
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: COUNCIL MEMBER ROBINSON

SUBJECT: COUNCIL MEETING POLICY

DATE: FEBRUARY 5, 2021

CC: MIKE APPLGARTH

I appreciated the Chair's request for a review of our Council meeting policies. Our brief discussion touched on some of the areas where the policies we have largely inherited from our predecessors no longer adequately clarify Council practice. In the hope of stimulating further discussion, and with the goal of helping to refine our policies so they better serve as a fair and predictable guide to Council business, I propose that we consider the following three concepts.

- 1. We should amend the Rules of Procedure to require annual review, adjustment if necessary, and re adoption of the Rules annually at the first Council meeting of each year.** This will help ensure that our meeting rules are current, that all Council Members have a shared understanding of their applicability and provide predictability in meeting procedure to City staff and the public.
- 2. Require staff to explicitly title Council Member sponsored agenda items to indicate whether an item is a first or second "pass" per our legislative procedures.** Although staff often uses language along these lines such as, "Council Member introducing" or "Council Member requesting/recommending," we can provide clarity to members, staff, and the public by more clearly indicating whether an item is a first introduction or second reading of an item previously discussed now ready for Council final action.
- 3. Segregate our agendas again into weekly alternating Work Sessions and Business Sessions.** From my perspective, the mixture of voting and non-voting items *on the same agenda* is key source of confusion. We are encountering ambiguous territory when the Council desires to take a vote on something initially scheduled as "information" or "non-voting." We debate whether we can vote, and if so, whether our rules for public comment apply. The same dilemma applies to items pulled from the Consent Calendar. In addition, many of our voting items are

occurring late into the evening as they occur after information items. I have heard concerns from residents and staff who wonder why we spend so much time on “non-voting” issues. This has caused me to also question if we could be more efficient and deliberate with our time and by consequence, the public’s time.

As we initially intended at this time last year, and attempted until the pandemic curtailed physical meetings, Work Sessions will include all “information” and/or “non-voting” items. It is a chance for the Council to engage in deeper discussion amongst ourselves, with Administration, and staff. My thought is that the Work Session could begin at 6 PM at which time we would have a Citizen Comment period before diving into the agenda items. This way the continuity of the Work Session discussion is not broken or pressed by time-constraints.

Business Sessions would include our customary standing reports and all items that require a Council vote. We should continue our standard practice of beginning these meetings at 5:15 and maintain our 6 PM Citizen Comment section. This way, open public comment always falls on at the same time each Tuesday. We should continue to welcome public comment on each voting item. With our recently enhanced communication efforts and social media presence (which we did not have at this time last year), we should have no trouble communicating the details of each meeting. In addition, staff can add individual eComment links to all agenda items to make it easy for residents to submit written comments on any item of their choosing.

I look forward to the feedback of my Council colleagues on these suggestions. As we drive toward consensus on these or alternative policy improvements, I am happy to work with staff to create the necessary technical amendments for Council review.