



TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL POLICY COMMITTEE REPORT

MEETING DATE: 04/22/2025

ITEM NO: 2

DATE: April 22, 2025
TO: Council Policy Committee
FROM: Chris Constantin, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Discuss and Consider a New Town Council Policy: Board, Committee, and Commission Code of Conduct

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Policy Committee discuss and consider recommending adoption of a new Town Council Policy: Board, Committee, and Commission Code of Conduct.

BACKGROUND:

The Town of Los Gatos relies on its Boards, Committees, and Commissions (commonly referred to as "Commissions") to serve as advisory bodies that help gather public input, analyze community concerns, and make policy recommendations to the Town Council. The Commissioners must follow the legal standards set by State and Federal law which include the Ralph M. Brown Act and conflict-of-interest statute.

Commissioners are subject to legal standards established by State and Federal law, including the Ralph M. Brown Act and conflict-of-interest regulations. However, there is also a need to establish consistent expectations for conduct and communication beyond legal compliance. A formal Code of Conduct Policy provides this clarity and ensures all members operate with respect, integrity, and professionalism.

At the February 25, 2025, Policy Committee meeting, the Committee directed staff to explore the development of a standalone policy to provide clarity for the roles and conduct of Commissioners. This recommendation was based on the need to distinguish expectations for Commissioners from those that apply to elected officials.

PREPARED BY: Wendy Wood
Town Clerk

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, and Town Attorney

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DISCUSSION:

In response to the Policy Committee's direction on February 25, 2025, staff developed a standalone Code of Conduct Policy based on the structure of the revised Council Code of Conduct and specifically tailored to align with the advisory responsibilities and functional roles of the Town's Boards, Committees, and Commissions. The goal was to ensure that Commissioners clearly understand their responsibilities and the expectations for ethical conduct, respectful communication, and productive engagement in public service.

The proposed policy (Attachment 1) clearly defines the responsibilities and conduct expectations for Commissioners. The key components include:

- **Defined Roles and Responsibilities:** Emphasizes the advisory function of Commissions and the importance of aligning their work with Council's Strategic Priorities and the Town's mission.
- **Meeting Conduct:** Establishes respectful and orderly behavior during public meetings, appropriate use of formal titles, and respectful engagement with both colleagues and members of the public.
- **Legal Requirements and Training:** Reiterates compliance with the Brown Act, procurement and land use restrictions, harassment prevention, and ongoing training obligations.
- **Communication Standards:** Provides guidance on interactions with the Council, public, and media, requiring Commissioners to clearly distinguish between personal and official communications and refer all media inquiries to Town staff.
- **Council Relationship:** Clarifies the advisory nature of Commission input and the need for Commissioners to respect and not contradict Council decisions once made.
- **Enforcement Framework:** Outlines a process for evaluating complaints, categorizing violations as minor or major, and determining appropriate sanctions, including written notices or removal by Council vote.

CONCLUSION:

This proposed policy fulfills the Policy Committee's direction from February 25, 2025, and establishes a comprehensive framework to support effective and respectful service by Commissioners. It reinforces the Town's commitment to open, ethical, and collaborative governance.

COORDINATION:

This report was coordinated with the Town Attorney's Office and the Town Manager's Office.

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FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.

Attachments:

1. Draft Policy