



TOWN OF
LOS GATOS
CALIFORNIA

COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

Small Town Service

Community Stewardship

Future Focus

TITLE: Commission Requirements and Guidelines:
Residency and Attendance, Requirements, and Establishing
a Quorum, and Appointments

POLICY NUMBER: 2-11

EFFECTIVE DATE: 2/28/1990

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9/20/2022; 10/3/2023; 11/21/2023;
3/5/2024; 12/17/2024

APPROVED:

PURPOSE

To establish a policy to encourage participation by the Town's residents on Town Boards, Commissions and Committees (hereinafter referred to as "Commissions"). The Town of Los Gatos is committed to inclusivity. We value all our community members, regardless of religion, immigration status, ethnicity, race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Town will encourage residents to participate on Commissions by advertising vacancies on Commissions for at least 30 days, preparing easily understood applications, maintaining clear descriptions of the role of each Board, Commission, and Committee and its respective members, providing current meeting schedules, and conducting public interviews of all Commission applicants, except as provided by this Policy.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all applicants to Town Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

POLICY

The Town Council encourages public participation in all decision-making and to be successful residents must be assured both that the participation is meaningful and that their input will be valued. The widest representation from the community can only be achieved if vacancies are well advertised so that anyone interested will have the opportunity to apply. Interviews of the applicants conducted in public by the Town Council demonstrates that it values these appointments and that all have an equal opportunity to be appointed. While the Council Members may be provided standardized questions to use during the interviews,

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they free to ask other appropriate questions instead of, or in addition to, those provided.

Applicants may apply to more than one Commission, and shall rank their choices in their preferred order, during each recruitment cycle.

To ensure the greatest possible participation by the public, no person shall be appointed to more than one Commission except in those cases where they are ex-officio members of other Boards, Commissions, and Committees, or Commission members (hereinafter referred to as "Commissioners") serving as representatives of their Commission who have been appointed by the Town Council.

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

Residency within the incorporated municipal limits of the Town of Los Gatos, California is required for appointment and continued membership on all Town of Los Gatos Boards, Commissions, and Committees, with the exception of the Youth Commission and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission.

Youth Commission:

The members shall be students who are entering grades 8 through 12 in the fall.

Membership for the students requires either residency in the incorporated limits of the Town of Los Gatos or residency in the unincorporated areas of the County of Santa Clara, which have a Los Gatos mailing address.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission:

Membership composition shall be as outlined in the Commission's enabling resolution ~~and includes a Los Gatos business owner/employee, faith leader who leads a congregation in Los Gatos, and Los Gatos non-profit employee who may or may not reside in Los Gatos.~~

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. All members of all appointive Commissions should attend all regular and special meetings of said Commissions.
2. Consistent with the Town Council's summer recess, Commissions will not schedule a regular meeting in the month of July to allow time for vacations. Nothing in this policy will prohibit staff from scheduling a special meeting to address urgent Town business.
3. Any member not in attendance at a regular meeting of said Commissions for at least 70% of the duration of the meeting shall be considered absent. To allow Commissioners to plan ahead to meet the 70% requirement, there will be a two-hour time limit for a regular Commission meeting with the exception of the Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Committee and meetings containing discussion regarding the Town's annual budget.

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4. A Commissioner shall be deemed to have automatically surrendered their office if they have either:
 - a. Three consecutive unexcused absences from the regular meetings of the Commission; or
 - b. Unexcused absences totaling more than twenty percent* of the total number of scheduled regular meetings in any calendar year;* or
 - c. Absences, whether excused or unexcused, totaling more than thirty-five percent* of the total number of scheduled regular meetings in that calendar year.**
5. Excused absences shall be limited to those which meet both of the following requirements:
 - a. The absent Commissioner must have informed the chair and the staff liaison to the Commission of their intended absence prior to the scheduled meeting. (Failure to inform the chair and the staff liaison prior to the meeting shall result in an unexcused absence unless an unusual circumstance prevents advance notice.); and
 - b. The following shall be considered an excused absence:
 - i. An absence due to illness of the Commissioner; or
 - ii. An absence due to a medical emergency of the Commissioner or the Commissioner's family member or loved one; or
 - iii. An absence due to the Commissioner's need to provide direct caregiving related to the illness of the Commissioner's family member or loved one; or
 - iv. An absence due to the death of a Commissioner's family member or loved one; or
 - v. An absence because a Commissioner is away on authorized commission business; or
 - vi. An absence due to required military service; or
 - vii. An absence related to Federal and State Family Leave.
6. For all Commissions other than the Finance Commission, vacant positions shall be filled by appointment by a majority vote of the Town Council, for a term equal to the unexpired portion of the office vacated. Any member removed from office due to non-attendance may re-apply to serve on a Town Commission but will not be treated as an incumbent in any subsequent application to the same Commission.

* Percentages will be rounded to the nearest whole number using standard rounding rules (less than .5 will round down and .5 or more will round up) and if the Commissioner was appointed to fill a vacancy, more than twenty percent of the total number of remaining scheduled regular meetings in that calendar year.

** A calendar year is defined as January 1 through December 31. Any absence that causes the cancellation of a regular meeting due to lack of a quorum shall be counted as an

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absence for the Commissioner. A regular meeting shall not be cancelled and replaced with a special meeting in order to alleviate an absence by a Commissioner.

QUORUM REQUIREMENTS

The number of members needed to constitute a quorum on any Town Commission shall be a majority of the Commission.

PROCEDURES

~~The following procedures will be followed by the applicant, the Town Clerk, and the Town Council for the appointment of applicants to Town Commissions:~~

~~Responsibility and Actions: Town Clerk~~

~~A. Annual Recruitments~~

~~Adult Commissioners' terms begin on January 1 and end on December 31, Youth Commissioners' terms begin on September 1 and end on May 31. The Town Clerk shall perform the following duties in conducting an annual recruitment for Commissioners:~~

- ~~1. Notify Town Council of vacancies on Commissions by indicating the names of the Commissions, the number of terms expiring or being vacated, names of individual(s) with expiring terms or vacating seats, advertising periods (at least 30 days) and the date of interview.~~
- ~~2. Advertise the vacancies, including the application deadline and the interview date. Interviews and appointments for Adult Commissioners shall occur after annual Mayor and Vice Mayor selection, and in the case of election years, after new Council Members have been seated. Interviews and appointments for Youth Commissioners shall occur by the fourth Wednesday in May, no earlier than 4:00 p.m.~~
- ~~3. Prepare and maintain easily understood applications for appointment to Commissions. Applications shall include the following policy information:~~
 - ~~a. Prior to initial appointment to any Commission, non-incumbent applicants must be interviewed by the Town Council, with the exception of the Finance Commission which will be interviewed by the appointing Council Member. The applications of those not interviewed will be held for the next recruitment.~~
 - ~~b. If an incumbent Commissioner is requesting reappointment to the same Commission and is not available to be interviewed, the incumbent may submit a letter prior to the interviews, describing the reason why the applicant cannot be present via teleconference or in person for the interview, and why the applicant should be reappointed to the Commission.~~
 - ~~c. Submission deadlines are mandatory; no exceptions are permitted.~~

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~~4. Applications:~~

- ~~a. For adult applicants — Accept applications, verify eligibility, and distribute copies of the applications of eligible applicants to the Town Council prior to the interviews for appointment.~~
- ~~b. For student applicants — Accept applications, verify eligibility, and distribute copies of the applications of eligible applicants to the Town Council Selection Committee, consisting of the Mayor, Vice Mayor, Police Chief, and Youth Commission Chair (if not reapplying), prior to the interviews for appointment.~~

~~5. Notify the applicant by letter or email as to the date and time of the interview and provide the option for an in-person or teleconference interview.~~

~~6. Facilitate the Council voting process set forth below by informing the Council as to how many votes are possible on each Commission, calling out applicants' names, and identifying the applicants receiving sufficient votes for appointment. This voting process does not apply to Youth Commission or Finance Commission applicants.~~

~~7. Applicants:~~

- ~~a. For adult applicants — After the interviews and the Council votes are completed, notify all applicants of the Council's action, and explain the Town's policy of keeping applications active for one year with notification of subsequent openings on that Commission to the interested applicants.~~
- ~~b. For Youth Commission applicants — After the interviews are completed, notify all applicants of the Council Committee's action, and prepare a staff report for the Town Council to ratify the Committee's appointment at the first Town Council meeting in June.~~

Interview Process

~~To ensure the interview process is consistent, fair, and equitable, each applicant shall be asked the same standard questions, as provided below. Notwithstanding, no Council Member shall be prevented from asking appropriate questions of applicants.~~

- ~~1. If appointed, what ideas would you like to see the Commission explore?~~
- ~~2. Please expand beyond the written response on your application: your experience, interest, and/or expertise that you feel would be most useful to the Commission.~~
- ~~3. Please elaborate on any written response provided in the application to assist the Council learn more about you.~~
- ~~4. If you did not answer any of the questions on the application, please explain why.~~

~~The standard questions are limited in number to allow an applicant sufficient time to respond. While the intent is for each Council Member to be able to ask one question of each applicant, the Council may decide not to ask all of the provided questions, change the order of the questions, or rotate which Council member asks a specific question. Applicants will be given a two-minute time limit to answer each question.~~

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Balloting Process

~~Unless determined otherwise, the Council shall conduct a ballot vote for the appointment of individuals to fill the vacancies for each Commission with the exception of the Finance Commission. Such ballot vote may be conducted at either a regular, adjourned or special meeting of the Town Council. The ballot vote process shall be conducted as follows:~~

- ~~1. The Town Clerk shall provide a ballot to each Town Council member listing the names of all applicants and "None of the above" for each respective Commission. Prior to the vote, the Town Clerk shall publicly announce the position vacancy and all applicant names that are listed on the ballot.~~

APPOINTMENT GUIDELINES

Boards, Committees, and Commissions

In order for a candidate to be appointed, a majority vote (3 or more) must occur. In the event of a tie vote, a runoff will be held. Each Council member may vote for the same number of applicants as there are current vacancies on the respective Commission. In no case, can a Council Member cast more votes than there are vacancies; or vote for the same candidate more than once on each ballot (i.e. cumulative voting -- e.g. where there are three vacancies, a Council member may not give all three votes to the same candidate). A Council Member is not required to vote for any of the candidates or for the total number of vacancies available.

Youth Commission

The Town Council Selection Committee, consisting of the Mayor, Vice Mayor, Police Chief, and Youth Commission Chair (if not reapplying), will interview the Youth Commission applicants and make appointment recommendations for the Town Council to ratify.

~~The Town Clerk shall collect all ballots and shall publicly announce the name of each Town Council member and how that Council member cast his or her vote. In the case of a tie vote, the Town Clerk will announce that there is a tie and that a run-off vote shall be conducted but will not announce the names of the applicants in the run-off. Once all voting is concluded and a decision made, the votes will be made public. The run-off ballot will also include a "None of the above" option.~~

- ~~2. Applicants receiving a majority number of votes shall be deemed appointed to the Commission. In the event of a tie, a run-off vote shall be conducted among the applicants receiving the highest number of votes from the previous round. This shall continue until a majority consensus on an applicant(s) is reached for the number of vacancies to be filled. In the event of an unbreakable tie, the Council may determine an alternative method for selecting the appointee(s) or direct the Town Clerk to re-advertise the vacancy.~~

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- ~~1. If an applicant(s) is appointed to a Commission that has vacancies for both full and partial, unexpired terms, the length of the appointee's term will be determined by the Mayor.~~

~~B. Mid-Term Recruitments~~

~~During the year, Commissions may experience vacancies that drop the number of filled seats to a number of members that is not sufficient to conduct Commission business. The Commission may request the Council to conduct a mid-term recruitment to fill seats. To the extent possible, the Town Clerk will consolidate mid-term recruitments to minimize the number of recruitments occurring throughout the year. In the event of a vacancy on the Planning Commission, the Town will automatically conduct a mid-term recruitment. Mid-term recruitments will not be conducted for Youth Commissioners. The Town Clerk shall advertise mid-term vacancies on Commissions for at least 15 days.~~

~~Responsibility and Action: Applicant~~

- ~~1. Read the Commission Appointments, Residency and Attendance Requirements, and Establishing a Quorum Policy, complete and submit to the Town Clerk the application for appointment to a Town Commission by the advertised deadline date and time.~~
- ~~2. For adult applicants: Attend the Council meeting to be interviewed for the Commission appointment. The applicant is required to notify the Town Clerk no later than 4:00 p.m. three business days before the scheduled interview date whether they will not attend in person or via teleconference.~~
- ~~3. For student applicants: Attend the Council Selection Committee interview session. The applicant is required to notify the Town Clerk no later than 4:00 p.m. the three business days before the scheduled interview date whether they will not attend in person or via teleconference.~~
- ~~4. If an incumbent Commissioner is requesting reappointment to the same Commission and is not available on the date of the interview, the incumbent must submit a letter by 4:00 p.m. the three business days prior to the interviews, describing the reason why the applicant cannot be present via teleconference or in person for the interview, and why the applicant should be reappointed to the Commission.~~
- ~~5. If appointed, prior to starting the Commission term, appointees are required to attend a Commissioner Orientation and take the "Oath of Office."~~
- ~~6. Attend Commission meetings once term begins.~~
- ~~7. Read the Commissioners' Handbook available online.~~

~~Responsibility and Action: Town Council~~

- ~~1. Review applications.~~
- ~~2. For adult applicants—Interview applicants by Commission at a public meeting with all applicants present.~~

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- ~~For student applicants—Town Council Selection Committee interviews applicants.~~
- ~~3. Determine if the incumbents not in attendance and having submitted a letter pursuant to this Policy should be considered for reappointment.~~
- ~~4. If there are limited applications for any vacancy to a Commission, the Mayor, on behalf of the Council, may request that the Town Clerk re-advertise the vacancy, reschedule the interviews, and notify all applicants of the new interview date.~~

REAPPOINTMENT GUIDELINES

An individual who has been removed from a Commission for the following reasons, may not be reappointed:

1. Failure to file the following documents required by the Fair Political Practices Commission (Adult Commissioners):
 - a. Form 700 – Assuming Office, Annual, and Leaving Office when term is complete.
 - b. Planning Commissioners are also required to complete AB 1234 Ethics Training and file the original certificate with the Town Clerk every two years.
2. Failure to comply with all Town Policies, Guidelines, and Handbooks.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Under the ~~Fair Political Practice~~Political Reform Act, a Commissioner has a disqualifying conflict of interest in a governmental decision if it is foreseeable that the decision will have a financial impact on his or her personal finances or other financial interests. In such cases, there is a risk of biased decision-making that could sacrifice the public's interest in favor of the official's private financial interests. To avoid actual bias or the appearance of possible improprieties, the public official is prohibited from participating in the decision. While all Commissioners must at a minimum comply with the ~~Fair Political Practice~~Political Reform Act regulations, they should also avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Some Board and Commission members serve on non-profit boards or are employed by non-profit organizations. Board and Commission members may not participate in decisions (which includes making recommendations to the Town Council) in which they have a potential conflict of interest, which can be a financial or a personal interest. In the event of a potential conflict of interest, the Board or Commission member must recuse themselves and provide a brief statement explaining the reason for recusal. Even if it is determined that there is no potential conflict of interest, the Board or Commission member must state that their affiliation with the non-profit organization before participating in the decision.~~The Fair Political Practice Act does not prohibit a Commissioner from participating in a decision regarding a non-profit organization simply by virtue of holding a position as a board member, director, officer, or employment with a nonprofit corporation. However, with limited exceptions, Government Code Section 1090 prohibits a Commissioner from participating in a decision (including a recommendation) in which the Commissioner is financially interested. the~~

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~~Town strongly encourages that in the event that a decision concerns a nonprofit corporation for which a Commissioner is a board member, director, officer, or employed with that nonprofit corporation, the person should recuse him or herself and at a minimum shall disclose the potential conflict of interest before any discussion and decision.~~

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Gabrielle Whelan, Town Attorney