

# PROCEDURES MANUAL

## Menlo Park City Council



*Approved at the City Council Meeting of January 24, 2006*

**CITY OF MENLO PARK**  
*Mission Statement*

It is the mission of the City government to ensure that Menlo Park is a desirable and vibrant community in which to live and do business, and to respond to the values and priorities of the residents so as to provide for the community's current and future needs.

Explicitly, the City fulfills its function by:

- Addressing the needs of the residents through the City Council, the appointed commissions, and the City staff.
- Providing easy and open access to information and encouraging dialogue, enabling residents to actively engage in civic life.
- Providing for the safety of its residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Providing timely and responsive service.
- Providing special assistance to those in need.
- Functioning effectively, efficiently and with accountability.
- Creating a positive and desirable workplace environment for City employees.
- Managing change for the betterment of the City.
- Creating and maintaining a viable revenue stream and providing for the unpredictable nature of our economy.
- Implementing and maintaining City infrastructure, facilities, and programs.
- Formulating sound environmental policies.
- Recognizing and supporting the City's diverse neighborhoods and population.
- Acting as a responsible member of the greater region.

Mission Statement adopted by the City Council on July 20, 2004.

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The City of Menlo Park acknowledges and greatly appreciates the excellent work of the City of Davis, California, and its willingness to share its “procedures manual” as a helpful example.

## Introduction

The Menlo Park City Council establishes policies and priorities for the community and is responsible for the fiscal health of a public corporation. In Fiscal Year 2005-06, the City has a General Fund budget of nearly \$30 million and a total budget of \$85 million. The City organization is comprised of 150 different services and has assets valued in excess of \$370 million (roads, buildings, parks, etc).

## Purpose of the Procedures Manual

City of Menlo Park staff prepared a procedures manual to assist the City Council by documenting currently accepted practices. Through agreement of the City Council and staff to be bound by these practices, the effective administration of City Council affairs is greatly enhanced. While attempting not to be overly restrictive, procedures are established so that expectations and practices can be clearly articulated to guide Council Members in their actions. It is anticipated that this Procedures Manual will be reviewed by each two-year City Council and may be revised from time to time.

## Overview of City Documents

This procedures manual provides a summary of important aspects of City Council activities. However, it cannot incorporate all material and information necessary for undertaking the business of a city council. Many other laws, policies, plans and documents exist which bind the City Council to certain courses of action and practices. A summary of some of the most notable documents that establish City Council direction is provided below.

**Municipal Code:** The Municipal Code contains local laws and regulations adopted by ordinances. The administrative chapter of the code addresses the role of the City Council, Mayor and Mayor Pro Tempore. It also describes the organization of City Council meetings and responsibilities as well as the appointment of certain city staff positions and advisory commissions. In addition to these administrative matters, the Municipal Code contains a variety of laws. The municipal code is available either on the City's website or from the City Clerk.

**California Government Code:** The State Government Code contains many requirements for the operation of city government. Many of these requirements are also replicated within the municipal code to ensure there is broad awareness of such requirements. Menlo Park is a "general law" city, which means it is organized in accordance with provisions of the State Government Code. Also described within the government code is the Council-City Manager form of government. Basically, this form of government prescribes that a city council's role is to establish policies and priorities, while the role of the City Manager is to oversee the operations of the city government.

**Annual Budget:** The City's annual budget provides a description of city services and the resources used to provide services. The document contains both a broad overview of the budget as well as descriptions of programs and services organized for convenience by lead department. The City operates on a July 1 through June 30 fiscal year.

**General Plan:** The General Plan is comprised of a number of elements, such as land use, transportation, open space and housing, in accordance with State requirements, and provides a policy framework for various matters that fall within these areas.

## **Orientation of New Council Members**

It is important that members of the Council have an understanding of the full range of services and programs provided by the organization. As new members join the City Council, the City Clerk coordinates with department heads to provide tours of City facilities and meetings with key staff.

## **League of California Cities Guide**

A publication that provides additional useful information is the *Mayors and Council Members Resource Guide* published by the League of California Cities. The Guide contains general information on the role and responsibilities of city council members and on the specific requirements and laws that govern Council actions. The Guide is available from the City Clerk.

# Menlo Park City Council: Powers and Responsibilities

## City Council Generally

The powers of a city council in California to establish policy are quite broad. Essentially, councils may undertake any action related to city affairs other than those forbidden or preempted by state or federal law. Specifically, *the Council shall have the power, in the name of the city, to do and perform all acts and things appropriate to a municipal corporation and the general welfare of its inhabitants and which are not specifically forbidden by the Constitution and laws of the State of California (California Government Code).*

It is important to note that the Council acts as a body. No member has any extraordinary powers beyond those of other members. While the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem have some additional ceremonial and administrative responsibilities as described below, in the establishment of policies, voting and in other significant areas, all members are equal. It is also important to note that policy is established by at least a majority vote of the Council. While individual members may disagree with decisions of the majority, a decision of the majority does bind the Council to a course of action. In turn, it is staff's responsibility to ensure the policy of the Council is upheld. Actions of staff to pursue the policy direction established by a majority of Council do not reflect any bias against Council members who held a minority opinion on an issue.

The City Council has occasionally debated whether it should take positions of a broader nature or limit itself to purely municipal functions. Historically, Menlo Park City Councils have chosen to not take positions on issues outside of their immediate authority to effect. The propensity of the City Council to involve itself in such issues reflects the personalities and outlooks of the members who make up the two-year Council sessions.

Limitations are imposed on a Council member's ability to serve on appointed boards of the city. State law expresses that no member of the Council shall serve as a voting member of any city board, committee, or commission, whether composed of citizen volunteers, city employees, or a combination of both. This is not construed as prohibiting members of the Council from serving on committees or subcommittees of the Council itself, or of agencies representing other levels of government. In fact, Council members often participate and provide leadership in regional and state programs and meetings. Council members are strongly encouraged to report to the Council on matters discussed at subcommittees and other regional or state board/agency/group activities in which they have been involved.

## Role of Mayor & Mayor Pro Tempore

**Mayor:** As reflected in the Municipal Code, the Mayor is to preside at all meetings of the City Council and perform such other duties consistent with the office as may be imposed by the Council or by vote of the people. The Mayor does not possess any power of veto. As presiding officer of the Council, the Mayor is to faithfully communicate the will of the Council majority in matters of policy. The Mayor is also recognized as the official head of the city for all ceremonial purposes.

The Mayor, unless unavailable, shall sign all ordinances, and other documents that have been adopted by the City Council and require an official signature; except when the City Manager has been authorized by Council action to sign documents. In the event the Mayor is unavailable, the Mayor Pro Tempore's signature may be used.

Traditionally, the Mayor has also been assigned by the City Council to consult and coordinate with the City Manager in the development of agendas for meetings of the City Council. The scope of such review focuses on the timing of business items and the volume of business that can be considered at any one meeting. Such review does not allow for a unilateral unlimited delay of items to be considered by the Council or the introduction of new items not otherwise part of the Council's identified priorities or staff's work plan. Should any significant disagreement arise regarding the scheduling of items, these matters are to be resolved by the full City Council. The staff maintains a "tentative" Council Calendar that programs when matters will likely be considered at future meetings.

**Mayor Pro Tempore:** The City Council has specified that the Mayor Pro Tempore shall perform the duties of the Mayor during the Mayor's absence or disability. The Mayor Pro Tempore shall serve in this capacity at the pleasure of the City Council. The Mayor Pro Tempore title is often abbreviated to Mayor Pro Tem; and a more common and contemporary title of Vice Mayor may be substituted as well.

## Appointment of City Manager, City Attorney

The City Council appoints two positions within the city organization: the City Manager and City Attorney. Both positions serve at the will of the City Council. The City Manager is an employee of the City and has an employment agreement that specifies certain terms of employment including an annual evaluation by the City Council. The City Manager is responsible for all other personnel appointments within the City. The current City Attorney is a part-time employee, and a partner in a local law firm that has served the City for many years.

## Role in Disaster

The City Council has some special, extraordinary powers in the case of a disaster. Some meeting restrictions and expenditure controls are eased in such extreme situations. In critical situations the Council may be directed by the City Manager/Emergency Services Director to assemble in the City's Emergency Operations Center (EOC), located within the Police Department, to provide policy guidance and to receive information in an emergency. Should the City Council not be available during an emergency, state law specifies a hierarchy of others who may serve in place of the City Council. The most likely scenario is that the County Board of Supervisors would serve in the place of the Council.

## Appointment of Advisory Bodies

The city has a number of standing advisory bodies. Appendix C contains adopted policy #CC-01-0004 on the appointment, roles and responsibilities of the various Commissions. These procedures apply to all appointments and reappointments to standing advisory bodies.

In addition, resident committees and task forces are occasionally appointed by the City Council to address issues of interest. A task force or other ad hoc body is a body created by Council for a specific task. Council subcommittees, when used, are to help the Council do its job. Committees ordinarily will assist the Council by preparing policy alternatives and implications for Council deliberation. Council subcommittees will normally not have direct

dealings with staff operations. Council subcommittees may not speak or act for the Council. Subcommittees will be used sparingly and ordinarily in an ad hoc capacity. This policy applies to any group that is formed by Council action, whether or not it is called a subcommittee. Unless otherwise stated, a subcommittee ceases to exist as soon as its task is complete. The Council may assign, and specify the role of, one or two Council Members to the task force (if more, it becomes a defacto Council meeting). Unless otherwise specified, Council Members have all the rights, and only the rights, of ordinary citizens with respect to task forces and other ad hoc bodies.

Note that both appointed advisory bodies and ad hoc committees are usually subject to the open meetings laws commonly known as the Brown Act.

## **Council Relationship with Advisory Bodies**

The City Council has determined that Council Members should not lobby commissioners for particular votes. However, Council Members may attend meetings as residents and request that commissioners consider certain issues during their deliberations or in unusual instances as Council Members to reflect the views of the Council as a body.

Council Members choosing to attend commission or committee meetings should be sensitive to the fact that they are not participating members of the body. Council Members have the rights, and only the rights, of ordinary citizens with respect to Commissions – including the right to write to and speak to the Commission during public comment periods.

## **Role of Commission Liaison**

Members of the Council are assigned to serve in a liaison capacity with one or more city commissions. The purpose of the liaison assignment is to facilitate communication between the City Council and the advisory body. The liaison also helps to increase the Council's familiarity with the membership, programs and issues of the advisory body. In fulfilling their liaison assignment, members may elect to attend commission meetings periodically to observe the activities of the advisory body or simply maintain communication with the commission chair on a regular basis.

Members should be sensitive to the fact that they are not participating members of the commission, but are there rather to create a linkage between the City Council and commission. In interacting with commissions, Council Members are to reflect the views of the Council as a body. Being a Commission liaison bestows no special right with respect to Commission business.

Typically, assignments to commission liaison positions are made at the beginning of a Council term in December. The Mayor will ask Council members which liaison assignments they desire and will submit recommendations to the full Council regarding the various committees, boards, and commissions which City Council Members will represent as a liaison. In the rare instance where more than one Council Member wishes to be the appointed liaison to a particular commission, a vote of the Council will be taken to confirm appointments.

# City Council Meetings

## General Procedures

By resolution, the City Council has adopted a modified version of Roberts Rules of Order.

**Presiding Officer:** The Mayor is the presiding officer and acts as chair at Council meetings. In the absence or incapacity of the Mayor, the Mayor Pro Tempore serves as presiding officer.

**Seating arrangement of the Council:** The Mayor Pro Tempore is seated immediately next to the Mayor. The Mayor, with the approval of individual Council members, shall establish the seating arrangement for regular Council meetings.

**Quorum:** Three-fifths of the Council members constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

## Meeting Schedule

The Council approves and follows an annual calendar that reflects its priorities and coincides with the budgeting process, beginning at the start of the calendar year. Project priorities are ranked in February for the following fiscal year, in order to reflect the commitment of resources required. Other Council priorities are overlaid on the calendar as time permits.

Regular meetings are usually held in the Council Chambers, 701 Laurel Street, on Tuesdays at 7 pm, with study sessions and closed sessions generally being convened earlier, as needed, or at the end of the meeting at the conclusion of public business.

On occasion, the Council meeting will be held in alternative locations such as the Senior Center. No Council meeting will typically be held in the event that a regular meeting of the Council falls on a legal holiday or the day after a holiday. Other meetings throughout the year may be cancelled as well. Council Members should inform the City Manager's secretary as soon as possible if they intend to be out of town on a set meeting date. On occasion, arrangements may be made in order for Council Members to remotely participate in Council meetings by telephone conference call when out of town.

## Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called by the Mayor or by three members of the City Council. Written notice must be given to the City Council and to the media 24 hours prior to a special meeting. No business other than that officially noticed may be discussed.

**Public Comment:** At all regular and special meetings, public comments must be permitted before or during consideration of any agenda item. Public comment is appropriate on any matter within the jurisdiction of the City Council.

**Meeting Notices and Minutes:** Notice requirements of the Brown Act are complied with for all meetings; minutes of the meeting are taken by the City Clerk or designee and made available for public inspection.

## Development of Agenda

The City Council adopts a yearly meeting calendar identifying meeting dates and cancellations to aid members and staff with planning and scheduling. A medium-range “tentative” Council calendar that reflects an estimate of when various items will be scheduled over the next few weeks is available on the City’s website. A copy of the draft agenda is transmitted to the Mayor for review on the Monday one-week prior to the meeting. Staff is required to submit reports for a Tuesday Council meeting to the City Clerk by noon on the Thursday of the week preceding the meeting. All agenda materials are available after 5:30pm on the Thursday before the Tuesday Council meeting. Website posting includes a tentative Council calendar that shows Council meeting dates and planned agenda items 3-5 weeks in advance.

Given this agenda development schedule, it is usually extremely difficult when Council requests at a Tuesday meeting that a report be prepared for consideration the following week. For this reason, it will usually require at least one week for the preparation of a report requested by the City Council. Complex reports, of course, will require more time to prepare, and an estimated time of completion can be provided to the City Council. The ability to schedule new agenda items depends on the nature of the item itself, other agenda subjects that are already scheduled and the amount of time available.

## Placing Items on Agenda

**City Council:** A Council Member may request an item be considered on a future agenda and, upon agreement of a majority of Council, staff will prepare a staff report if formal Council action is required. Council Members may make this request verbally during a meeting or may submit written requests. Normally, the process involves two steps: initial consideration of the request by the full Council at the soonest possible regularly scheduled meeting; and, if a majority agrees, the matter is then scheduled for further consideration on an upcoming meeting agenda.

**Members of the public:** A member of the public may request that an item be placed on a future agenda during public comment or through other communication with Council Members. Upon approval of a majority of Council, the item will be agendized and a staff report may be prepared. The City Manager will inform the Council of the potential impact the request will have on established priorities or staff workload and seek approval by the City Council before authorizing the work or scheduling the item as appropriate.

**Emergency and Non-Agendized items:** Emergency and non-agendized items may be added to an agenda only in accordance with state law. Emergency items are only those matters affecting public health or safety such as work stoppages, disasters and other severe emergencies. Adding an emergency item requires a majority vote. Emergency items are very rare. More likely, after the agenda is posted an item arises that the Council would like to act on. Non-agendized items may be added to the agenda only if the Council makes findings that (1) the need to consider the item arose after the posting of the agenda, and; (2) there is a need to take immediate action at this meeting of the City Council. These findings must be approved by a 4/5th vote; if less than five members of Council are present, the findings require a unanimous vote of those present.

## Notification and Advertising

The City attempts to well publicize matters of significant neighborhood or community public interest that appear on a City Council agenda, as well as all matters where advertising is required by law. Advertisements and notifications are intended to inform all interested individuals.

## Order of Business

The City Council established the order of business for meetings through the adoption of a policy on meeting procedures. Technically, the order of the agenda is as follows: roll call; special business; proclamations; council, committee and staff reports; public comment #1; appointments to boards/commissions/committees; consent calendar; public hearings; regular business; public comment #2; written communications; information items; adjournment. The following section describes the various types of meeting components.

- 1. Closed Sessions** (*closed to the public*): The ability of the City Council to conduct sessions not open to the public is restricted by state law to ensure open proceedings. Certain defined circumstances exist wherein a city council may meet without the public in attendance. Such circumstances include:

Real Property: The purchase, sale, exchange or lease of real property with the City's negotiator; the real property and the person(s) with whom the City may negotiate must be announced in open session prior to the closed session (*Cal Govt Code 54956.8*).

Litigation: Pending or a significant exposure to litigation or the decision to initiate litigation; the litigation title must be identified in open session prior to the closed session unless the Council states that to do so would jeopardize its ability to conclude existing settlement negotiations or effectuate service of process.

Compensation: Salaries and benefits of employees; Council meets in closed session to review its position and instruct designated representatives (*Cal Govt Code §54957.6*).

Personnel: A closed session is held to discuss the appointment, employment, evaluation of performance, or dismissal of a public employee, or to hear a complaint against the employee unless the employee requests a public hearing (*Cal Govt Code §54957.6*).

It is critical to stress that there shall be no disclosure of closed session confidential information. Members of the Council, employees of the City, or anyone else present shall not disclose to any person, including affected/opposing parties, the press, or anyone else, the content or substance of any discussion which takes place in a closed session without Council direction and concurrence. Whenever possible, written reports received for closed session items will be turned in at the end of the meeting.

Typically, closed sessions will be scheduled prior to the public portions of the meeting or at the end of the meeting after public business has been concluded. This is done so public portions of the meeting are not interrupted by closed sessions. In addition, such sessions may require the attendance of special legal counsel and consultants. In an attempt to manage the costs of these professionals, it is beneficial to conduct closed sessions at a time certain. On occasion, during the course of a regular meeting, an issue arises that requires the Council to adjourn to a closed session on the advice of the City Attorney.

- 2. Council Member Reports:** Provides members of the Council an opportunity to introduce matters not currently before the Council, including brief announcements, to pose questions of staff and make requests for items to be placed on the agenda at a future meeting. Examples of appropriate communications would be information of general interest received from outside agencies, comments or inquiries received from the public, requests to agendaize future items, or announcements of interest to the public.

State law provides that Council can take action only on such matters that have been noticed at least three days (72 hours) in advance of the regular meeting, or 24 hours in the case of a special meeting, unless special circumstances are found to exist (as mentioned above). Formal action or approval on non-agendized items is not allowed, and such items should be placed on the agenda of the next available regular meeting.

- 3. Consent Calendar:** Those items on the Council agenda that are considered to be of a routine and non-controversial nature by the City Manager are placed on the “Consent Calendar.” These items shall be approved, adopted, accepted, etc., by one motion of the Council. Typical consent calendar items include the final reading and adoption of ordinances, various resolutions approving agreements, awards of contracts, minor budgetary adjustments, meeting minutes, status reports, and reports of routine city operations.

Council Members may request that any item listed under “Consent Calendar” be removed from the Consent Calendar, and Council will then take action separately on this item. A member of the public may request that an item listed under “Consent Calendar” be removed and Council action taken separately on the item; the City Council must concur with such a request. Items that are removed (“pulled”) by members of the Council for discussion will typically be heard after other Consent Calendar items are approved unless the majority of Council chooses an earlier or later time.

Council Members are encouraged to contact the City Manager’s office prior to 12:00 noon on the day of a Council meeting day to provide notification of items to be removed from the Consent Calendar. This practice allows the City Manager to notify staff that may need to be present to respond to removed items. Equally important, it also allows the Manager to inform staff who do not need to be present at the meeting. Unless contacted in advance of the meeting with sufficient time, the presumption is that staff will not be present.

- 4. Public Comment:** A block of 30 minutes time is set aside at the beginning of the meeting and again at the end to receive general public comment about issues not on the agenda. Comments on agenda items should not be heard until the appropriate item is called. Individuals desiring to speak are to address the Council from the speaker podium after giving their name and place of residence. Speaker cards may be required and should be filled out, including the speaker’s actual jurisdiction of residence, and given to the City Clerk prior to Public Comment.

Comments should focus on a specific matter within the Council’s jurisdiction. Members of the public are encouraged to present written comments, preferably in advance of the meeting, as a way to fully communicate their thoughts on agenda or non-agenda items. When written materials are presented, they should be submitted to the City Clerk for distribution and record keeping ahead of time. Comments are typically limited to three minutes per speaker so that all have an opportunity to address the Council.

Videos, PowerPoint or similar presentations may accompany in-person testimony but are subject to the same speaking time limits. Prior notice and coordination with the City Clerk is strongly encouraged and the Mayor reserves the privilege to limit such requests as necessary for the effective conduct of the meeting. Speakers are to address their comments to the City Council from the podium.

Public comment on regular business items normally follows staff's presentation of the staff report, clarifying questions from Council Members and applicant comments as necessary and appropriate. Typically, applicants or appellants are limited to a maximum of 10 minutes. Council will then hear public comment.

5. **Public Hearing:** In the case of public hearings, once the Council has voted to close the hearing, no member of the public shall be permitted to address the Council or the staff from the audience, except at the discretion of the presiding officer (Mayor).
6. **Regular Business Items:** Regular items are shown on the agenda and are normally taken in the order listed.
7. **Written Communications:** The City Council has established a practice of placing written communication between Members requesting items to be agendaized and select letters sent by agencies to Council Members on the meeting agenda so that this correspondence receives wide distribution. If letters or emails from the public are received on the day of or just before a meeting, copies will be placed at the Council Members' positions on the dais.
8. **Commission Reports:** Commission reports provide an opportunity for designated members of appointed boards to address the Council on matters of importance or to update the Council and community on studies that are underway.
9. **Study Session:** From time to time, the Council will hold study sessions. These meetings are normally scheduled before the regular Council meeting. On occasion, dedicated study sessions are held instead of a regular meeting on the first Tuesday of the month. The purpose of study sessions is to give the Council a less formal and more interactive forum to discuss issues in advance of any official action to be taken. Staff often presents policy alternatives and is more directly engaged in the dialogue. Official minutes are not generally kept, but meetings are open to the public and are broadcast and videotaped when held in the Council Chambers and at the direction of the Council. While general direction may be given to staff or the proponent behind the topic of discussion, no formal action by the Council is taken in a study session.

## Discussion Rules

To assist the City Council in the orderly discussion of items, rules are followed which represent accepted practices for the management of Council meetings.

1. **Obtaining the floor:** A member of the City Council or staff shall first address the Mayor and gain recognition. Comments and questions should be directed through the chair and limited to the issue before the Council. Cross-exchange between Council Members and public should be avoided.
2. **Questions to staff:** A Council Member shall, after recognition by the Mayor, address questions to the City Manager, City Attorney, department head or designated staff member. If a Council Member has questions on an agenda item, that member should

preferably contact staff prior to the meeting in order to allow staff time to research a response for the meeting.

3. **Interruptions:**

- a. Once recognized, a Council Member is considered to have the floor, and another Council Member may not interrupt the speaker except to make a point of order or point of personal privilege. In such a circumstance, the Council Member holding the floor shall cease speaking until the point of order or privilege is resolved.
- b. Upon being recognized by the Mayor, members of the staff shall hold the floor until completion of their remarks or until recognition is withdrawn by the Mayor.

4. **Discussion:** A Council Member should not speak more than once on a particular subject until every other Council Member has had the opportunity to speak. Council Members are encouraged to discuss items during the decision-making process and may ask staff to respond when appropriate. The Mayor normally allows other members to speak first, then will give his/her views and summarize.

5. **Tabling procedure:** Tabling an item immediately stops discussion and causes a vote to postpone a matter indefinitely or to a time and date certain. A motion to “continue” an agenda item has the same effect, but is generally used when a scheduling problem arises or when insufficient time is available to address the matter thoroughly.

6. **Right of protest:** A Council Member is not required to state reasons for a dissenting vote.

7. **Calling for the question:** The purpose of calling for the question is to disallow further debate and put an issue to an immediate vote. A Council Member may move to “call for the question” on an item which is being considered. The motion requires a second, is not debatable, and must pass by a four-fifths vote. If the motion carries, the item is no longer debatable and the City Council must vote on it.

8. **Conducting business at a late hour.** According to Council policy, all regular meetings of the Council are to end by midnight unless there is a three-fourths vote taken by 11:00 pm to extend the meeting. The motion to extend is to include the title of the items to be considered after 11:00 and a new ending time for the meeting.

## Voting Procedures

When present, all Council Members are to vote. Failure of a seated member to orally express a vote constitutes an affirmative vote.

No ordinance, resolution or motion shall be passed or become effective without an affirmative vote by the majority with a quorum present.

A conflict of interest shall be declared whenever appropriate and in compliance with state law. The affected Council Member will step down from the dais and leave the Chambers.

Council members may declare general consensus at the discretion of the presiding officer, if there are no negative votes or objections.

Upon the request of any Council Member, a roll call vote will be taken and recorded.

**Tie vote:** A tie vote is equivalent to a motion that has failed. The presiding officer may publicly explain the effect of the tie vote for the audience or may direct a member of the staff to do so.

**Motions.** There are a number of types of motions, each of which must meet certain requirements before a vote can be taken. A reference guide to motions is provided in chart form in Appendix A of this manual.

**Reconsideration:** Reconsideration of an item shall be allowed in accordance with the following Council guidelines. A Member of the prevailing majority when the previous vote was taken must make a motion for reconsideration. The City Council has determined that any motion for reconsideration should be made at the meeting immediately following that at which the action was taken. No motion for reconsideration will be entertained after this time unless the City Council determines significant new information has arisen which warrants such action.

## Other Guidelines

Other guidelines have been developed to ensure that meetings of the Council are conducted in a civil and professional manner. Council members and staff shall:

1. Work to preserve appropriate order and decorum during all meetings.
2. Discourage side conversations, disruptions, interruptions or delaying efforts.
3. Inform the Mayor before departing from a meeting.
4. Limit disruptive behavior. The Mayor will call persons demonstrating rude, boisterous, or profane behavior to order. If such conduct continues, the Mayor may call a recess, request the removal of such person(s) from the Council Chambers, adjourn the meeting, or take such other appropriate action. The Council has a policy to discourage applause, booing or other similar behaviors from the public during meetings.
5. Recognize that only the City Council, staff, advisory body chairs or designated representatives, and those authorized by the presiding officer shall be permitted to sit at the Council or staff tables.
6. Limit breaks of the City Council to 5-10 minutes. The Council has authorized the Mayor to resume the meeting if a quorum exists and other members have not returned from the break within the announced time period.
7. Impose time limits on speakers. While the City Council encourages and embraces the need for and right of public participation, it acknowledges that public comments must, at times, be limited. Therefore, the City Council authorizes the Mayor, as presiding officer, to poll the audience for an indication of the number of people wishing to speak, and to impose time limits per speaker. Typically, speakers are limited to three minutes but a shorter time limit may be established as deemed necessary. When a member of the public is to speak on behalf of others in attendance, a maximum time limit of ten minutes is usually imposed. After the time limit, Council may ask questions of the speaker for clarification, if needed. Each speaker will be thanked for his or her participation.

**Values of Respect:** The City Council has also recognized the importance of approaching the public's business in an environment of personal respect and courtesy, which places emphasis on the consideration of policy and avoids personalization of comments. Some guidelines utilized by the City Council include:

1. Discussion should focus on policy matters
2. Personal criticism of members is inappropriate
3. Proper decorum should be displayed as other members express their views
4. Treat members of the public equally, applying rules in a fair and consistent manner

**Enforcement of Order:** The Police Chief or his designee acts as the Sergeant-At-Arms. Any Council Member may request the presiding officer to enforce the rules of protocol. Upon motion and majority vote, the presiding officer shall be required to do so.

## Open Meeting Laws ("The Brown Act")

Operations and procedures of the City and City Council incorporate requirements of the state's open meeting law (commonly referred to as the Brown Act). Because this law is such an important part of local government operations, some specific requirements of the law are highlighted below.

**Applicability and Penalties:** The entire city organization conducts its business in compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, State Government Code Section 54950. The intent of the Act is to ensure that deliberation and actions of local public agencies are conducted in open and at public meetings.

- A. Applicability: The Act applies to Council and all commissions, boards and Council appointed subcommittees (except if comprised entirely of two Council Members) and task forces that advise Council. Staff cannot promote actions that would violate the Act.
- B. Meetings: All meetings shall be open and public. A City Council meeting takes place whenever a quorum (3 or more members) is present and information about the business of the body is received; discussions qualify as a meeting. Social functions (e.g., receptions, dinners) do not fall under the Act unless city business is discussed.

Serial meetings take place when any member of Council or city staff contact more than two Council Members for the purpose of deliberating or acting upon an item pending before the City Council. This restriction does not apply to the public or media who may contact Council Members. Correspondence that merely takes a position on an issue is acceptable. Note that the Brown Act applies to City Council Members immediately after their election and prior to their swearing-in ceremony.

- C. Agendas: Agendas for regular meetings must be posted 72 hours in advance of the meeting and must meet various requirements.
- D. Actions: No action can be taken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda.

*Exceptions:* 1) An emergency situation exists (determined by a majority of the Council).  
2) The need to take action arose subsequent to the agenda being posted and there is a need for immediate action (determined by 2/3 vote of the Council; or if less than 2/3 are

present, by unanimous vote). 3) The item was continued to another meeting that was scheduled and posted within 5 days of the original agenda.

- E. Public Input: The public, by law, has an opportunity to address the Council on any item of interest to the public that is within the jurisdiction of the Council, at the time the matter is heard. The Mayor has the right to establish a time limit on speakers and the total time allocated for a particular issue. Three minutes per speaker has been standard, but in unusual cases either shorter or longer time periods may be established by the Mayor or the Council.
- F. Public Disruptions: A portion or all of the public may be removed if willful disruption makes conducting the meeting "unfeasible"; the press may remain unless they participate in the disruption.
- G. Correspondence: All writings distributed for discussion or consideration at a public meeting are public records.
- H. Special Meetings: Special meetings may be called by the Mayor or a majority of the Council with strict notification requirements for delivery to the media and Council 24 hours before the time of the meeting.
- I. Emergency Meetings: Emergency meetings may be called without notification due to the disruption or threatened disruption of public facilities. Only work stoppages or crippling disasters that impair the public health and/or safety qualify for emergency meetings.
- J. Other Provisions: The Act provides many other restrictions and requirements; this chapter is intended merely as a Council summary and overview of the Act, and nothing in this Chapter supersedes the provisions of the Brown Act. Please check with the City Attorney and/or the City Clerk for more information.

# Council Communications

## Overview

Perhaps the most fundamental role of a Council Member is communication—communication with the public to assess community opinions and needs—communication with staff to provide policy direction and to gain an understanding of the implications of various policy alternatives. Because the City Council performs as a body (that is, acting based on the will of the majority as opposed to individuals), it is important that general guidelines be understood when speaking as a Council Member. Equally important, when members are expressing personal views and not those of the Council, the public should be so advised.

## Correspondence from Council Members

Members of the City Council may occasionally be called upon to write letters to citizens, businesses or other public agencies. Typically, the Mayor will be charged with transmitting the City’s position on policy matters to outside agencies on behalf of the City Council. Correspondence sent on behalf of the Council is placed on official City letterhead and is signed by the Mayor or City Manager. Individual members of Council may prepare letters to constituents in response to inquiries or to provide requested information. Individualized City Council Member letterhead is available for this purpose, and staff can assist in the preparation of such correspondence. Council Members are required to place on file and to provide copies upon request of any correspondence sent on City letterhead.

On occasion, members may wish to transmit correspondence on an issue upon which the Council has yet to take a position or about an issue for which the Council has no position. In these circumstances, members should use their personalized letterhead and clearly indicate within letters that they are not speaking for the City Council as a whole, but for themselves as one member of Council.

After the City Council has taken a position on an issue, official correspondence should reflect this position. While members who may disagree with a position are free to prepare correspondence on such issues as private citizens, City letterhead, official Council title, and staff support should not be utilized in order to avoid confusion. In addition, City letterhead and staff support cannot be utilized for personal or political purposes.

Council Members may be asked to prepare letters of recommendation for students and others seeking appointment. It is appropriate for individual Council Members to utilize City letterhead and their Council titles for such letters. No review by the full Council is required, however, copies will be kept on file.

## Speaking for “the City”

Similar to written correspondence, when members are requested to speak to groups or are asked the Council’s position on an issue, the response should reflect the position of the Council as a whole. Of course, a member may clarify their vote on a matter by stating, for example, “While I voted against “X”, the City Council voted in support of it.” When representing the City

at meetings or other venues, it is important that those in attendance gain an understanding of the City Council's position rather than that of an individual member.

When dealing with members of the media, it is usually the Mayor who represents the position and interest of the City Council. When the City Manager or Department Heads are contacted, they too will refer the media first to the Mayor for comment. Similarly, when the City issues a Press Release, the Mayor is consulted in terms of any Council Member quotes or references. The City Manager decides whether staff are available to respond to media requests directly or not.

## **Local Ballot Measures**

At times measures that affect City Council policy may be placed on the ballot. There are restrictions regarding what actions a City Council or individual Members may take on ballot measures. Guidelines as to what is permissible are available from the City Clerk or City Attorney upon request.

## **State Legislation, Propositions**

The City has been a member of the League of California Cities for many years. In addition, the City has a representative on the City/County Association of Governments (C/CAG). Both of these groups actively track legislation at the state level. Either through the advisories received from these two organizations or as a result of City staff following key legislative bills of importance to the City, the Council is at times requested to take a position or an action on pending state legislation. Unless Council has previously acted on a similar bill in the recent past, in which the City's position is clear, the Council has a practice of requiring analysis and discussion of bills prior to taking an official position. The analysis includes a summary of the legislation's purpose and a listing of those entities both in support of and against the proposed legislation. As a framework for screening bills that are pending to determine if the City should weigh in, Appendix B serves as a Legislative Policy Guide, with the explicit understanding that the City will express itself on legislation dealing with issues that will directly effect its financial stability or effective operation, and that the City may enter into alliances with other entities to promote common goals.

## **Proclamations**

Ceremonial proclamations are often requested of the City in recognition of an event or individual. Proclamations are not statements of policy but a manner in which the city can make special recognition of an event (e.g., Recycling Week) or individual. As part of his/her ceremonial responsibilities, the Mayor is charged with administration of proclamations. Individual Council Members do not issue proclamations. Proclamations can be sent to the requestor or presented at a City Council meeting as arranged with the requesting body and at the Mayor's discretion.

# Interaction with City Staff

## Overview

City Council policy is implemented on a daily basis through staff. Therefore, it is critical that the relationship between Council and staff be well understood by all parties so that policies and programs may be implemented successfully. The City of Menlo Park has a long tradition of positive relationships between members of the City Council and staff. To maintain these effective relationships it is important that roles are clearly recognized.

## Council-Manager Form of Government

Like most California cities, Menlo Park has adopted a City Council-City Manager form of government. The Council appoints a City Manager to implement policy, enforce its laws, to direct the daily operations of city government, and to prepare and monitor the municipal budget. The Municipal Code specifies roles and responsibilities and requires that Council Members work through the City Manager in dealing with City staff unless simply requesting information from department heads or other staff members. The City Manager is responsible to the City Council as a body rather than to individual Council Members.

## Council-Manager Relationship

The employment relationship between the City Council and City Manager reflects the fact that the City Manager is the chief executive officer of the City. The City Manager has an employment agreement with the City Council. Regular communication between the City Council and City Manager is important in maintaining effective interpersonal relations. All dealings with the City Manager, whether in public or private, should be consistent with the authority of the City Manager in administrative and personnel matters. Council Members should avoid situations that can result in City staff being directed, intentionally or unintentionally, by one or more members of the City Council. Further, Council Members should avoid involving themselves in matters regarding individual City employees or related affairs.

The City Council evaluates the City Manager's performance on a regular basis to ensure that both the City Council and City Manager are in agreement about organizational performance and priority goals that are based on mutual trust and common objectives.

As in any professional relationship, it is important that the City Manager keep the City Council informed. The City Manager respects that the final responsibility for establishing the policy direction of the City is held by the City Council. The City Manager communicates with City Council in various ways. In addition to the formal Council meetings, there are periodic briefing meetings with individual Council members and written memoranda and email. Communication must be undertaken in such a way that all Council Members are treated similarly and kept equally informed. It is also important that the Council provide ongoing feedback, information and perceptions to the City Manager including responses to written communications and surveys requesting feedback.

## City Manager Code of Ethics

The City Manager is subject to a professional code of ethics that binds the City Manager to certain practices that are designed to ensure his or her actions are in support of the City's best

interests. Violations of such standards can result in censure. Appendix D is a copy of the City Manager's Code Of Ethics.

## City Council-City Attorney Relationship

The City Attorney is the legal advisor for the Council, City Manager and departments. The general legal responsibilities of the City Attorney are to: 1) provide legal assistance necessary for formulation and implementation of legislative policies and projects; 2) represent the City's interest, as determined by the City Council, in litigation, administrative hearings, negotiations and similar proceedings; 3) prepare ordinances, resolutions, contracts and other legal documents to best reflect and implement the purposes for which they are prepared; and 4) keep City Council and staff apprised of court rulings and legislation affecting the legal interest of the City. It is important to note that the City Attorney does not represent individual members of Council, but the City Council as a whole.

## Roles and Information Flow

**Objectives:** It is the intent of staff to ensure Council members have free and easy access to information from the City and to ensure that such information is communicated completely, with candor and without bias. Individual Council Members may not intervene in staff decision-making, the development of staff recommendations, scheduling of work, or executing department priorities without the prior knowledge and approval of the City Council as a whole. This is necessary to protect staff from undue influence and pressure from individual Council Members, and to allow staff to execute the priorities given by management and the Council as a whole without fear of reprisal.

**Council roles:** The full City Council retains power to accept, reject, amend, influence, or otherwise guide and direct staff actions, decisions, recommendations, service levels, work loads and schedules, departmental priorities, and the performance of City business. If a Council Member wishes to influence the actions, decisions, recommendations, workloads, work schedule, and priorities of staff, that member must prevail upon the Council to do so as a matter of Council policy.

Should a Council Member become dissatisfied about a department, he/she should always talk it over with the City Manager and/or the Assistant City Manager, not the department head. Concerns about a department head must be taken to the City Manager only.

**Access to Information:** Individual Council Members as well as the Council as a whole shall receive the full cooperation and candor of staff in being provided with any requested information. The City Manager or appropriate staff will inform council when a critical or unusual event occurs about which the public would be concerned.

To assist the City Manager in his ability to monitor the flow of information, requests for information are best tracked if submitted in writing, either in memorandum form or through email. And to ensure proper responsiveness, Council Members are asked to "cc" both the department head and the City Manager on all correspondence with staff. Staff further encourages Council Members and constituents to utilize the "Menlo Park Direct Connect" web-based system that is accessed via the home page of the City's website.

There are limited restrictions when information cannot be provided. Draft documents (e.g., staff reports in progress, administrative draft EIRs) under review are not available for release until complete and after review by city management. In addition, there are legal restrictions on the City's ability to release certain personnel information even to members of the City Council. Certain aspects of Police Department affairs (access to restricted or confidential information related to crimes) may not be available to members of the Council.

City Council Members have a responsibility in this information flow as well. It is critical that they make use of staff reports and commission minutes. Council Members should come to meetings well prepared – having read staff reports and attachments, and requesting in advance any necessary and available information from staff. If a Council Member has questions on an agenda item, that member should preferably contact staff prior to the meeting in order to allow staff time to research a response for the meeting.

**Staff roles:** The Council recognizes the primary functions of staff as serving the community, executing Council policy and actions and in keeping the Council informed. Staff is obligated to take guidance and direction only from the Council as a whole or from the appropriate management supervisors. Staff is directed to report to the City Manager any attempts by individual members of the Council to unduly direct or otherwise pressure them into making, changing or otherwise influencing recommendations.

City staff will make every effort to respond in a timely and professional manner to all requests made by individual Council Members for information or assistance; provided that, in the judgment of the City Manager, the request is not of a magnitude, either in terms of workload or policy, which would require that it would be more appropriately assigned to staff through the direction of the full City Council. If a request by an individual Council Member is determined by the City Manager to take one hour or more of staff time to complete, that request may be included on the formal Council agenda for full Council discussion.

## **Dissemination of Information**

In cases where a staff response to an individual Council Member request involves written materials that may be of interest to other Council Members, the City Manager will provide copies of the material to all other Council Members. In making this judgment, the City Manager will consider whether the information is significant, new, otherwise not available to the Council or of interest to the Council.

## **Magnitude of Information Request**

Any information, service-related request, or revised policy position perceived as necessary by individual Council Members, and that cannot be fulfilled based on the above guidelines, should be submitted by the individual Council Member in writing to the Council as a whole. When raised at a Council meeting, the full Council can decide whether and when to agendize the request for further consideration. The City Manager will seek necessary clarification as to whether the Council desires staff research or a report prepared; and, if so, the relative priority that should be given to such a request in light of other priorities and potential workload impacts.

## **Staff Relationship with Advisory Bodies**

Staff support and assistance is typically provided to commissions and task forces. However, advisory bodies do not have authority over City employees. While staff may work closely with

advisory bodies, staff members remain responsible to their immediate supervisors and ultimately the City Manager and City Council. The members of the commission/ board/committee are responsible for the functions of the advisory body, and the chairperson is responsible for committee compliance with City policies and practices as outlined in the Commission Handbook.

Staff support often includes preparation of an agenda and its posting in compliance with the Brown Act. Staff may also prepare reports providing background on the issue, alternatives, a recommendation, and appropriate backup materials, if necessary. Advisory body members should have sufficient information to reach decisions based upon a clear explanation of the issues. The assigned staff person may serve as secretary, taking minutes as needed. Staff members are to assist the advisory body chair to ensure appropriate compliance with state and local laws and regulations.

It is important that advisory bodies wishing to communicate recommendations to the City Council do so through approved Council agenda procedures. In addition, if a commission wishes to correspond with an outside agency, that correspondence will be prepared by staff for review by the City Manager and possible approval by the City Council. Individuals who would like staff to perform research or for the commission to review a particular issue must gain the approval for such a request from the full City Council before any work is planned or done. The annual work plan for the City's commissions is determined by the City Council at its priority-setting that precedes the adoption of the fiscal year budget.

## **Restrictions on Political Involvement by Staff**

Local governments are non-partisan entities. Professional staff, as reflected within the principles of the Council-Manager form of government, formulates recommendations in compliance with Council policy and for the good of the community and is not influenced by political factors. For this reason, it is very important to understand the restrictions of staff in any level of political involvement through campaigns, fund-raisers, or other means.

By working for the City, staff members do not surrender rights to be involved in local elections. Indeed, laws are in place to preserve those rights. However, there are limitations to such involvement. Different restrictions apply to management and to general employees.

General employees have no restrictions while off the job. No participation in campaigns or other activities may take place while on the job. No City resources may be used by staff in support of any campaign. Even while off the job, no employee may participate in campaign or other activities in a City uniform. For example, posing for a promotional photograph for a candidate for local office while in uniform is inappropriate. The support of the City Council in these matters is requested. A Council Member asking staff to sign petitions or similar items can similarly create an awkward situation.

For management staff, the City Manager strongly discourages any involvement in a local campaign even while on personal time. Such involvement could erode the tenet that staff is to provide an equal level of service to all members of the City Council. The City Manager specifically prohibits any political involvement in local campaigns by department heads.

# Support Provided to City Council

## Staff Support

General administrative support to members of the City Council is provided through the City Manager's Office. Secretarial services including scheduling of appointments, receipt of telephone messages, and word processing are available as needed. In addition to supporting the five City Council members, the two administrative support staff members also assist the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, City Clerk and Business Development Manager. Sensitivity to the workload of support staff members in the City Manager's Office is appreciated. Should requested tasks require significant time commitments, prior consultation with the City Manager is requested.

## Office Equipment

To enhance Council Members' ability to communicate with staff and the public, the City Council office is equipped with a computer and telephones with voicemail. The Council can also receive and send faxes.

Council Members may be connected from their home to the City's computer network. Information Services staff will provide initial assistance in setting up necessary software and hardware. While staff will maintain those computer applications related to City affairs, staff cannot provide assistance for personal computer applications. When individual Council Members have completed their term of office, any installed software and external modems must be returned to the City.

These technologies facilitate efficient communication by Council Members. However, their use also raises important legal issues to which Council Members must pay special attention. First, the Brown Act prohibits members from using "technological devices" to develop a concurrence by a majority regarding an action to be taken by the Council. "Technological devices" under the Brown Act include phones, faxes, computer email, public access cable TV and video. Council Members should not use e-mail, faxes or phones for communicating with other Council Members in order to develop a majority position on any particular issue that may come before the full Council. Particular caution is advised when using or responding to email received via the "CCIN" feature on the City's website and email directory. Correspondence sent using CCIN automatically goes to all five Council Members, certain staff and to the local newspapers.

Second, be aware that most emails sent by Council Members probably are public records under the Public Records Act. Even though it does not create paper, sending email is more similar to mailing a letter than placing a telephone call. The information in the email is stored on the computer network until deleted, and may continue to exist on the network's back-up systems even after being deleted. As a result, emails can become records of the City maintained in the course of business, and thus available for public disclosure under the Public Records Act.

Finally, the City's email system is intended for the conduct of official business, and not for political reasons. See CHAPTER 8 for a detailed discussion on the prohibition against using City property and funds for personal or political purposes.

## **Meeting Rooms**

An office is available adjacent to the City Manager's Office for shared use by members of the City Council. Council Members can also reserve larger meeting space for use by contacting the City Manager's Office staff.

## **Mail, Deliveries**

Members of the City Council receive a large volume of mail and other materials from the public, private interests and staff. The City Manager's Office staff maintains a mailbox for each member. Meeting agenda materials are available for pick up Thursday evenings at 5:30pm and are posted on the City's website. Members are encouraged to return unwanted reports and documents to staff for distribution to the public or for recycling.

# Financial Matters

## Council Compensation

State law and the Municipal Code provide for modest compensation to members of the City Council. State law limits an increase in City Council salaries to 5% per year, effective only following the next election after adoption. Currently, Council Members receive a stipend of \$640 per month. Council Members are also eligible for participation in group insurance benefits including retirement, medical, dental, vision, and life insurance plans available at the level provided to management employees.

## Expenditure Allowance

The annual city budget includes limited funding for members to undertake official City business. Eligible expenses include travel for attendance at conferences or educational seminars, and the purchase of publications and annual subscriptions. Travel expense reimbursement for meals does not allow reimbursement for alcohol. Donations to organizations are not eligible nor are meals for individuals other than Council Members. Available funds are disbursed on a first come first served basis, with the Mayor and City Manager monitoring expenses during the year. Appendix D includes a copy of #CC-91-0002 pertaining to travel and meeting expenses.

## Expenditure Guidelines

It is important to note that any expense must be related to City affairs. Public property and funds may not be used for any private or personal purpose. Courts have ruled that this prohibition includes personal political purposes. For example, reimbursement could not be allowed to pay for meals at a meeting designed to discuss political or campaign strategies. It is also inappropriate for City funds to pay for a meal or other expenses of a private citizen.

City budgetary practices and accounting controls apply to expenditures within the City Council budget. Reimbursement requests should be made through the City Manager's Office monthly with receipts. Expenditure records are public information. Questions arising as to the proper application or interpretation of the adopted policy will result in the City Manager conferring with the Mayor.

# Conflicts & Liability

## Conflict of Interest

State laws are in place to prevent an action by a Council Member that would or may constitute a conflict of interest. The purpose of such laws and regulations is to ensure that all actions are taken in the public interest. At any time a Member believes a potential for conflict of interest exists, he/she is encouraged to consult with the City Attorney or private legal counsel for advice. Staff may also request an opinion from the City Attorney regarding a member's potential conflict. Laws that regulate conflicts are very complicated. Violations may result in significant penalties including criminal prosecution.

There are two primary laws that govern conflicts of interest for public officials in California - the Political Reform Act and Government Code §1090. In general terms, the Political Reform Act prohibits a public official from having a financial interest in a decision before the official; §1090 prohibits a public official from having an interest in government contracts.

The Political Reform Act prohibits public officials from making, participating in, or in any way attempting to use their official position to influence a governmental decision in which they know, or have reason to know, that they have a financial interest. Therefore, if a public official has a conflict of interest, the official must disqualify himself or herself from acting on or participating in the decision before the City. Once a year Council Members and certain staff are required to file statements of economic interests.

Government Code §1090 is similar to the Political Reform Act, but applies only to City contracts in which a public official has a financial interest. The financial interests covered by §1090 are different from those in the Political Reform Act. A Member having an interest in a contract may preclude the City from entering into the contract at all. In addition, the penalties for violating §1090 are severe. If a Council Member believes that he or she may have any financial interest in a contract that will be before the Council, the Member should immediately seek advice from the City Attorney or the Member's personal attorney.

There are a number of other restrictions placed on Council actions that are highlighted in the League of California Cities' *Guide*. Such restrictions include prohibitions on secrecy and discrimination as well as assurance that all city funds are spent for public purposes. Violations of these restrictions may result in personal liability for individual Council Members.

## City Attorney Advice

The City Attorney has an affirmative duty to protect the City and City Council from conflicts of interest wherever possible. It is critical to note that while the City Attorney can render advice on the interpretation of State laws and regulations on conflict matters, such advice is solely an interpretation of the law. The only authority that can provide binding interpretations on such matters is the State Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC). Members or the full Council may also solicit opinions on such matters directly from the FPPC; however, such opinions often take time to develop and may not readily respond to urgent matters. It is important to note that

the City Attorney does not represent individual members of Council, but the City Council as a whole.

## **Conflict of Interest Forms**

Annual disclosure statements are required of all Council members, designated commissioners and senior staff which indicate potential conflicts of interest including sources of income, ownership of property and receipt of loans and gifts. Council Members and the City Manager often serve on the governing board of other agencies as a result of their positions. These agencies also require submittal of disclosure forms. These forms require information including income, loans, receipt of gifts, and interest in real property among other items.

## **Liability**

The City is a large institution offering a variety of services and may occasionally find itself subject to legal actions through lawsuits. For example, those involved in automobile accidents sometimes choose to take actions against a City since the accident occurred on a City roadway. The City must always approach its responsibilities in a manner that reduces risk to all involved; however, with such a wide variety of high-profile services all risk cannot be eliminated. The City belongs to an agency with other governments to manage insurance and risk activities.

It is important to note that violations of certain laws and regulations by individual members of the City Council may result in that member's being personally liable for damages which would not be covered by the City's insurance. Examples may include discrimination, harassment or fraud.

# Additional Training & Resource Materials

## League of California Cities

The League is an association of virtually all cities in California. It provides many services including the production of educational conferences for local officials, publication of various newsletters and the monthly magazine *Western City*. The League has lobbyists on staff to represent the interest of cities before the state legislature and federal government and supports committees having local officials as members that are organized to address issues as they arise. The League has an Internet web site at [www.cacities.org](http://www.cacities.org). The City of Menlo Park participates in League activities through the Peninsula Division.

## Local Government Commission

The Commission is a California-based organization that focuses largely on planning and resource conservation issues. It conducts workshops, offers periodic seminars, and publishes newsletters.

## International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

ICMA is a professional association of local government chief executives/city managers. The association has an extensive list of publications to assist local officials.

## Other Reference Material Available

The Brown Act - Open Meetings for Local Legislative Bodies

Report on City Participation in Ballot Measure Campaigns

A Guide to the Political Reform Act

Elected Officials Handbooks:

Setting Goals for Action: An Overview of Policy Development

Building a Policy-Making Team

Setting Policies for Service Delivery

Pursuing Personal Effectiveness

City of Menlo Park Municipal Code

## APPENDIX A – Reference Guide to Motions

| Type of Motion                               | Second Required | Debatable      | Amendable | Priority Over Pending Motion | Reconsidered | Interrupt Speaker |
|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Adjourn                                      | Y               | n/a            | n/a       | Y                            | n/a          | n/a               |
| Amend or Substitute <sup>1</sup>             | Y               | Y              | Y         | Y                            | Y            | n/a               |
| Appeal                                       | Y               | Y              | n/a       | n/a                          | Y            | Y                 |
| Call the Question <sup>7</sup>               | Y               | n/a            | n/a       | Y                            | n/a          | n/a               |
| Take Up New Business Past 12 pm <sup>8</sup> | Y               | Y              | n/a       | Y                            | n/a          | n/a               |
| Limit Debate                                 | Y               | n/a            | Y         | Y<br>Except “table”          | Y            | n/a               |
| Main Motion                                  | Y               | Y              | Y         | n/a                          | Y            | n/a               |
| Nominations                                  | n/a             | Y              | n/a       | n/a                          | n/a          | n/a               |
| Personal Privilege or Point of Order         | n/a             | n/a            | n/a       | Y                            | Y            | Y                 |
| Postpone to Time Certain                     | Y               | Y              | Y         | Y                            | Y            | n/a               |
| Previous Question                            | Y               | n/a            | n/a       | Y                            | Y            | n/a               |
| Recess or Adjourn to Time Certain            | Y               | Y              | Y         | n/a                          | n/a          | n/a               |
| Reconsider                                   | Y <sup>2</sup>  | Y <sup>3</sup> | n/a       | n/a                          | n/a          | <sup>4</sup>      |
| Table or Take From Table                     | Y               | n/a            | n/a       | Y <sup>5</sup>               | n/a          | n/a               |
| Take up Out of Order                         | Y               | n/a            | n/a       | n/a                          | n/a          | n/a               |
| Withdraw a Motion <sup>6</sup>               | n/a             | n/a            | n/a       | Y                            | Y            | Y                 |

“Y” indicates that this action can be taken, is necessary, is required, is permitted or is applicable

“n/a” indicates that this action cannot be taken, is unnecessary or is inapplicable

<sup>1</sup> Limit of three substitute motions.

<sup>2</sup> May only be made by a person who voted on prevailing side; not applicable to “table” motions. Must be made within two meetings of original action.

<sup>3</sup> If prior motion was debatable.

<sup>4</sup> Except for request for later action.

<sup>5</sup> Highest subsidiary motion – takes precedence over all motions except adjourn and privilege.

<sup>6</sup> Must be voted unless there is no objection.

<sup>7</sup> Requires 4/5 vote.

<sup>8</sup> Requires ¾ vote taken by 11:00 p.m. to extend beyond midnight.

## APPENDIX B

### LEGISLATIVE POLICY GUIDE

#### The City Council of Menlo Park believes:

- *In conducting the business of government with openness, respect, and civility, and including the involvement of all stakeholders in establishing goals and in solving problems.*
- *The vitality of cities is dependent upon their fiscal stability and local autonomy, and that local self-governance is the cornerstone of democracy.*

#### Therefore:

- The City supports legislation that reflects the need to conduct the public's business in public.
- The City opposes legislation that mandates costly and unnecessary procedures.
- The City supports the use of the general plan as a guide to meeting community planning needs, and opposes mandatory review or approval by another level of government and legislation that restricts the land use authority of cities.
- The City emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness to achieve the best possible use of city resources and believes the state should implement fiscal and legislative reforms in order to allow local government to adequately finance its service responsibilities, with accountability to the taxpayers for its programs.
- The City supports additional funding for local transportation and other critical unmet infrastructure needs and enhanced autonomy for local transportation decision-making.
- The City supports strategic alliances with counties, schools, other cities and local agencies, nonprofit and civic organizations and business and professional associations.

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