TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES

DATE: SEPTEMBER 18, 2006 CMR: 365:06

SUBJECT: HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION TO THE CITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT A VOTER CONFIDENCE RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION
The City of Palo Alto’s Human Relations Commission (HRC) requests that the City Council adopt a Voter Confidence Resolution and direct the City Attorney to draft the final version of the resolution.

BACKGROUND
At its June 8, 2006 HRC meeting, Commissioners discussed revisions to the Voter Confidence Resolution after receiving feedback from the City Council at its May 8, 2006 meeting. During the January and February HRC meetings, the Commissioners discussed the election process and entertained testimony from residents regarding the voting system and the problem with voting machines in Santa Clara County.

DISCUSSION
The HRC’s concerns are that the voting machine system is unregulated. Some of the machines that have been tested had as much as a 30 percent error rate. Currently, the voting machines do not have a paper back-up system to provide for accurate recounts. The HRC is in support of absentee ballots because voting on paper is the only way to insure an accurate recount of votes. The HRC is recommending a Voter Confidence Resolution as a way of sending a message to local, state and federal election officials of the need to return to a more participatory democracy.

BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATION
The HRC is forwarding the revised resolution to the City Council for adoption and to request that the Council direct the City Attorney to draft the final version of the resolution.

RESOURCE IMPACT
There should not be a significant impact on staff time.

ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: Cover Letter from the Chair of the Human Relations Commission
Attachment B: Draft Voter Confidence Resolution