



DISCUSSION ITEM

Agenda Item # 12

AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY

Meeting Date: August 24, 2021

Subject: Temporary City Council Meeting Locations

Prepared by: Jon Maginot, Deputy City Manager

Approved by: Gabe Engeland, City Manager

Attachment(s):

1. None

Initiated by:

Staff

Previous Council Consideration:

None

Fiscal Impact:

None

Environmental Review:

Not applicable

Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:

- Where does the Council wish to hold meetings once in person meetings resume?

Summary:

- Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20 which suspends certain portions of the Brown Act and allows for all virtual Council meetings is set to expire on September 30, 2021
- The Council Chambers Audio/Visual Upgrade project is under construction and an alternate location will need to be identified for Council meetings during construction

Staff Recommendation:

Provide direction to staff for the location of City Council meetings upon expiration of State orders permitting entirely virtual meetings

Reviewed By:

City Manager

GE

City Attorney

JH

Finance Director

JM



Subject: Temporary City Council meeting locations

Purpose

To determine locations for future City Council meetings

Background

On March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Newsom issued Executive Orders N-25-20 and N-29-20. These orders suspended certain elements of the Brown Act and specifically allow for Legislative Bodies (City Council, Commissions, Committees, etc.) to hold meetings entirely electronically with no physical meeting place. On March 17, 2020, the City Council held a Special Meeting and ratified and continued an Emergency Proclamation of the Existence of a Local Emergency Issued by the Director of Emergency Services. This proclamation continues to be in place.

On March 24, 2020, the City Council held an entirely virtual meeting and has continued to hold virtual meetings since that date. In addition, City Commissions and Committees have also held virtual meetings since Spring 2020.

On June 11, 2021, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-08-21 which states that the provisions in Executive Order N-29-20 suspending certain elements of the Brown Act will continue to apply through September 30, 2021. As of now, the City will no longer be able to hold entirely virtual meetings starting October 1, 2021. Rather, all meetings will be subject to the provisions of the Brown Act, including the requirements for a physical location.

Discussion/Analysis

As it is unknown whether further Executive Orders may be issued extending the suspension of certain elements of the Brown Act, it has become prudent for the City to begin planning for the return to in person meetings.

The City Council Chambers are currently under construction as part of the Council Chambers AV Upgrade project. Until this project is completed, it will be necessary to find an alternate location for Council meetings.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the City Council was meeting in the Los Altos Youth Center (LAYC). Alternatively, the Council could begin meeting in the new Community Center. The largest program room there is more comfortable than LAYC and is designed for large gatherings. For either facility, the City already has a stage and other equipment for the meetings.

In either option, the City will be able to continue live-streaming of City Council meetings either through Facebook Live or YouTube. In addition, staff will continue the process established during COVID-19 of including written comments received from the public in the meeting packet.



Subject: Temporary City Council meeting locations

Options

- 1) Hold City Council meetings in the new Community Center

Advantages: Will allow the City Council to meet in a comfortable room specifically designed to hold large gatherings.

Disadvantages: None identified

- 2) Hold City Council meetings in the Los Altos Youth Center

Advantages: The City Council has previously met in LAYC and staff is familiar with setting up the room for Council meetings.

Disadvantages: While Council meetings were held in LAYC, the City received some complaints that the facility can be uncomfortable. There is no air conditioning in the building and the heating system is old. In addition, the lighting in the facility is not ideal for City Council meetings and there can be issues with acoustics.

Recommendation

The staff recommends Option 1.