



Staff Report

REPORT ON CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary

At the April 11, 2006 meeting, the City Council directed staff to report back on Council Member Dickenson's Item #9 regarding implementation of a Council Committee Structure. Council Member Dickenson presented the attached chart (Exhibit A) outlining the proposed structure which is intended to better define and manage Council workloads and allow Council and staff to work more effectively with one another. This chart was developed and submitted to Council by former Interim City Manager Jack Crist to give more formality to the way the Council conducts its committee work and create opportunity to involve all Council Members in Committee work.

The following report has been developed with management team input and with particular thanks to the City Clerk Terri Cook for researching peninsula cities' Council Committees and Public Works Director Ray Davis for researching the City of San Leandro's Council Committee structure and protocol.

Background

As you are aware, the Belmont City Council has established the following Council subcommittees/liason assignments and appointed members of Council to assume these "internal" responsibilities.

COUNCIL INTERGOVERNMENTAL ASSIGNMENTS – 2006

Council Subcommittees/Liaisons	Contact		Meeting Schedule
Public Works Subcommittee	Rep: Mathewson; Rep: Feierbach	Ray Davis, 595-7459	As needed
Liaison to Finance Commission	Delegate: Vice Mayor Alternate: Dickenson	Thomas Fil, 595-7436	Monthly 1 st Thursday, 7:30 p.m.
Harbor Industrial Area Liaison	Rep: Dickenson Rep: Lieberman	City Manager Howard Jones, 349-3820	Monthly Luncheon meeting, 1 st Thursday
Liaison Senior Citizen Advisory Committee	Delegate: Feierbach Alternate: Warden	Rich Bortoli, 595-7444	Alternate months 4 th Monday, 4:00 p.m.
San Juan Canyon Subcommittee	Rep: Feierbach Rep: Mathewson	Carlos deMelo, 595-7440	As needed
Economic Development Subcommittee	Rep: Warden Rep: Mathewson	City Manager	As Needed

On occasion, some Council subcommittee work has overlapped. Case in point would be the efforts of the Economic Development Subcommittee and the Harbor Industrial Area liaisons.

A formalized Council Committee structure beyond what is currently in place, could help clarify Council assignments and focus on the larger issues, distribute Council workload, develop Council “expertise” in key areas, get all the Council involved and facilitate more effective interaction between Council and management staff. Standing Council Committees could also give structure and support for which items should go to the full Council and when. A set term for Council Committee members would also assure a continuity of Council involvement for a given period as well as allow for rotation of assignments from member to member which would enhance Council “expertise” on a broader range of important subjects.

Appointments to Council Committees could be based on member preferences/interests, experience and availability and ratified by the Council as a whole. It should be noted that standing Council Committees and standing Council Subcommittees, even with only two Council Members involved, are subject to the Brown Act with meetings required to be noticed and open to the public. Based on extent, necessity and timing of subject matters assigned to Council Committees, meetings could be regularly scheduled or called as needed. While formal agendas would be required to notice Committee meetings, staff reports could be written or verbal, therefore keeping staff support manageable.

Discussion

Management staff has met on several occasions to discuss and give input on the possible creation of Standing Council Committees. Additionally, staff has reviewed the initial draft of this report and Exhibits A and B and provided comments. Staff is generally disposed to Council Committees primarily because they provide a structure for staff to receive and give input to two members of Council before matters go before the entire Council and that those members can better articulate the background and possibly serve as ambassadors for issues with their Council colleagues. It is therefore possible that Council Committees could help reduce the length of Council meetings. Staff time supporting Council Committees may also be more productive versus multiple impromptu briefings of all five Council Members. Where additional staff time would be required would be in the noticing of meetings, development of agendas and production of meeting minutes.

It is anticipated that staff would take the lead in developing Committee agendas with Council Committee member input. Initially, the frequency of meetings could be monthly or as needed depending on timelines for bringing matters to the Council as a whole.

Exhibit B, which is attached for your review and comment, reflects staff input on the number of Council Committees, Committee charges and staff liaisons based on the subject matters within the proposed charges. Clearly, Council Committees could be “designed” in a variety of ways. Should you wish to proceed, Council could appoint an Ad Hoc Council Committee to work with

staff to revise/refine Committee structure, scope, staff assignments and protocol.

General Plan/Vision Statement

Development and implementation of a Standing Council Committee structure and protocol would further the City’s Vision Statement – Distinctive Community Character as outlined below:

1. “Our strong sense of community and enjoyment of the town’s assets and activities deepen as we become better informed and connected.”

Fiscal Impact

None at this time.

Public Contact

Posting of the City Council Agenda.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that Council discuss the value added by establishing Standing Council Committees and direct staff accordingly.

Alternatives

1. Direct staff, with or without Ad Hoc Council Committee input, to develop a protocol to implement the desired Standing Council Committee structure for Council action at a future meeting.
2. Postpone action/direction to a date certain.
3. Refer back to staff for additional information.
4. Deny approval and use Ad Hoc Council Committees as issues warrant.

Attachments

- Exhibit A. Council Agenda Item 9.A. Meeting of April 11, 2006
- Exhibit B. Proposed Council Committee Structure

Respectfully submitted,

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Interim City Manager

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