prosecution as a misdemeanor offense. In addition, there may be fines and/or attorney's fees associated with a violation of the Brown Act. Commissioners who violate the Brown Act may be subject to removal.

Whenever a questionable area arises, it should be brought to the attention of the City Attorney or City Clerk so that corrective actions or "cures" may be taken. Advice from the City Attorney or City Clerk should be followed completely to ensure all actions of the City comply with the Brown Act.

Types of meetings
There are two types of meetings which Commissions hold. The first, and most common, are regular meetings. These meetings are where a Commission accomplishes the vast majority of its work. Regular meeting days, times and locations are established by formal action of the Commission.

The second type are special meetings. A special meeting is any meeting held outside of the normal meeting day, time or location. Action may be taken at special meetings and agendas for those meetings should indicate the action recommended to be taken.

Special meetings may include study sessions. Study sessions are held to provide Commission members the opportunity to discuss and better understand a particular item. Generally, no action is taken at study sessions.

Agendas
The staff liaison, in collaboration with the Chair, is responsible for preparing all agendas of a Commission. All items of business that will be considered or discussed at a meeting shall be briefly described on the agenda. The description should define the proposed action to be considered so that members of the public will know the nature of the action under review and consideration. No discussion or action may be taken by a Commission on any item not on the agenda.

The Chair, or a majority of the Commission, may decide to take matters listed on the agenda out of the prescribed order.

All agendas and meeting materials are posted to the City's website as set forth in the Brown Act and the City's Open Government Policy. All Commissioners should sign up to receive meeting notices and associated agenda materials for their specific Commission through the City's website.

Meeting Minutes
Written minutes of all regular and special meetings are kept as the official record of business transacted and are taken by the staff liaison. Minutes are modeled after the City Council form of minutes known as "action minutes" and include a record of the legislative actions from the meeting. They do not include summaries of comments or discussion made by Commissioners or members of the public. The staff liaison will endeavor to distribute draft minutes within 10 days of the meeting. Action minutes will state the text of a motion voted on by the Commission, the result of the vote, identify which Commissioners voted "aye", "no", abstained, recused, or were absent. Action minutes will also identify whether motion passed or failed.

Any document submitted at a meeting, whether by a member of the public or a Commissioner, becomes part of the public record. The staff liaison should make a notation on the document of the date it was submitted and file it with the meeting packet. The staff liaison is responsible for posting the materials received within 48 hours of the meeting to the City's website and forwarding the material to the members of the commission.

Adding items to a future agenda
Commissioners may request that items be placed on a future agenda. This is done by requesting an item during the "Potential Future Agenda Items" portion of the meeting or by emailing a request to the staff liaison. Requests must be for items that are under the purview of the Commission. One less than a majority of members is required to place an item on an agenda. The staff liaison will work with the Chair to determine the best meeting to place an item on an agenda. Any background materials or information should be provided to the staff liaison for inclusion in the agenda packet. Future agenda items must be consistent with the Commission's Approved Work Plan.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Commission members are subject to all aspects of the Political Reform Act. Commission members must not make, participate in making, or attempt to influence in any manner a governmental decision which he/she knows, or should know, may have a material effect on a financial interest.

It is ultimately the responsibility of the Commission member to identify whether they may be engaging in incompatible activities or have a perceived conflict of interest. The City Attorney should be consulted as early as possible on any matters regarding incompatible activities or perceived conflicts of interest.

A Commission member should disclose any perceived conflicts of interest prior to any discussion of the Commission. A Commission member should recuse themselves for a conflict of interest.

Incompatible Activities
Per state law, a public official, including commissioners, may not engage in any activity for compensation that is inconsistent, incompatible, or in conflict with their official duties with the City.

Perceived Conflict of Interest
A perceived conflict of interest for a Commissioner may arise from personal relationships, financial interests, serving on bodies or boards that have shared or overlapping subject matter jurisdiction as those under the jurisdiction of the Commission, or when it appears that the Commissioner's private interests impact the official duties of the Commissioner, or influence his/her decision-making.

If a Commission member is appointed to an agency or body that has shared or overlapping subject matter, after their service on a City Commission has started, the Commission member will notify the Council liaison and staff liaison.

A Commission member who has a conflict of interest shall, immediately prior to the consideration of the matter, do all of the following: 1) publicly identify the financial interest that gives rise to the conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest in detail sufficient to be understood by the public, except that disclosure of the exact street address is not required; 2) recuse himself or herself from discussing and voting on the matter; and 3) leave the room until after the discussion, vote, and any other disposition of the matter is concluded. Notwithstanding this, a Commission member, not in the member's capacity as a Commissioner, may speak on the issue during the time that the general public speaks on the issue.

If a Commission member has obtained a letter or other documentation from the FPPC to discuss and vote on an item, then the member shall provide the letter to the staff liaison and the City Clerk upon receipt of the letter and disclose at the next Commission meeting the existence of the letter or other authorization, briefly describe the circumstances of why the member sought clarification, the basis for the FPPC's conclusion, and the file number or other unique identifier so that members of the public can request a copy from the FPPC. In addition, the member shall provide to the staff liaison a copy of the letter or other authorization no later than 24 hours after the meeting at which the letter or other authorization is disclosed, so that a copy may be forwarded to any member of the public who requests a copy.

COMMISSION ORGANIZATION

Each Commission consists of between five and seven members, except the Youth Commission which consists of eleven members. Each member has an equal voice and vote on the Commission.

Chair and Vice Chair

To facilitate meetings and the work of the Commission, each Commission appoints a Chair and Vice Chair from the members of the Commission. The positions of Chair and Vice Chair shall rotate annually. Selection of Chair and Vice Chair occurs at the first meeting in October. In the event of either's resignation or removal, the Commission shall elect another member to fill the remainder of the year. No member of a commission may serve consecutive terms as the chair, meaning that the chair must change annually.

The role of the Chair is to preside at Commission meetings and to run a timely and orderly meeting. The Vice Chair is to preside in the absence of the Chair. If both the Chair and Vice Chair are absent, the Commission may elect a Chair Pro Tem to conduct the meeting. It is incumbent upon the Chair to limit discussion and recommendations to those items on the agenda.

Ad Hoc Subcommittees

A Commission may appoint Ad Hoc subcommittees, consisting of less than a majority of the body, to work on specific tasks. Ad Hoc subcommittees should be focused on one specific topic and shall not last more than one year. These Ad Hoc subcommittees are working bodies and may be responsible for generation of reports and analyses, which are reviewed by staff prior to distribution to the full Commission. Commissions shall not create standing committees.

In order to establish an Ad Hoc Subcommittee, the topic of the formation of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee must be posted and noticed on the regular agenda.

Commission members currently serving on a Ad Hoc Subcommittee are not eligible to serve on another Ad Hoc Subcommittee simultaneously.

The motion of establishment must include that the Ad Hoc Subcommittee:

- Is comprised solely of members of the Commission establishing the Ad Hoc Subcommittee,
- Consists of less than a quorum of the Commission,
- Includes a defined purpose and the timeframe to accomplish that purpose and is less than one year in duration,
- Will automatically terminate when a final report is given to the Commission, or when the timeframe established by the Commission is met, unless extended by the Commission at a public meeting,
- Will not be re-established or renewed in multiple years, and
- Is advisory in nature and is not established to work on an item where continuing jurisdiction exists.

In accordance with the Brown Act, Ad Hoc Subcommittees do not need to post notice of their meetings or hold meetings in public, unless directed to do so by the City Council.

Commission Liaison assignments

Commissions may assign individual Commissioners to act, by a majority vote, as a liaison to other boards, commissions, or agencies, without establishing an Ad Hoc Subcommittee. The work, findings, conclusions, and any updates of the liaison should be brought back to the Commission at a regularly scheduled meeting for a report or discussion and, if applicable, action. The positions supported by the liaison are to be in alignment with the positions that the Commission or the City Council have taken if they have considered the topic.

In the event that a Commission is not able to select a Commission member as a liaison to another board, commission, or agency and a staff member cannot serve in that capacity, the Commission may recommend an individual resident to represent the Commission upon approval by the Commission and City Council.

MEETING PROCEDURES

All Commission meetings are open to the public and should be approached in a dignified, respectful manner. It is the responsibility of all Commissioners to treat their duties and obligations seriously and to ensure that all meetings are productive and further the mission of the City.

Rules of Order

Rosenberg's Rules of Order, with addendums adopted by the City Council, govern the conduct of Commission meetings. Information regarding the *Rules of Order* can be obtained from the City Clerk's Office.

Consideration of agenda items

The standard procedure for considering individual agenda items shall be as outlined in Figure 5. From time to time, the prescribed order may be changed.

Consideration of an agenda item

1. Presentation by Staff, Commissioner or Ad Hoc subcommittee
2. Commissioners ask clarifying questions
3. Members of the public are given an opportunity to speak on the item
4. Commissioners discuss the item
5. If needed, a motion is made upon which the Commission votes on

Figure 5: Procedures for considering agenda items

Official action requires a majority vote of the entire Commission/Committee, not just those present.

Public Comment
Persons present at Commission meetings may comment on any item on the agenda. To facilitate an orderly meeting, each speaker is requested, but not required, to complete a Request to Speak card for each item they wish to speak on before discussion on that item begins. To ensure that all are heard, speakers are typically given three minutes to speak on each item. If there are more than 10 requests to speak on an agenda item, the Chair may limit each speaker's time to two minutes.

The Chair has the right to ask a member of the public to step down from speaking if over the allotted time or if comments are not related to the topic at hand.

During regular meetings, comments may be offered on items not on the agenda under that portion of the agenda identified for Public Comment. The Commission may not discuss nor take action on any item raised during the Public Comments on Items not on the Agenda portion of the meeting.

Teleconferencing
Commission members may participate in meetings via teleconference in accordance with State law (Gov. Code sec. 54953 and AB 2449). Members participating via teleconferencing under AB 2449 (Just Cause or Emergency Circumstances) must participate via audio and visual methods. In all other circumstances, members participating via teleconferencing shall participate via audio and visual methods, when practical. Members may participate via teleconference in no more than 20% of meetings in a calendar year (January to December), whether utilizing provisions of the traditional Brown Act or Just Cause or Emergency Circumstances. All meetings of the Commission must have a majority of members present in the physical meeting location within the City.

At the beginning of a meeting in which a member is participating via teleconference, the Chair, or the Vice Chair if the Chair is participating remotely, will ask the member(s) participating via teleconference to confirm the teleconference location was properly noticed according to State Law, the teleconference location is accessible to members of the public and whether anyone is present in the teleconference location besides the member.

DECORUM

Commissioners shall render the utmost courtesy to each other, the City Council, staff and members of the public. Commissioners may be subject to dismissal for failure to observe these standards.

Members of the public attending Commission meetings shall observe the same rules of order and decorum applicable to Commission members. Los Altos Municipal Code Chapter 2.05 – Public Meetings Rules for Conduct shall apply to all meetings. To provide an environment in which all viewpoints may be expressed, noise emanating from the audience, whether in opposition or support, shall not be permitted. Continual disruption of meetings by members of the public may be grounds for removal from the meeting.

TRAINING

Commissioners are expected to stay current on issues related to their service as a public official. Members are provided brief training following their appointment regarding their duties as a Commissioner and the Brown Act. Annual trainings are organized by the City Clerk and conducted by City staff to review roles and responsibilities and to provide information on any changes in laws or policies that may be relevant to conducting the work of the Commissions. Attendance at this training is required for all Commission members and staff liaisons. Individuals who are unable to attend the

training session will be required to watch the video of the training and certify that they have completed the training.

Members of Commissions are encouraged, within budget limitations, to attend training related to their area of responsibility. It is intended that such attendance will broaden a member's knowledge and increase awareness of current developments relating to relevant areas of responsibility. The City may cover costs of registration and certain travel expenses in accordance with the City's Travel and Expense Policy. Requests for use of City funds must be approved in accordance with City Policy.

CONCLUSION

The City Council and staff appreciate your service as a Los Altos Commission member. The time and energy you expend help to make Los Altos the wonderful community it is. If at any time during your service, you have questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact your staff liaison who can help address any issue which may arise.

Tips for Chair (and Vice Chair)
(and anyone who may have to run a meeting)

The role of the Chair of a Commission is to preside at meetings and to help move the work of the Commission forward. The Chair (and Vice Chair) does not have any extra authority or power beyond that of his/her fellow Commissioners.

As Chair, you are responsible for conducting meetings of the Commission. It is important to limit discussion to those items on the agenda. For each agenda item, it is suggested that you follow this procedure:

1. Announce what the item being considered is
2. Ask if there is a report for the item – generally, this is provided by the staff liaison but occasionally may be provided by another Commissioner
3. Ask Commissioners if there are any clarifying questions
4. Take public comment – instructions for how to take public comment are included in the "Meeting Procedures" section of the Commission Handbook
5. Facilitate discussion among the Commission – it is important that each Commissioner is given equal chance to speak and express his/her opinion
6. After discussion of the item, ensure that a conclusion is reached – this can be in the form of a motion, direction provided to staff or an Ad Hoc subcommittee, decision to continue the item to a date certain or not certain, or to take no further action.

Applications
On occasion, a Commission may receive an application from a resident or community group which the Commission is to consider. In these instances, applicants are given a total of up to ten minutes to present their position/input prior to hearing other public comments. This is done after the staff has presented its report. After the applicant(s) has presented, public comment is taken from the audience. Following public comment, the applicant is given five minutes to provide a rebuttal to any issue raised during public comments.

Announcing votes
The Brown Act requires that all votes be clearly noted, both at the meeting and in the record. It is the Chair's responsibility to ensure that the vote is noted during the meeting. This is done by announcing how each member voted on a particular issue. If the voting is unanimous, it is sufficient to state "passes unanimously." The staff liaison will ensure that the minutes accurately reflect how each member voted on each issue.

Recess
It is customary to have a short recess two hours after the beginning of a meeting. The established hour after which no new items will be started is four hours after the beginning of the meeting. Remaining items, however, may be considered by consensus of the Commission/Committee.