



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: MAY 12, 2022

BUSINESS & LEGISLATIVE

SUBJECT: REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

FROM: Justin Clifton, City Manager

SUMMARY:

This item will provide for an introductory review and discussion of City Boards and Commissions. The activities of Boards and Commissions was identified for a process improvement review at recent Council Visioning Sessions held in November 2021.

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct Staff as appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

City Council recently held two Visioning Sessions in an effort to establish priorities and identify targeted process improvements to make the work of the City organization more efficient and effective.

Priority setting work is fairly complete with the creation of a high-level Strategic Plan, a detailed 12+ month Work Plan and a more detailed 3–4 month Work Plan Summary that outlines major tasks and agenda meetings.

Staff has also made progress implementing various process improvements, including elimination of standing Council Subcommittees, the addition of monthly Council Study Sessions, various amendments to Council Rules of Procedure, and an emphasis on use of Working Groups as an engagement strategy. Review and amendment of Board and Commission composition and practices is one of the more substantial processes under review. This meeting is an opportunity for Staff to present Council with initial findings and recommendations from a review of Palm Springs Boards and Commissions, review of best practices and recommended changes.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

It is important to note that Boards and Commissions play a critical role in a complex and iterative decision-making process. There are very few, if any, systems of decision-making

that are as inclusive, participatory, and iterative as the ones we use in local government. Even small policy decisions likely include some level of participation from residents, stakeholders, external government and non-governmental partners, Boards and/or Commissions, Committees and/or Subcommittees, numerous City Departments and City Council. This highlights the importance of having very clear roles and responsibilities and good systems to facilitate maximizing the value added by each of those role players. When roles and responsibilities aren't carefully considered and communicated, tension often emerges as role players seek expanded roles and greater influence over outcomes. Over the past many months and years, Commission members have expressed frustration over the lack of clear roles and responsibilities, the lack of strategic direction and lack of communication with Council.

Boards and Commissions play a valuable role in the organization. The role is unique in that Boards and Commissions tend to blend roles of residents, stakeholders, and staff. Commissions are a component of resident engagement since Commissions are generally comprised of residents. The fact that Commissions are organized by topic area (Planning, Arts, Sustainability, etc.) gives them a quality similar to stakeholder groups with niche expertise. And being narrowly focused on niche issues provides a level of specialization, similar to, and sometimes greater than, City staff.

Substantial feedback was given from Commissions during the Council Visioning Process. Staff also has provided feedback on what processes are working well and which could be improved. Lastly, Staff has reviewed best practices from neighboring communities. Staff has outlined 10 broad challenges, each with a recommendation for improvement that are the culmination of Commission and Staff feedback and a review of best practices.

- **Challenge #1:** The City currently has 14 Boards and Commissions (including a "Committee"), most of which are created to advise Council on policy but sometimes participate in administrative work.
Recommendation: Realign ordinances, bylaws, and practices to reflect advisory roles. Delegate ongoing administrative work to the few Commissions that have this responsibility, such as Planning Commission and Architectural Review. Reserve all other delegated tasks on a case-by-case basis.
- **Challenge #2:** Boards and Commissions vary in size from 5 to 19. Larger Commissions sometimes struggle with attendance, continuity, and efficiency.
Recommendation: Reduce Commissions to 5 or 7 members with the possible exception of the Airport Commission. Consider reducing the size of the Airport Commission in a way that still emphasizes regional participation. For instance, a 7-member Airport Commission could have 4 appointees from Palm Springs and 3 appointed from the mid-Valley, East-Valley and unincorporated Riverside County, respectively.

- **Challenge #3:** All Commission meetings were instructed to be held at 5:30. This creates some scheduling conflicts and makes the logistics of hybrid meetings more difficult.
Recommendation: Consider allowing Commissions to schedule meetings at other times as long as transparency with recorded meetings and convenient options for public input are maintained.
- **Challenge #4:** Boards and Commissions have varying practices with bylaws, use of subcommittees and other practices.
Recommendation: Create template bylaws for all Commissions. Require any special provisions that may be necessary for some Commissions to be approved by City Council.
- **Challenge #5:** Expectations regarding conduct, media relations, stakeholder engagement, working with external jurisdictions, representing Commissions with outside groups, representing the City, etc. are unclear.
Recommendation: Create a template Handbook outlining various expectations for conduct and incorporate into onboarding.
- **Challenge #6:** Board and Commission members often lack clarity on roles, responsibilities, and important rules such as the Brown Act. Not all staff that serve as liaisons to Commissions are trained in this area.
Recommendation: Ensure onboarding materials cover this content and there is annual training provided to staff liaisons and Commissions.
- **Challenge #7:** Boards and Commissions often lack strategic direction from Council. This leads to confusion and frustration as Commissions struggle to meter the volume of work and produce recommendations that Council is willing and ready to act on. This also leads to instances where work that is important to a Commission is advanced to City Council, but Council is focused with other priorities, causing the Commission to feel slighted or to have wasted its time.
Recommendation: Create an annual cycle of strategic planning that coincides with Council's strategic visioning. The cycle of planning would contemplate providing input to Council before priorities are considered, receiving direction from Council after priorities are established and reporting back periodically on progress. New initiatives Commissions want to undertake outside established priorities would start with a request and proposal to Council.
- **Challenge #8:** Commissions report feeling disconnected from Council and unaware of how information is exchanged. Council Members have sometimes served as direct liaisons to Commissions, but an ambitious policy agenda and high demands for Council Member time makes consistent participation at Commissions difficult.
Recommendation: Create a process whereby active Commissions create and submit quarterly reports to Council. Alternatively, the Mayor or designated Council

Members can attend Commission meetings quarterly or on some other periodic basis. Hold at least one annual meeting between Council and Commissions. Train staff to better facilitate communication between Boards and Commissions.

- **Challenge #9:** Commissions often have ideas for engaging in additional work, creating subcommittees, creating communications content and other work that often goes beyond researching, drafting, and presenting policy recommendations. **Recommendation:** Outline in a Commission Handbook that staff is committed to assist the work of the Commission but is empowered to adjust and meter work or to suggest alternative ways to complete tasks to balance the demand on staff time.
- **Challenge #10:** Commissions, like City Council, can sometimes have tension between the roles of individual members and the Commission as a body. Some Commissioners readily engage in advancing Commission work outside of Commission meetings, sometimes causing confusion about what has been directed by Commission as a body. **Recommendation:** Outline in a Commission Handbook expectations for conduct and emphasize the limited nature of individual roles (typically limited to officer positions) and the greater emphasis on group decision making. Individual efforts to work around the Commission as body should be discouraged.

Included as **Attachment 1** to this staff report is a short summary of each Board and Commission with links to their enabling ordinance or adopted rules of procedure/ bylaws.

NEXT STEPS:

Pending direction from Council, Staff will begin work implementing the recommendations above. Some of this work, such as amending ordinances to reflect smaller Commissions, is relatively easy. Other work, such as creating comprehensive Handbook and onboarding materials will take longer to complete and would come back to Council for approval. Lastly, there may be some remaining recommendations or requests to make specific changes to individual Commissions not outlined in this staff report, which focuses on the broad changes that impact all or most Commissions.

Additionally, staff is recommending the Study Session currently scheduled for June 21, 2022, be held as a joint meeting with City Boards and Commissions, providing an opportunity for Commissions to meet with City Council and provide important updates.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING:

City Council directed a review and recommendation of changes to Boards and Commissions as part of the 2022 Vision Setting process.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

REVIEWED BY:

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| City Manager: | Justin Clifton |
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ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Boards and Commissions Summary

ATTACHMENT 1

Administrative Appeals Board

This Board consists of five (5) members and two (2) alternate members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. The Board was established to hear appeals on actions taken by an administrative officer or administrative agency of the City relating to ministerial enforcement of the provisions of the Municipal Code and has adopted Rules of Procedure.

Staff Liaison: City Clerk
Meeting Schedule: Fourth Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: 1 (alternate)

[AAB Rules of Procedure](#)

Airport Commission

This Commission consists of nineteen (19) members. Ten (10) members are appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms; and nine (9) members representing the Coachella Valley cities are appointed by the City Council after having been nominated by their respective city and/or the County of Riverside. Appointees nominated by other agencies may serve alternate terms and have other requirements established by their nominating legislative body. The Commission serves as an advisory body to City Council and performs duties as outlined in Palm Springs Municipal Code Section 2.16.060.

Staff Liaison: Airport Executive Director
Meeting Schedule: Second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: None

[Palm Springs International Airport Commission - Chapter 2.16](#)

Architectural Advisory Committee

This Committee consists of seven (7) members and one (1) alternate member appointed by the Planning Commission. The Committee reviews and makes recommendations on building and landscape design to the Planning Commission, City Council, and City Staff, and has adopted Rules of Procedure.

Staff Liaison: Assistant Director of Planning Services
Meeting Schedule: First and Third Mondays of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: None

[Architectural Advisory Committee Rules of Procedure](#)

Historic Site Preservation Board

This Board consists of seven (7) members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. Members must have demonstrated knowledge and interest in the cultural, socioeconomic, architectural, or archaeological history of the area, through either experience, training, education, or occupation. The Board identifies, nominates, and recommends potential historic sites and districts to the City Council, while fostering public awareness and appreciation of the City's rich cultural and architectural heritage. HSPB's goals are to stabilize and improve buildings, structures, or areas which are considered to be historical, architectural, archaeological or of ecological value, to foster education and welfare of the citizens of Palm Springs. HSPB has adopted Rules of Procedure that outline the purpose, effect, and authority of the Board.

Staff Liaison: Historic Preservation Officer, Planning Department
Meeting Schedule: First Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: None

[Historic Site Preservation Board Rules of Procedure](#)

Human Rights Commission

This Commission consists of nine (9) members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. The Mission of the Human Rights Commission is to promote and protect the diversity of our community and to improve human relations through education and community awareness. The HRC has adopted Rules of Procedure that outline the Commission's Goals, Roles, and Responsibilities.

Staff Liaison: Director of Community & Economic Development
Meeting Schedule: Second Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: None

[Rules of Procedures of the Human Rights Commission](#)

Library Board of Trustees

This Board consists of five (5) members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. The Board reviews and amends Library policy, reviews progress reports, discusses immediate and long-range library planning, administers the Library Trust Fund, and prepares an annual report for the City Council and State Library. The Board has adopted bylaws.

Staff Liaison: Director of Library Services
Meeting Schedule: First Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: None

[Board of Library Trustees Bylaws](#)

Measure J Oversight Commission

This Commission consists of nine (9) members and two (2) alternate members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. The Commission was created to review and make recommendations to the City Council on the use of funds generated by the implementation of Measure "J", a 1% transaction, sales, and use tax, and has adopted bylaws.

Staff Liaison: Director of Finance & Treasury
Meeting Schedule: Third Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: 4 (2 members and two alternate members)

[Measure J Oversight Commission Bylaws](#)

Parks & Recreation Commission

This Commission consists of eleven (11) members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. One member shall be appointed by the Palm Springs City Council from a candidate nominated by the Palm Springs Unified School District Superintendent of Schools. Such nominee shall not be a student, elected official, or teacher of the district. The Commission functions in an advisory capacity to the City Council on matters relating to existing and proposed human services programs, planning and monitoring of parks and recreational services, operations of the municipal golf course, special events, and leisure services programs and activities. The Commission has no adopted bylaws or Rules of Procedure.

Staff Liaison: Director of Parks & Recreation
Meeting Schedule: Fourth Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: 2

[Municipal Code Chapter 2.18 Parks and Recreation Commission](#)

Planning Commission

This Commission consists of seven (7) members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. The Commission review applications for development within the City and makes recommendations on land use, zoning, and General Plan policies to the City Council in a public forum to ensure the community can provide input. The Commission's decisions are final, unless appealed to the City Council. All duties and powers of the Planning Commission are described in Section 607 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code.

Staff Liaison: Director of Development Services
Meeting Schedule: Second and Fourth Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: None

[Section 607. Planning Commission](#)

Public Arts Commission

This Commission consists of seven (7) members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. The Commission is responsible for procuring and placing visual art in and around the City. The powers and duties of the Commission are outlined in Palm Springs Municipal Code Section 2.24.050.

Staff Liaison: Director of Community & Economic Development
Meeting Schedule: Third Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: 1

[Municipal Code Chapter 2.24 Public Arts Commission](#)

Rent Review Commission

This Commission consists of five (5) members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. No person shall be eligible to serve on the rent review commission who is a landlord or a tenant of a rental unit or units subject to the provisions of Chapter 4.02 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. This Commission is empowered to hear and decide petitions for hardship rent increases, to interpret the rent control ordinance of the City, rule upon the propriety of actions or proposed actions under the terms of the ordinance and make recommendations to the City Council on matters relating to rent control. The decisions of this group are final and may not be appealed to the City Council. The powers and duties of the Commission are outlined in Palm Springs Municipal Code Section 608.

Staff Liaison: Director of Community & Economic Development
Meeting Schedule: As needed.
Current Vacancies: 4

[Section 608 Rent Review Commission](#)

Small Hotel Tourism BID Advisory Board

This Board consists of eight (8) members and two (2) alternate members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. The Board is comprised of the President and four members of the Small Hotels of Palm Springs and the President and four members of the Desert Gay Tourism Guild. The members of the Board are not required to be residents of the City. The Small Hotel Tourism BID is a parking and business improvement district (referred to as an Assessment District) established for the promotion of tourism and public events which benefit hotel and motel businesses operating within the District.

Staff Liaison: Palm Springs Convention Center and Bureau of Tourism provides support.
Meeting Schedule: Fourth Thursday of each month at 4 p.m.
Current Vacancies: 4 (two members and two alternate members)

[Municipal Code Chapter 5.83 Establishment of the Palm Springs Small Hotel Tourism Business Improvement District](#)

Sustainability Commission

This Commission consists of eleven (11) members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. The Commission reviews and makes recommendations to the City Council on issues relating to energy and natural resources conservation, educational programs and natural resource issues including water conservation, air pollution, waste management, and recycling. The City has adopted a Sustainability Master Plan which serves as the roadmap to protect the surrounding natural environmental and the Palm Springs community.

Staff Liaison: Director of the Office of Sustainability
Meeting Schedule: Third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: 3

Sustainability Master Plan

VillageFest Board

This Board consists of seven (7) members appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms. Members shall either be current retail merchants or have significant retail experience, or, in the alternative, one member may be a representative of the community-wide tourism industry. This Board was established to review and approve VillageFest vendors, interpret and apply rules and regulations approved by the City Council, suspend or revoke vendor permits, and advise the City Council on matters relating to VillageFest. The Board has adopted Rules of Procedure that outline the purpose and authority of the Board.

Staff Liaison: Special Events Manager, Department of Parks & Recreation
Meeting Schedule: Second and Fourth Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.
Current Vacancies: None

VillageFest Rules and Regulations

Challenges to Palm Springs Boards and Commissions
Proposed Responses from Sustainability Commission, 30 April 2022

| <u>Staff Report Challenge and Recommendation</u> | <u>Sustainability Commission Response</u> |
|--|---|
| <p>• Challenge #1: The City currently has 14 Boards and Commissions (including a “Committee”), most of which are created to advise Council on policy but sometimes participate in administrative work. Recommendation: Realign ordinances, bylaws, and practices to reflect advisory roles. Delegate ongoing administrative work to the few Commissions that have this responsibility, such as Planning Commission and Architectural Review. Reserve all other delegated tasks on a case-by-case basis.</p> | <p>The Sustainability Commission supports the recommendation to realign ordinances, bylaws, and practices to emphasize advisory roles. Administrative work required to enforce organics disposal and food ware requirements will be performed by the additional Sustainability Staff the City plans to hire.</p> |
| <p>• Challenge #2: Boards and Commissions vary in size from 5 to 19. Larger Commissions sometimes struggle with attendance, continuity, and efficiency. Recommendation: Reduce Commissions to 5 or 7 members with the possible exception of the Airport Commission. Consider reducing the size of the Airport Commission in a way that still emphasizes regional participation. For instance, a 7-member Airport Commission could have 4 appointees from Palm Springs and 3 appointed from the mid-Valley, East-Valley and unincorporated Riverside County, respectively. Item 3B – 2.</p> | <p>The Sustainability Commission supports the recommendation to reduce the number of members on commissions. The Sustainability Commission should be reduced to seven members (including Chair and Vice Chair). <i>To Commissioners for discussion at the May 17 meeting: do you agree with this number of members?</i> The Commission recommends that Work Groups be established as needed for specific tasks. The period of performance would be specified, and Work Groups could include people outside of the Commission.</p> |
| <p>• Challenge #3: All Commission meetings were instructed to be held at 5:30. This creates some scheduling conflicts and makes the logistics of hybrid meetings more difficult. Recommendation: Consider allowing Commissions to schedule meetings at other times as long as transparency with recorded meetings and convenient options for public input are maintained.</p> | <p>The Sustainability Commission supports creating flexibility in meeting times. Historically, the Sustainability Commission has met at 5:00 pm on the third Tuesday. The time changed to 5:30 pm in 2020 per City Council direction. <i>To Commissioners for discussion at the May 17 meeting: what is your recommendation for meeting time?</i></p> |

| <u>Staff Report Challenge and Recommendation</u> | <u>Sustainability Commission Response</u> |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge #4: Boards and Commissions have varying practices with bylaws, use of subcommittees and other practices. Recommendation: Create template bylaws for all Commissions. Require any special provisions that may be necessary for some Commissions to be approved by City Council. | <p>The Sustainability Commission supports creating templates, with the expectation that there will be flexibility in tailoring practices to each commission.</p> <p>The Sustainability Commission can contribute two documents: Commission Work Flow and Agenda Development Process (attached).</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge #5: Expectations regarding conduct, media relations, stakeholder engagement, working with external jurisdictions, representing Commissions with outside groups, representing the City, etc. are unclear. Recommendation: Create a template Handbook outlining various expectations for conduct and incorporate into onboarding. | <p>The Sustainability Commission supports creating templates, with the expectation that there will be flexibility in tailoring handbooks to each commission.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge #6: Board and Commission members often lack clarity on roles, responsibilities, and important rules such as the Brown Act. Not all staff that serve as liaisons to Commissions are trained in this area. Recommendation: Ensure onboarding materials cover this content and there is annual training provided to staff liaisons and Commissions. | <p>The Sustainability Commission supports developing onboarding materials that cover the content specified.</p> <p>A FAQ sheet would be helpful.</p> <p>The Sustainability Commission has had “training” on the Brown Act and conflict of interest at Commission meetings by the City Clerk on request.</p> <p>Annual training should be more substantive than that held in January 2020.</p> |

| <u>Staff Report Challenge and Recommendation</u> | <u>Sustainability Commission Response</u> |
|--|---|
| <p>• Challenge #7: Boards and Commissions often lack strategic direction from Council. This leads to confusion and frustration as Commissions struggle to meter the volume of work and produce recommendations that Council is willing and ready to act on. This also leads to instances where work that is important to a Commission is advanced to City Council, but Council is focused with other priorities, causing the Commission to feel slighted or to have wasted its time. Recommendation: Create an annual cycle of strategic planning that coincides with Council’s strategic visioning. The cycle of planning would contemplate providing input to Council before priorities are considered, receiving direction from Council after priorities are established and reporting back periodically on progress. New initiatives Commissions want to undertake outside established priorities would start with a request and proposal to Council</p> | <p>The Sustainability Commission supports creating an annual cycle of strategic planning. This may be more useful for some commissions than others.</p> <p>By nature of the discipline, the Sustainability Commission attracts members who have a “passion” for conservation and environment-related issues. Historically, the Sustainability Commission has been successful in developing projects from “grass roots” initiatives, communicating with Council, and having the plans accepted by Council. Examples are differentiation of trash and recycling containers downtown and in parks, battery recycling, and recommending solar panel installation on new houses.</p> <p>Sustainability Commissioners often have interests and talents that complement those of Council members. This may be interpreted as conflict. Commissioners may have expertise or insight into neighborhood needs that might not be visible to Council members.</p> |
| <p>• Challenge #8: Commissions report feeling disconnected from Council and unaware of how information is exchanged. Council Members have sometimes served as direct liaisons to Commissions, but an ambitious policy agenda and high demands for Council Member time makes consistent participation at Commissions difficult. Recommendation: Create a process whereby active Commissions create and submit quarterly reports to Council. Alternatively, the Mayor or designated Council Item 3B - 3 Members can attend Commission meetings quarterly or on some other periodic basis. Hold at least one annual meeting between Council and Commissions. Train staff to better facilitate communication between Boards and Commissions.</p> | <p>The Sustainability Commission supports creating a process whereby commissions create and submit quarterly reports to Council. This seems to implicitly acknowledge the value of commissions. It would formalize what has been a generally good process for the Sustainability Commission.</p> <p>Historically the Sustainability Commission has had a good working relationship with Council members, both formally with designated liaisons, and informally. Examples are collaboration on the leaf blower ban, food ware ordinance, climate action roadmap, and requiring commercial businesses to purchase renewable energy.</p> <p>Council members have attended Commission meetings and Waste Reduction subcommittee meetings.</p> <p>A study session was held with a Council member in May 2018.</p> |

| <u>Staff Report Challenge and Recommendation</u> | <u>Sustainability Commission Response</u> |
|--|--|
| <p>Challenge #9: Commissions often have ideas for engaging in additional work, creating subcommittees, creating communications content and other work that often goes beyond researching, drafting, and presenting policy recommendations. Recommendation: Outline in a Commission Handbook that staff is committed to assist the work of the Commission but is empowered to adjust and meter work or to suggest alternative ways to complete tasks to balance the demand on staff time.</p> | <p>The Sustainability Commission supports the recommendation that staff should assist the work of the Commission but can adjust or meter work.</p> <p>This challenge is much like challenge 7, but it creates potential conflict between Commissioners and staff.</p> <p>There needs to be clarification of the roles of the Sustainability Commission versus those of staff, especially since a new Sustainability Director and additional staff members will be added in 2022.</p> <p>The involvement of Planning, Engineering, and Parks and Recreation in Sustainability activities, which is included in Council priorities, needs to be formalized and managed.</p> |
| <p>• Challenge #10: Commissions, like City Council, can sometimes have tension between the roles of individual members and the Commission as a body. Some Commissioners readily engage in advancing Commission work outside of Commission meetings, sometimes causing confusion about what has been directed by Commission as a body. Recommendation: Outline in a Commission Handbook expectations for conduct and emphasize the limited nature of individual roles (typically limited to officer positions) and the greater emphasis on group decision making. Individual efforts to work around the Commission as body should be discouraged.</p> | <p>The Sustainability Commission supports the recommendation to outline conduct and definition of roles in a handbook.</p> <p>Historically there have been conflicts with a few Sustainability Commission members working outside of Commission meetings. The Sustainability Commission Chair and Sustainability Manager attempted to coach members and minimize conflict. It was not always successful.</p> <p>The Sustainability Commission Chair and Sustainability staff provide information to Commissioners to facilitate group decision making at monthly meetings. This is a recognized leadership role.</p> <p>Commission candidate interviews should better align candidates' interests and abilities with Commission and Council priorities. The Commission Chair should have input into selection of candidates for interviews and final selection of Commissioners.</p> |

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION: PRODUCT WORKFLOW

IDEAS COME TO THE COMMISSION FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES

Ideas can come to the Commission through a variety of paths. Many of these ideas can result in actions, resolutions, and work products. For example:

- Ideas that are presented by **members of the public** at or outside of Commission meetings need to be taken up by a Commission member and put forward for discussion by the full Commission or taken on by a Subcommittee for them to be formally considered by the Commission.
- Questions or requests that are generated by **City Council** are clarified by City Staff and referred back to the Commission and placed on a Commission agenda by the Chair or by City Staff as part of the agenda development process. If these requests are directly related to the work of a Subcommittee, then they will be referred directly to the Subcommittee.
- Comments by **Commission members** may also evolve into agenda items at future meetings. These comments are either referred to the appropriate Subcommittee or agenda items by City staff and the Commission Chair through the agenda development process.
- **Subcommittees** (Ad hoc or Standing) work on issues and identify topics for further development through the Subcommittee. The Subcommittee refines these ideas and products and presents them to the Commission for consideration or approval based on the topic.
- **City staff** may also receive requests that could generate topics for the Commission to consider. In these cases, City Staff will work with the Commission Chair to place these topics on the agenda through the agenda development process, and they will be assigned to the appropriate subcommittee for follow-up, when needed.

PRODUCTS DEVELOPED BY SUBCOMMITTEES

Subcommittees work on key topics that are directly supportive of the mission of the Commission. Subcommittees generally research topics and refine scope and direction through the Subcommittee process. The Subcommittee may seek guidance and input from the Commission along the way.

Products that are developed by Subcommittee members are shared with the full Subcommittee to gain insights from the group. Members consider this feedback as they refine products. These products are then considered Subcommittee products that will then be shared with the full Commission. Subcommittees should be clear about the status of these products (e.g., draft, final, etc.) when they are shared with the Commission. These products may include the following:

- Research reports that provide information and insight about issues facing the city to help inform city policies and programs.
- Motions and resolutions for the Commission to advocate for certain actions or positions by the City Council or city staff.
- Responses to specific questions posed by the Commission, City Council, or city staff on particular topics.

For draft products that come before the Commission, the Commission will provide feedback to the Subcommittee as appropriate. For final products that come before the Commission, these products will be approved and forwarded to the appropriate body for further consideration.

PRODUCTS THAT EMERGE FROM THE COMMISSION

Products that are finalized by the Commission or motions and requests that are voted on favorably by the Commission typically will be forwarded to the City Council or city staff. Below are examples of how products may be handled after they leave the Commission:

- Motions passed by the Commission that have some explicit action for City Council must be developed into Staff reports that are then submitted to City Council. These staff reports are developed by staff members with input from the Commission. One example is a suggested ordinance change.
- Requests from the Commission for information from city staff. These requests for information, when finalized by the Commission, will be transmitted by city staff to the appropriate department for a response. This response will be transmitted back to the Commission by city staff.
- Motions or excerpts from Commission meetings that are important for Council to know but may not require specific action or may inform their future work. These items will be formatted by staff for transmittal to the Council as “receive and file.”
- Specific recommendations for Council Action. The products of the Commission will often serve to inform the staff report that will be developed to transmit the recommendation. This can take the form of a consent calendar item if an item does not require discussion. Discussion items where the Commission recommendation will be taken into consideration by the Council as part of the suite of information they may consider before taking an action.

Items that are forwarded directly to Council members may not be able to be considered by them except for informational purposes. They must be formally added to a Council Meeting agenda for any discussion or action by the full Council.

PROGRAMS THAT ARE RECOMMENDED BY THE COMMISSION

Similar to products, programs can emerge from the work of the Commission and its Subcommittees. Programs initiatives that are undertaken by City staff that typically require a long-term commitment and resource allocations. These programs typically follow a development path that is similar to the path for products and may include the following steps:

- Subcommittees research a particular issue that requires a programmatic response. This could include research into what other local governments have done to address the issue.
- Subcommittee members then identify key program parameters and suggestions for implementation. This may also include potential grant funding or other resources that could be used to support implementation efforts.
- The program recommendation is vetted and refined through the subcommittee and presented to the full Commission. If a program would require resources, it will be noted in the monthly Subcommittee report when the recommendation is transmitted to the Commission.
- If the Commission approves the recommended program, it will be forwarded to the appropriate City staff for consideration.
- Assuming there is internal support for the program, City staff will identify existing funds that can be used to support program development and implementation. If there are no funds currently available, City staff will work internally to request funds from City Council or incorporate the funding request into a future budget.
- After funding is approved, City staff will develop a formal program development and implementation plan to describe how the program will be rolled out. This will be done with input from the Commission and will likely be based on the Commission’s original research and recommendations.
- City staff will report regularly to the Commission on program implementation efforts.

If there is some reason that the program cannot be implemented, City staff will provide that feedback to the Commission.

PROJECTS OR PROGRAMS THAT EMERGE FROM OUTSIDE THE CITY

The City may get access to program and funding opportunities through entities such as the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) or the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The City may also be required to respond to or participate in other state or national initiatives. In these cases, City staff will determine how to appropriately engage Commission members in the process. This could include the following:

- Seeking input from Commission members on project scope.
- Requesting assistance from Commission members on related research or community outreach.
- Seeking involvement from Commission members in other advisory bodies.
- Developing recommendations to City Council.

Depending on the scope of these programs, they may require the formation of new Commission Subcommittees or the engagement of additional community volunteers.

CITY OF PALM SPRINGS SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION: AGENDA DEVELOPMENT PROCESS PRIMER

IDENTIFICATION OF AGENDA TOPIC IDEAS

The Commission works with the City to identify topics for each meeting agenda. Agenda topics typically emerge from the following sources:

- Discussions or public comments at a prior Commission meeting
- Work of Commission standing or ad-hoc subcommittees
- Work of City staff
- Input from City Council
- Commissioner comments

Agenda topics must be submitted to City staff and the Commission Chair no later than the Monday two weeks before a Commission meeting.

REFINEMENT OF AGENDA TOPICS

After an agenda topic has been identified, the Commission Chair and City staff will reach out to leaders of each topic to determine the following:

- The most appropriate place for that item on the agenda
- The approximate time needed
- What information is needed to prepare Commission members for any discussion or decision
- The precise wording of motions or resolutions
- Whether or not any topic is in any way sensitive
- Whether the topic should be deferred to the next meeting

AGENDA REVIEW

The Commission Chair and City staff work to finalize the Commission meeting agenda the Tuesday before the meeting. Between the date topics are due and the Tuesday before the meeting, they may reach out to topic leaders to address outstanding questions.

When the agenda has been finalized, it is submitted to the City Manager for review. If the City Manager is recused from a topic, City staff will work with the Deputy City Manager or City Attorney to determine the proper person to review that agenda topic. If the City Manager suggests any changes to the agenda, City staff will inform the Commission Chair and the topic lead. The City Manager (or other City official) will provide comments no later than noon the Thursday before the meeting. If no comments are received, the agenda will be considered final.

COLLECTION AND POSTING OF MEETING MATERIALS

City staff will collect all materials, including the agenda and background documents, that will be shared with Commission members at the meeting. At a minimum, the agenda and all decisional documents must be collected and distributed to Commission members prior to the meeting at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting for public review. Informational items can be shared at the meeting but should be kept to a minimum. Any additional items shared during the meeting will be posted after the meeting. All materials are posted and archived to the Sustainability Commission Meetings website.