

MEMORANDUM

TO: UTILITIES ADVISORY COMMISSION

FROM: UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

DATE: FEBRUARY 3, 2016

SUBJECT: Discussion of Pilot Approach for Commissioner-Initiated Placement of Items on Utilities Advisory Committee Agendas, Distribution of Informational Materials



RECOMMENDATION

The Interim Director of Utilities (Interim UD) recommends that the Utilities Advisory Commission (UAC) discuss this report on a proposed pilot approach for managing placement of Commissioner-initiated topics on the UAC agenda, and distribution of informational material among Commissioners as a supplement to existing rules established by state law, the Palo Alto Municipal Code and the UAC Bylaws.

BACKGROUND

At its January 13, 2016 meeting, the UAC briefly identified the topic of how Commissioner-initiated issues are agendaized and shared with the Commission as a whole, either as informational items or for discussion. The Interim UD agreed to agendaize this topic for discussion at the next UAC meeting.

UAC meeting agendas and information sharing practices are subject to requirements of the Palo Alto Municipal Code Chapter 2.23 and applicable California law, including the Brown Act, California Government Code Section 54950 *et seq.* The City Council has further approved Bylaws for the UAC, and Section 7 of the UAC Bylaws define protocols for setting meeting agendas and for Commissioners to request future items for discussion.

CONSIDERATIONS

Feedback from Commissioners has indicated a desire to better enable discussion of emergent issues, tempered by an appreciation for the need to allow staff to focus on efficient operation of Palo Alto's utilities. Recognizing that balancing these potentially competing priorities may change over time, the Interim UD believes that, on a pilot basis, establishing written criteria and expectations could be a helpful step to clarify roles and meet expectations over the next several Commission meetings. These criteria could be adjusted as needed over time to maintain consensus with the Commission and reflect experience in practice.

The Interim UD would therefore like to proceed with the following understanding:

1. Commission-Initiated Topics on UAC Agenda

- a. Using either the "Commissioner Memo" or Rolling Calendar methods specified in the UAC Bylaws, two or three Commissioners may propose a topic for UAC discussion. Proposed topics should fall within the UAC's purposes and duties (PAMC section 2.23.050).
- b. Upon receipt and finalization of a Commissioner memo (using procedures in the Bylaws) or per the rolling calendar, the Interim UD will agendize the topic. At the subsequent month's UAC meeting, the Interim UD will identify where the topic has been placed on the rolling calendar and how it will be agendized. If the item cannot be agendized, the reason will be identified for the Commission.
- c. The topic will be agendized for discussion (not action) if the memo has the potential to adversely impact staff resources or work priorities. The Interim UD will consider time and agenda management in placement of Commissioner-initiated topics on future agendas. Given limited staff availability, the UAC's discussion may proceed without a presentation or attendance by City staff most knowledgeable on a topic.
- d. The item If UAC discussion leads to a desire for action on a discussion topic, the Interim UD will evaluate the topic and identify a future agenda for follow-up discussion and possible action. This will then be reflected on the rolling calendar.

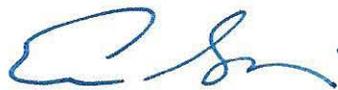
2. Distribution of Information to Commissioners

- a. A Commissioner may send information to the UD for distribution to the UAC.
- b. The Interim UD will review the material to confirm that it falls within the scope of the Commission's responsibilities. In general, material distributed should be limited to factual or newsworthy information, and avoid advocacy or promotional content. Materials that require staff research or review prior to distribution (such as for technical accuracy or legal considerations) should not require more than one hour of staff time.
- c. Based on this review the Interim UD will distribute the information to the UAC or consult with the UAC Chair and discuss with the Commissioner reasons for not distributing the information. When distributing materials to the UAC, the Interim UD will also identify a method for providing the material to the public.

NEXT STEPS

The UAC will discuss this approach at its meeting on February 3rd. The Interim UD requests Commissioner feedback on this pilot approach, and will proceed accordingly.

PREPARED BY:



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