

RESOLUTION 2021-

RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS REGARDING BROWN ACT COMPLIANCE AND TELECONFERENCING PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953, AS AMENDED BY ASSEMBLY BILL 361, DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, on March 4, 2020, the Governor of the State of California declared a state of emergency to make additional resources available, formalize emergency actions already underway across multiple state agencies and departments, and help the state prepare for broader spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 an International Pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 12, 2020, the Town Manager of Los Gatos acting in the capacity of Town of Director of Emergency Services, issued a Proclamation of Local Emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States of America declared a national emergency and announced that the federal government would make emergency funding available to assist state and local governments in preventing the spread of and addressing the effects of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health directed all individuals in the County to Shelter in Place and mandated requirements, including but not limited to, social distancing, staying home if sick, canceling or postponing group events, working from home, and other precautions to protect public health and prevent transmission of this communicable virus; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-29-20, which suspended and modified the teleconferencing requirements under the Brown Act (California Government Code Section 54950 et seq.) so that local legislative bodies can hold public meetings via teleconference (with audio or video communications, without a physical meeting location), as long as the meeting agenda identifies the teleconferencing procedures to be used; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2020, the Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos ratified the Proclamation of Local Emergency as set forth in Resolution 2020-008 and remains in full force and effect to date; and

WHEREAS, on June 4, 2021, the Governor clarified that the “reopening” of California on June 15, 2021 did not include any change to the proclaimed state of emergency or the powers exercised thereunder; and

ATTACHMENT 1

WHEREAS, on June 11, 2021, the Governor issued Executive Order N-08-21, which extended the provision of N-29-20 concerning the conduct of public meetings through September 30, 2021, and the Governor subsequently signed legislation revising Brown Act requirements for teleconferenced public meetings (Assembly Bill 361, referred to hereinafter as “AB 361”); and

WHEREAS, on September 16, 2021 Governor Newsom signed AB 361, which added subsection (e) to Government Code section 54953 of the Brown Act, and makes provision for remote teleconferencing participation in meetings by members of a legislative body, without compliance with the requirements of Government Code section 54953(b)(3), subject to the existence of certain conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends physical distancing of at least six (6) feet whenever possible, avoiding crowds, and avoiding spaces that do not offer fresh air from the outdoors, particularly for people who are not fully vaccinated or who are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, the CDC recommends that people who live with unvaccinated people avoid activities that make physical distancing difficult; and

WHEREAS, the CDC recommends that older adults limit in-person interactions as much as possible, particularly when indoors; and

WHEREAS, fully vaccinated persons who become infected with the COVID19 Delta variant can spread the virus to others; and

WHEREAS, the Town’s public-meeting facilities are indoor facilities that are not designed to ensure circulation of fresh/outdoor air, particularly during periods of cold and/or rainy weather; and

WHEREAS, the Town’s public-meeting facilities are not designed to ensure that attendees can remain six (6) feet apart; and

WHEREAS, holding in-person meetings would encourage community members from different households to come to Town facilities to participate in local government, and some of them would be at high risk of getting very sick from COVID-19 and/or would live with someone who is at high risk; and

WHEREAS, in-person meetings may bring community members who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms to leave their homes in order to come to Town facilities and participate in local government; and

WHEREAS, some attendees would use ride-share services or public transit to travel to in-person meetings, thereby putting them in close and prolonged contact with additional

people outside of their households; and

WHEREAS, a required condition of AB 361 is that a state of emergency is declared by the Governor pursuant to Government Code section 8625, proclaiming the existence of conditions of disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property within the State caused by conditions as described in Government Code section 8558; and

WHEREAS, as of the date of this Resolution, neither the Governor nor the Legislature have exercised their respective powers pursuant to California Government Code section 8629 To lift the state of emergency either by proclamation or by concurrent resolution in the state Legislature; and

WHEREAS, as of the date of this Resolution, neither the County Health Officer nor the County of Santa Clara have exercised their powers to lift the local health emergency and local state of emergency declared; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council has considered all information related to this matter, including the associated staff report and other information relating to COVID-19 provided at prior public meetings of the Town Council; and

WHEREAS, the Town Council now desires to adopt a Resolution finding that the requisite conditions exist for the legislative bodies of the Town of Los Gatos, as defined in the Brown Act, to conduct remote teleconference meetings without compliance with paragraph (3) of subdivision (b) of Government Code section 54953.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS DOES HEREBY RESOLVE:

1. The Town Council hereby finds that the fact set forth in the above recitals are true and correct, and establish the factual basis for the adoption of this Resolution;
2. There is an ongoing proclaimed state of emergency relating to the novel coronavirus causing the disease known as COVID-19 and as a result of that emergency, meeting in person would present imminent risks to the health or safety of attendees of in-person meetings of this legislative body within the meaning of California Government Code section 54953(e)(1).
3. Under the present circumstances, including the risks mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the Town Council determines that authorizing teleconferenced public meetings consistent with Assembly Bill 361 is necessary and appropriate.
4. Staff are directed to take all actions necessary to implement this Resolution for all Town meetings in accordance with the foregoing provisions and the requirements of Government Code section 54953, as amended by Assembly Bill 361, including but not limited

to returning for ratification of this Resolution every 30 days after teleconferencing for the first time pursuant to Assembly Bill 361 for so long as either of the following circumstances exists: (a) the state of emergency continues to directly impact the ability of this legislative body to meet in person; and/or (b) state or local officials, including but not limited to the County Health Officer, continue to impose or recommend measures to promote social distancing.

PASSED AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos, California, held on the 5th day of October 2021, by the following vote:

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

SIGNED:

MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

DATE: _____

ATTEST:

CLERK ADMINISTRATOR OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

DATE: _____