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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

Meeting: January 19, 2021

Subject

Approve the updated Commissioner Handbook

Recommended Action

Approve the updated Commissioner Handbook and provide any input

Background

The Commissioner Handbook is provided to each commissioner at their orientation to use as a guide to the roles and responsibilities of serving on the City's commissions. The Handbook is designed to serve as a reference for the basic protocols that apply generally to all commissions.

Discussion

On January 21, 2020, the City Council adopted recommendations provided by a Council Ad Hoc subcommittee to improve commission engagement with Council and to standardize protocol among commissions and committees (Attachment C). Due to these changes, updates were required to the Commissioner Handbook (Handbook). As part of the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 City Work Program, Council directed that the Handbook be updated to address the changes as well as to improve readability and user-friendliness. Recommendations directed to commissioners were incorporated into the Handbook language and the entire list of recommendations is included as an additional resource. Overall, the Handbook has been shortened from 32 pages to 10 pages, including the most pertinent information and adding links to additional resources.

The following resources have been referenced within the handbook:

- Rosenberg's Rules of Order, the official Parliamentary Procedures for City Council meetings, implemented March 5, 2020
- Rosenberg's Rules of Order Cheat Sheet
- Ethics AB1234 Certification
- Ralph M. Brown Act

- California Public Records Act
- FPPC Conflict of Interests
- City Organization Chart
- January 21, 2020 Subcommittee Recommendations Regarding Commissions
- City of Cupertino Policies and Resolutions:
 - Ethics Policy
 - Technology Use Policy (replaced Electronic Communications, Internet Access and Use, Password Policies)
 - Social Media Policy
 - Resolution Governing Recruitment Process
 - Commission Diversity Resolution

A joint commission meeting was held on November 30, 2020 where all commissioners were invited to provide feedback on the draft Handbook. There were 19 commissioners in attendance and 4 commissioners emailed their written comments. Commissioners were generally positive about the draft handbook and many appreciated the shortened version and commented that it is more user friendly. Three commissioners expressed that the number of required periodic written updates, reports, and website requirements is adding too much unnecessary work to commissioners and liaisons. Commissioners also recommended adding more training on Rosenberg's Rules of Order and Brown Act requirements. Additional training on these topics, meeting decorum, and ethics will be implemented starting this year. To supplement the training, the Handbook also links to the League of California Cities' Brown Act webpage which includes a guide and other resources.

Attachment B contains the commissioner feedback received. However, only minimal changes were made to the draft Handbook to add clarity. Language was added to page 5 section D to clarify that individual commissioners can make recommendations to Council as long as they are acting as individual citizens and not in their official capacity. A sentence regarding the future agenda items list on page 7 section E was amended to improve readability. In this section it was also clarified that commissioners should reach out to the liaison with proposals for agenda items rather than the Chair and liaison to avoid Brown Act concerns. This section was also the only section to refer to a commission's purpose as its purview, so the word was changed to "purpose" for consistency with the remainder of the document. The subcommittee recommendations and a Rosenberg's Rules of Order cheat sheet were also added to the resources section. These changes can be seen in redline in Attachment D. In addition to changes made directly to the Handbook, a section describing quasi-judicial proceedings was added to the guidance on imposed restraints for clarity.

Once approved, this Handbook will be provided to new commissioners and staff will make updates annually for factual changes such as the date and mayor's signature.

Sustainability Impact

None anticipated.

Fiscal Impact

None anticipated.

Prepared by: Astrid Robles, Management Fellow

Reviewed by: Katy Nomura, Assistant to the City Manager

Approved for Submission by: Dianne Thompson, Assistant City Manager

Attachments:

A – Draft Commissioner Handbook

B – Commissioner Feedback

C – Subcommittee Recommendations

D – Redline Draft Commissioner Handbook