



CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION AGENDA

6:00 PM - Tuesday, January 10, 2023

via Videoconference and In Person

Please Note: The City Council will meet in person as well as via Telephone/Video Conference

Telephone:1-669-444-9171 / Webinar ID: 872 9314 2252

<https://losaltosca.gov.zoom.us/j/87293142252?pwd=eUVDNWpqcZNyVzR0MkN1aWQ0YXRvZz09>

Passcode: 987405

TO PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON: Members of the public may also participate in person by being present at the Los Altos Council Chamber at Los Altos City Hall located at 1 N. San Antonio Rd, Los Altos, CA

TO PARTICIPATE VIA VIDEO: Follow the link above. Members of the public will need to have a working microphone on their device and must have the latest version of ZOOM installed (available at <https://zoom.us/download>). To request to speak, please use the “Raise hand” feature located at the bottom of the screen.

TO PARTICPATE VIA TELEPHONE: Members of the public may also participate via telephone by calling the number listed above. To request to speak, press *9 on your telephone.

TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS: Prior to the meeting, comments on matters listed on the agenda may be emailed to PublicComment@losaltosca.gov. Emails sent to this email address are sent to/received immediately by the City Council. Please include a subject line in the following format:

PUBLIC COMMENT AGENDA ITEM ## - MEETING DATE STUDY SESSION

Correspondence submitted in hard copy/paper must be received by 2:00 PM on the day of the meeting to ensure distribution prior to the meeting. Correspondence received prior to the meeting will be included in the public record. .

Public testimony will be taken at the direction of the Mayor, and members of the public may only comment during times allotted for public comments.

AGENDA

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

CONFIRM QUORUM

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEM(S)

A. Public Comment

DISCUSSION ITEM(S)

1. **Commission Appointment Process:** Provide direction on the commission appointment process that governs the process for individuals to be appointed to serve on a City of Los Altos Commission so staff can return with an updated policy (A. Carnesecca)

ADJOURNMENT**SPECIAL NOTICES TO THE PUBLIC**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the City of Los Altos will make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting. If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk 72 hours prior to the meeting at (650) 947-2610.

Agendas Staff Reports and some associated documents for City Council items may be viewed on the Internet at <http://www.losaltosca.gov/citycouncil/online/index.html>. Council Meetings are televised live and rebroadcast on Cable Channel 26.

On occasion the City Council may consider agenda items out of order.



PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE

The following is public correspondence received by the City Clerk’s Office after the posting of the original agenda. Individual contact information has been redacted for privacy. This may *not* be a comprehensive collection of the public correspondence, but staff makes its best effort to include all correspondence received to date.

To send correspondence to the City Council, on matters listed on the agenda please email PublicComment@losaltosca.gov

From: [Pat Marriot](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT Item #1 January 10, 2023 study session
Date: Friday, January 6, 2023 11:26:20 AM

Council Members:

I'm grateful to city staff for making recommendations on how to improve the commission appointment process. All six options are good ideas.

Some questions:

1 INTERVIEW PROCESS

The three options for interviews are

- Written Interview Process – City staff will provide all applicants with written Council-approved interview questions via email prior to the City Council meeting for their review **and response**. City Council will review the applications and written interview responses prior to the meeting. City Council will then vote on the candidates at that meeting.
 - o What response if there's to be no interview?
- In-Person Interview Process – City staff will provide all applicants with the same Council-approved interview questions via email prior to the City Council meeting for their review. City Council will review the applications prior to the meeting and then interview all candidates with the same questions for the same allotted time as monitored by the City Clerk. City Council will then vote on the candidates at that meeting.
- No Interview Process – City Council will review the applications prior to the meeting and vote on the candidates at the meeting. Council members may **conduct** applicants prior to the meeting.
 - o Should this be “contact” applicants? If so, that doesn't sound fair, e.g., if one or more council members contact one candidate but not others. If there are no interviews, there should be no contact. All or nothing.

Seems like there are really only two options:

- Written response only: Candidates answer application questions via email. Council reviews applications and makes decision based on the answers. (Does Council discuss the applicants or simply vote based on the written responses?)
- Written response + interviews: Candidates answer questions. Council reviews applications, then interviews candidates as noted above. (Is there any room for

clarification or discussion on the part of council members? For example, Mary Smith replies to one of the standard questions but her answer isn't clear. Can one or more council members follow up for clarification?)

In either cases, I think of the hiring process, where all those who interviewed a candidate discuss their reasons for wanting to hire or not. Just asking for a yes or no vote would miss a lot of valuable insights.

2 APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Please describe your experience, interest, and expertise that will benefit you as a commissioner.

- The benefit should be to the commission/city, not to the commissioner.
- Providing specific questions would level the playing field, ensuring each candidate gave the same information, e.g.,
 - o Please list your relevant education, training, degrees.
 - o Please list relevant work experience.
 - o Please describe any involvement in community activities, volunteer and civic organizations.
 - o How is your training/experience relevant to the work of this commission?
 - o Have you attended meetings of this commission?
 - o Is there an issue that has come before this commission that is of particular interest to you?
 - o If appointed, what goals would you like to see the commission achieve, and how would you help further them?
 - o If appointed, would you have any conflicts of interest?

Please describe what interests you the most about your requested commission(s).

Please provide any information you have not provided on your application or in this interview that will benefit the Council's decision-making process.

- This seems to be relevant only if there are interviews, in which case the highlighted words should be deleted because it would be one of the standard in-person questions, i.e., "Give us any relevant information you didn't provide in your written application."

3 CRITICAL MASS

What happens if there aren't enough applicants? How many commissioners are necessary to operate effectively?

Thanks for considering my comments.

Pat Marriott

From: [Gabriel Engeland](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: FW: Public Comment on Item #1, City Council Study Session, January 19, 2023
Date: Sunday, January 8, 2023 8:09:38 PM

Thanks,

Gabe

Gabriel Engeland
City Manager
City of Los Altos
(650) 947-2740 | www.losaltosca.gov
1 N. San Antonio Road | Los Altos, CA 94022

From: Los Altos Residents <losaltosresidents@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 8, 2023 4:56 PM
To: City Council <council@losaltosca.gov>
Cc: Gabriel Engeland <gengeland@losaltosca.gov>
Subject: Public Comment on Item #1, City Council Study Session, January 19, 2023

Dear Council Members,

We are very appreciative of your efforts and that of city staff to formalize and improve the commission appointment process. After reviewing the options you are considering, we would like to offer our thoughts.

We believe that selecting commissioners is similar to hiring an applicant for a job. It's necessary to know their qualifications for the position, their interest in filling the position, and a sense of their ability to work well with others. Accordingly, we recommend that you adopt an option that would provide for the following steps for selecting commissioners:

- A. Provide all applicants with a set of questions to elicit information about their qualifications for their first and second choice for commission appointments - the current questions appear adequate;
- B. Review their written responses; and then
- C. Interview all applicants in person and tailor questions to applicants based on their written responses. All applicants should be asked the same number of questions and applicants should have a set amount of time to answer each question, say 3 minutes.
- D. Review attendance for commissioners reapplying for their commission seat.

While we do not write in our capacity as commissioners, many of us are currently commissioners or have served as commissioners. Thus we are familiar with the commissioner selection process and highly recommend that applicants be allowed to indicate their first and second choice of commissions. Some of us applied for one commission but were asked to serve on another. We accepted that offer and have gone on to serve on that alternate commission with a great deal of enjoyment, passion, and commitment. Many people's motive for applying for a commission is

simply to serve Los Altos. And, as you are aware, it can be difficult to recruit applicants for vacant commission seats. Continuing to allow applicants to at least explicitly offer to serve on one of two commissions at the discretion of council would help fill vacant commission seats.

With respect to the difficulty recruiting candidates, we would offer the following suggestion. Provide Los Altans with at least 6 weeks notice of the deadline for applying for open seats on commissions. This would allow applicants to attend at least one commission meeting. Put the notice in the City Manager's Weekly Update and repeat the notice every week until the deadline for applying. Advertise in the Town Crier in at least a quarter page ad 6 weeks in advance of the application deadline and every week thereafter. Post the openings and application information on Nextdoor. Post the openings and application information on the City's social media. Please do everything possible to raise awareness of the community about the opportunity to serve on a commission.

Thank you for all your hard work to formalize and improve the commission application and selection process. We appreciate your commitment to improve this process.

Sincerely,

Los Altos Residents
Freddie Wheeler
Co-founder, Steering Committee



AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: January 10, 2023

Subject: Los Altos Commission Appointment Process

Prepared by: Anthony Carnesecca, Economic Development Administrator

Reviewed by: Jon Maginot, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Gabriel Engeland, City Manager

Attachment(s):

None

Initiated by:

City Council

Previous Council Consideration:

None

Fiscal Impact:

None

Environmental Review:

Not applicable

Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:

- Does the Council wish to provide direction on the commission appointment process?
- How does the Council wish to appointment individuals to serve on commissions?

Summary:

- City Council directed city staff to come back with an analysis of the commission appointment policy.

Staff Recommendation:

City staff recommends City Council provide direction on the commission appointment process based upon the analysis provided.

City Manager

GE

Reviewed By:

City Attorney

JH

Finance Director

JD



Subject: Los Altos Commission Appointment Process

Purpose

Provide direction on the commission appointment process that governs the process for individuals to be appointed to serve on a City of Los Altos Commission so staff can return with an updated policy.

Background

The City of Los Altos has guidelines on the procedures for the appointment process. These procedures for commissions have changed at the direction of the City Council to improve the appointment process for Council, commissioners, applicants, and staff.

The current commission appointment process is the following:

- “The City Council accepts applications for Commission positions year-round. Two times per year, formal recruitments are conducted for those positions which are or will become vacant (including those for which an incumbent is eligible for reappointment). With the exception of the Youth Commission, interviews are scheduled before the entire City Council at a special meeting. Between the two formal recruitments, the City may conduct recruitments for vacant positions as they arise. Interviews for these positions may be held either immediately before or during a regular Council meeting. Appointments are made by written ballot during a regular City Council meeting.

Youth Commission applicants are interviewed by the City Council Youth Commission Interview Committee which then makes appointment recommendations to the full City Council at a regular Council meeting.”

Discussion/Analysis

Many cities have different methods for appointing individuals to their commissions, committees, or boards depending upon the jurisdiction so there is no consistent method or standard criteria.

Some options to improve the process recommended by City staff include:

- Only receive applications during application period, which will simplify the process logistically for City Council, City staff, prospective commissioners, and the public.
- Move commission appointment process to once per year, which will also simplify the process for all involved.
- Require that the number of applicants must be greater than commissioner vacancies before City Council begins the applicant review process, which will ensure that vacancies have enough qualified candidates.
- Limit applicants to only be appointed to their requested commissions, which will create a higher likelihood that commissioners will have an interest in their specific commission.
- Conduct all reviews and voting for commission appointments at the same singular City Council meeting, which will simplify the appointment process.



Subject: Los Altos Commission Appointment Process

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- Incorporate attendance record as part of the application packet for incumbent review process, which will assist with a complete review for all applicants.

City staff requests direction on the following options that proposes to create a streamlined appointment process for City Council and an equitable process for candidates:

- **Written Interview Process** – City staff will provide all applicants with written Council-approved interview questions via email prior to the City Council meeting for their review and response. City Council will review the applications and written interview responses prior to the meeting. City Council will then vote on the candidates at that meeting.
- **In-Person Interview Process** – City staff will provide all applicants with the same Council-approved interview questions via email prior to the City Council meeting for their review. City Council will review the applications prior to the meeting and then interview all candidates with the same questions for the same allotted time as monitored by the City Clerk. City Council will then vote on the candidates at that meeting.
- **No Interview Process** – City Council will review the applications prior to the meeting and vote on the candidates at the meeting. Council members may conduct applicants prior to the meeting.

An example of standard questions for applicants would be the following:

- Please describe your experience, interest, and expertise that will benefit you as a commissioner.
- Please describe what interests you the most about your requested commission(s).
- Please provide any information you have not provided on your application or in this interview that will benefit the Council’s decision-making process.

Recommendation

Provide direction on the commission appointment process that governs the process for individuals to be appointed to serve on a City of Los Altos Commission so staff can return with an updated policy.