



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOODS COMMISSION **FROM:** Zulma Maciel
SUBJECT: STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS **DATE:** August 9, 2017
REGARDING THE DUTIES,
COMPOSITION & APPOINTMENT
PROCESS OF THE COMMISSION

Approved

Date

INFORMATION MEMO

In his March 9, 2017 memorandum Councilmember Rocha, the Neighborhoods Commission Council liaison, recommended that the Rules and Open Government Committee direct staff to bring forward recommendations on how the structure and scope of the Neighborhoods Commission could be revised or clarified to promote the success of the Commission, while ensuring staff resources to support the Commission are deployed efficiently. In addition, staff was directed to organize a Neighborhoods Commission retreat to discuss the size of the Commission, appointment process, and scope. The results of the retreat discussion were to be considered in staff's recommendation.

On March 15, 2017, the Rules and Open Government Committee unanimously approved placing Councilmember Rocha's recommendations on the March 21 Council agenda. On March 21, 2017, the City Council unanimously approved the memorandum (Item 2.15).

To implement Council's direction and allow the Commission to address the questions of scope and structure and make recommendations, the City Manager's Office arranged a retreat for April 29, 2017. In preparation for that retreat, staff worked with Shawn Spano, Public Dialogue Consortium, to help design the agenda and facilitate the retreat. Mr. Spano had facilitated the Neighborhood Commission's previous retreat on August 10, 2016. As part of creating the agenda for this retreat, Mr. Spano and City staff met with the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Commission as well as with the Commission liaison, Councilmember Rocha, for their input on the purpose and content of the retreat.

On Saturday, April 29, the Neighborhoods Commission met with City staff and the retreat facilitator Shawn Spano to:

- learn and understand requirements of the Brown Act;
- learn and understand requirements of the City Council Commission Policy 0-4;
- provide input on Commission purpose, size, composition, and appointment/caucus process; and
- check in any lessons learned through the 2016-17 work plan implementation.

City Manager Norberto Dueñas opened the meeting, the City Attorney's Office provided information regarding the Brown Act and City Policy 0-4, and Ken Podgorsek from United Neighborhoods of Santa Clara County and a long-time neighborhoods activist gave a brief history of how the Neighborhoods Commission was created. Next, the Commissioners broke into small groups to discuss the purpose, size, appointment process, and lessons learned in working on the Commission's 2016-17 work plan.

During the retreat, the Commission shared its perspective regarding their structure and scope. Staff has considered the Commission's input, reflected on the feasibility of the current structure, and thus developed the following recommendations.

Staff recommends:

- a. Maintain the current scope of the Commission;
- b. Maintain the 10-district caucus method for nominations in the Neighborhoods Commission appointment process;
- c. Reduce the size of the Neighborhoods Commission from 20 members to 11, with one seat per district and one city-wide seat; and
- d. Maintain the current staffing levels in support of the Commission's work.

Staff appreciates the Commission's enthusiasm to act on behalf of the San Jose community to advise the City on policy issues. Staff also acknowledges the Commission's desire to maintain the composition (size), appointment process, and scope intact. After careful review of Commission input and staff reflections and experiences, staff believes that the recommendations will ensure the Commission continues to hear the concerns of the residents, make meaningful recommendations to the City Council, and create efficiencies in staff support to the Commission. Of the four (4) areas discussed, three (3) will remain status quo. Reducing the size of the Commission in a way that is fair and transparent will require some time, and it is anticipated that a combination of member attrition and the implementation of caucus processes will lead to the recommended 11 members.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will present recommendations to the Neighborhoods Commission at the August 9, 2017 meeting, collect feedback from the Commission, then draft a memo to the City Council outlining staff recommendations. The item will be heard at the August 22nd Council meeting.

/S/

Zulma Maciel

Assistant to the City Manager