

Historical Commission Updates

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Historical Commission

- The Commission shall have those powers and duties granted it by Section 2.12.030 of the Los Altos Municipal Code and/or as may be entrusted to it by the council from time to time and shall submit an annual report to the council.
- The historical commission shall be advisory only. It shall advise the city council, the planning commission and the agencies and departments of the city. The historical commission shall establish liaison and work in conjunction with such authorities to implement the purposes of this chapter.



Historical Commission Powers and Duties

1. Review and recommend updates to the historic resources inventory. Properties must meet the criteria in this chapter for inclusion. The inventory will be publicly accessible, regularly updated, and retained in the planning department;
2. Recommend to the city council specific proposals for designation as an historic landmark or historic district;
3. Recommend to the appropriate city agencies or departments, projects and action programs for the recognition, conservation, and use of the city's historic resources, including standards to be followed with respect to any applications for permits to construct, change, alter, remodel, remove or otherwise affect such resources;
4. Review and comment upon existing or proposed ordinances, plans or policies of the city as they relate to historic resources;
5. Review and comment applications for building demolition involving work to be performed on a designated historic landmark, and all applications for tentative map approval, rezoning, building site approval, use permit, variance approval, design review or other approval pertaining to or significantly affecting any historic resource;
6. Provide resource information on the restoration, alteration, decoration, landscaping or maintenance of any cultural resource including the landmark, landmark site, historic district, or neighboring property within public view and promote and conduct public information and educational programs pertaining to those resources;
7. Submit an annual report to the city council on the additions and deletions from the Historic Resources Inventory;
8. Perform such other functions as may be delegated to it by resolution or motion of the city council;
9. Cooperate with the association of the Los Altos historical museum;
10. Submit an annual work plan to the city council; and
11. Review and make its recommendation to the planning director on all permit applications pursuant to Article 3, Sections 12.44.100 through 12.44.170.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

- Commission appoints Chair and Vice Chair annually at the first meeting in October.
- No member of a Commission may serve consecutive terms as the chair so they must change annually



Attendance and Participation

- Majority of members required in person for meeting to take place
- Commissioners must attend 75% of regularly scheduled meetings
- Commissioner must let liaison know at least one week in advance of meeting that they will attend remotely
 - Commissioners may attend no more than 20% of meetings remotely



Reporting

- Commissions provide a workplan for approval to Council in 1st Quarter of each calendar year
- Commissions provide an annual plan to Council at joint meeting



Work Plan

2025 Los Altos Commission Work Plan

Goal	Projects	Anticipated Completion	Priority Source	Status	Assignment	Notes
Overarching goal for Commission	Name of Project	When project is planned for review	Where this project comes from	What is the current status	Who has been assigned	Further information that will be useful to know



Work Calendar

2025 Los Altos Commission Calendar

January	February	March	April	May	June
Insert items from work plan					
July	August	September	October	November	December
No meetings					No meetings



Ad Hoc Subcommittees

- Must be Ad Hoc, cannot be standing
- 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.
- Ad Hoc Subcommittees must comply with all aspects of the Brown Act, but do not require meetings to be posted or staff support.



Ad Hoc Subcommittees

- Must have specific topic and timeframe
- Cannot be an area of continuing jurisdiction
- Cannot be established in multiple years
- Must report findings out to full Commission
- Commissioners can only serve on one subcommittee at a time



Ad Hoc Subcommittees

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

1. Is comprised solely of members of the Commission establishing the Ad Hoc Subcommittee,
2. Consists of less than a quorum of the Commission,
3. Includes a defined purpose and the timeframe to accomplish that purpose and is less than one year in duration,
4. 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,
5. Will not be re-established or renewed in multiple years, and
6. Is advisory in nature and is not established to work on an item where continuing jurisdiction exists



Working Pairs

- Unlike Ad Hoc Subcommittees which require a formal approval and are limited in time duration and scope, the Commission may assign Commissioners into working groups to provide research, information, fact gathering, prioritizing, or other activities related to the Commissions work plan.
- Working groups may consist of 1 or 2 Commissioners who are able to meet to discuss topics of interest to the Commission, prior to reporting back at an open meeting to the full Commission.
- The Commission may take action on the report or simply receive it.



Working Pairs

- Working groups are designed to allow Commissions to work in a more flexible manner, to respond to requests, initiatives, or direction from Council, or to move work plans forward.
- There is no limit to the amount of working pairs a Commissioner can participate in at one time.



What's the difference?

Ad-Hoc Subcommittee

- Formal
- Focused on project
- Workplan development
- Example: Main Library Improvements

Working Pairs

- Informal
- Component of plan or project
- Example: Flyer for New Library Feature



Commissioner Liaisons

- Commissions may assign individual Commissioners to act as a liaison to other boards, commissions, or agencies, without establishing an Ad Hoc Subcommittee.
- The full Commission should be updated in public
- 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



Council Liaisons

- Council liaison will meet with Commission Chair and staff liaison once per year at a minimum as well as at joint meeting
- Council liaisons shall not direct, guide or unduly influence the policy making work of the City's advisory bodies



Conflict of Interest

- Perceived Conflict of Interest
- Incompatible Activities



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.



Perceived Conflict of Interest

- Commissioners must notify Staff liaison
- Commissioner must disclose perceived conflict of interest before participating in discussion
- Commissioner will seek out advice from City Attorney or FPCC



Conflict of Interest

- 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.



Conflict of 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.



California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

- CEQA requires government agencies to consider the environmental consequences of their actions before approving plans and policies or committing to a course of action on a project.
- Most actions by advisory bodies will not qualify as a CEQA project requiring additional steps.
- Commission liaisons will check whether projects require CEQA review prior to commission review.
- For questions, please contact the Development Services Department Deputy Director.



Questions

- If any commissioners have questions, concerns, or are unclear on anything, please contact the staff liaison or Council liaison.

