



ITEM #7

HISTORICAL COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: December 11, 2023

Subject: Historical Commission Handbook and Commission Power and Duties

Prepared by: Sean Gallegos, Senior Planner

Attachment: A. Commission Handbook, dated September 12, 2023
B. Ordinance 2023-493, Chapter 2.08 and Chapter 2.12 Pertaining to City Commissions and the Historical Commission

Staff Recommendation

None

Environmental Review:

Not applicable

Background

The Los Altos Commission Handbook functions as the introduction to service for Commissions and Committees. It is reviewed and updated from time to time to incorporate changes in Council direction, state law, or to establish or further define roles and responsibilities of Commission Members. The City Council provided direction at the Study Session on August 22, 2023, regarding changes to the sections on ad hoc subcommittees, Council liaisons, and conflicts of interest.

Commission Handbook

The City Council approved amendments to the Commission handbook on September 12, 2023, and primary amendments include the following:

Attendance and Participation

This section has been updated to clarify the attendance and participation requires for Commissioners>

1. A majority of members must be physically present for a meeting to be held.
2. Commissioners are mandated to attend at least 75% of regularly scheduled meetings in person.
3. Commissioners are permitted to attend a maximum of 20% of meetings remotely.

Conflict of Interest

This section has been updated to require that Commissioners with a perceived conflict of interest disclose those conflicts prior to any discussion by the Commission. The City Attorney should be consulted if a Commissioner has a question about a potential, perceived conflict of interest. This section also has been updated to include language regarding incompatible activities.

1. Commissioners are required to notify the Staff liaison about any perceived conflicts of interest.
2. Commissioners must disclose any perceived conflicts of interest before actively participating in discussions.
3. Commissioners are encouraged to seek guidance from the City Attorney or the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) regarding potential conflicts.

Ad Hoc Subcommittees

This section has been updated to better define what an ad hoc subcommittee is, how Commissioners can serve on a subcommittee and the procedures for establishing subcommittees. The motion of establishment must include that the Ad Hoc Subcommittee:

1. Ad Hoc Nature: Committees must be ad hoc and cannot have standing status.
2. Limited Formalities: Ad hoc committees do not require public posting, open meetings, staff support, or the recording of meeting minutes.
3. Specific Focus: Each committee must have a well-defined topic and operate within a specified timeframe.
4. No Continuing Jurisdiction: Committees cannot address matters of continuing jurisdiction.
5. Single-Year Duration: Ad hoc committees are limited to establishment within a single year.
6. Reporting to Full Commission: Findings and recommendations from ad hoc committees must be reported to the full Commission for consideration.
7. One Subcommittee per Commissioner: Commissioners are restricted to serving on only one subcommittee at a time to ensure equitable participation.

Commission Liaisons

This section has been added to the Handbook to establish how Commissions can appoint a Commissioner to serve as a liaison to another board, commission, or agency.

1. Commissions have the authority to appoint individual Commissioners to serve as liaisons to other boards, commissions, or agencies, eliminating the need for establishing an Ad Hoc Subcommittee.
2. Regular updates on the liaisons' activities should be provided to the full Commission during public meetings.
3. Liaisons are expected to advocate for positions that are consistent with those supported by the Commission or the City Council, provided they have previously addressed the topic.
4. Can be a member of the public.

Council Liaisons

This section has been updated in the commission handbook.

1. Council liaison attendance is no longer required at every meeting.
2. Council liaison will meet with Commission Chair and Staff liaison once per year at a minimum as well as at joint meeting.
3. Council liaisons shall not direct, guide or unduly influence the policy making work of the City's advisory bodies.

Historic Preservation Ordinance Amendments

The City Council approved Ordinance 2023-293 on May 23, 2023 amending Chapter 2.08 and Chapter 2.12 Pertaining to City Commissions and the Historical Commission, and the amendments include the following:

Powers and Duties

The historical 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.

Meeting Schedule

The frequency of Historical Commission meetings has been reduced from monthly to quarterly, or more frequently upon call of the chair or commission staff liaison, as necessary. Meetings are not permitted during the months of July and December.

Composition

The composition of the commission has been altered, reducing the membership from 7 members to 5 members.

Adherence to City policies

Unless otherwise provided herein, Commissioners shall be bound by all City policies, including the Commission Handbook.

Discussion/Analysis

The primary objective of this item is to offer comprehensive information concerning the revised commission handbook and the amendments to Chapter 2.08 and Chapter 2.12, both of which pertain to City Commissions and the Historical Commission.

As an informational item, no action may be taken on the item.