



# CITY OF DEL MAR

## STANDARD OPERATING PRINCIPLES FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Del Mar relies on a robust and important system of advisory committees and ad hoc task forces staffed by appointed volunteers to help the City achieve its goals, engage the community in City affairs, and take advantage of the deep bench of talent in the Del Mar community.

The following standard operating principles are provided for all City of Del Mar advisory committees to help guide committees in best practices for common areas, in accordance with [Del Mar Municipal Code Chapter 2.30](#).

### I. MEMBERSHIP

- a. The membership composition of Del Mar advisory committees shall be adopted for each committee by resolution of the City Council.
- b. All Del Mar advisory committee members will be residents of the City of Del Mar, unless otherwise specified.
- c. All Del Mar advisory committees will consist of voting members selected by a majority (three or more) of the total authorized City Council membership.
- d. One or two City Council members, as appointed by a majority of the City Council, will act as Council liaison(s) to each Del Mar advisory committee.
- e. One City staff member, as designated by the City Manager, will act as a staff liaison to each Del Mar advisory committee. Additional City staff support for committees shall be allocated based upon: (1) any direction given in the committee charter; (2) consistent with the adopted City budget and pursuant to the City Manager's management of staff resources; and (3) the annual work plan approved by the City Council.

### II. AGENDAS

- a. The designated City staff liaison to the committee will prepare the agenda in the City's standard format, with the assistance of the committee Chair and Council liaison(s). Once the meeting agenda is finalized, the agenda will be posted by City staff in accordance with California's Open Meetings Law (the Ralph M. Brown Act, Gov. Code § 54950 et seq.).
- b. The agenda shall include the following:
  - i. The name of the committee;
  - ii. A summary of the Code of Civil Discourse
  - iii. The date, time and place of the meeting;
  - iv. A general description of each agenda item that will be discussed, including a time set aside for oral communications as described in Section IV(g).
  - v. Any other information that may be required by law.

- c. Items can be placed on a committee agenda in one or more of the following ways:
  - i. City staff;
  - ii. Council liaison(s);
  - iii. By committee direction, or the committee can agree to let the committee Chair place an item on the agenda;
  - iv. If a member of the public or a committee member other than the Chair requests an agenda item, it should go the Chair, City staff, or Council liaison(s) for approval to place it on the agenda.

### III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION ON AGENDA ITEMS

Del Mar advisory committees do not follow the red dot process. Instead, public communications should be sent to the staff liaison for distribution via email to the committee prior to the meeting. The communications will not be posted on the City's website but will be distributed to the committee members, Council liaisons, and staff liaisons, and the communication will be made available to the public and filed with the official record for the meeting.

### IV. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

- a. **Regular Meetings.** Advisory committees should establish regular meeting times and place in accordance with the Brown Act. The frequency of a committee's meetings will be set by the Council, preferably in the committee charter. The Council may modify the time, place, and frequency of a committee's meetings from time to time as appropriate. To assist with agenda planning, the standard meetings length will be two hours, which may be extended by a majority vote of the committee.
- b. **Changing Regular Meetings.** Committee members can propose a new regular meeting time or date by having the item placed on a committee agenda, with the majority of the members voting in favor of changing the regular meeting time. Council, staff liaisons, and meeting room availability should be considered when changing the regular meeting time or date. Meeting time or date changes must be approved by the Council liaisons and City staff.
- c. **Selection of Officers.** All established Del Mar advisory committees will have an agenda item to select a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary from among its members at the last meeting of the calendar year, with the new Chair serving at the first meeting of the new year. It is encouraged that these positions rotate annually among the committee members.
- d. **Quorum.** A quorum (1/2 or more of the committee membership) of voting membership must be present to transact business. If less than a quorum is present, those present may still discuss matters, but may not take action on any item.
- e. **Duties of Secretary.** All Del Mar advisory committees will select a Secretary from among its members. The Secretary will prepare action minutes of the committee meetings for the committee's approval and shall file a copy of the approved minutes with the Administrative Services Department within ten (10) business days of the meeting when the minutes were approved.

- f. **Brown Act (Open Meetings).** All Del Mar advisory committees will conduct their affairs in full compliance with California's Open Meetings Law (Ralph M. Brown Act, Gov. Code § 54950 et seq.). A copy of the Open Meetings Law will be provided to all new committee members. Members of the public can communicate with the committee prior to the meeting through the process described in Section III – Public Communication on Agenda Items.
- g. **Discussion Limited to Agenda Items.** Only matters listed on the posted agenda for a regular or special committee meeting may be discussed at that meeting. An opportunity for the public to speak on items not on the agenda will be provided at all Del Mar advisory committee meetings through a time set aside for oral communications and also during each agenda item before action is taken. Advisory committees are not required to use speaker slips; however, they may use speaker slips if there are large number of speakers for a given item. The committee Chair should remind public speakers to state their name for the record.
- h. **Meetings not Recorded.** Advisory committee meetings are not typically recorded or televised. Council liaison(s) can recommend that the full City Council approve in advance an advisory committee meeting be televised. Committees can work with City staff to audio record a meeting through the Town Hall dais recording system or as otherwise may be possible.
- i. **Public Participation Encouraged.** All Del Mar advisory committees will encourage the public to offer ideas and suggestions that contribute to the mission/scope of the committee. Working closely with their Council liaison(s), committees will determine if any suggestions or ideas should be brought forward to the City Council.
- j. **Attendance.** All Del Mar advisory committee members will make every attempt to attend all regular and special meetings of the committee, according to the Del Mar Municipal Code Section 2.30.020.
- k. **Continuance of Meetings.** There are special procedures for continuing meetings. Committees should work with the Council liaison(s) and City staff to properly notice and continue meetings.
- l. **Remote Attendance.** There are special procedures for patching in absent members by phone or online platform. Participation by phone or online platform should be approved by a Council liaison and should only be used for special circumstances. Participation by phone or online platform is not the City's standard practice. Participation by phone should be coordinated with City staff in advance of the agenda going out, as there are special noticing requirements for remote attendance.
- m. **Brown Act Assistance.** If uncertain what Brown Act requirements might apply to particular situations, please ask the City staff liaison or the Council liaison(s) for help, in advance.
- n. **Recusals.** Committee members designated in the City's Conflict of Interest Code must follow the applicable State laws related to recusals and must recuse themselves from items in which they have a personal, financial interest. These committee members should consult City staff for guidance when needed.

Committee members not designated in the City's Conflict of Interest Code should avoid participating in items in which they have a real or perceived bias. For example, a member of the Traffic and Parking Advisory Committee should recuse themselves on a vote for an item in very close proximity to their home.

- o. **Meeting Locations.** All committee or sub-committee meetings that have staff attending should be held at the Civic Center either at City Hall or in the Town Hall. Regular meetings of the full committee will be at the Civic Center or as directed by Council. Subcommittee meetings where staff are not attending can be held at a location other than the Civic Center or City Hall, provided that, if the sub-committee is subject to the Brown Act, the location is in compliance with Brown Act requirements.

- V. **SUBCOMMITTEES.** Committees may establish through consensus informal subcommittees of limited scope and duration that are made up of less than a quorum of the committee members. Subcommittees may be used to keep committee work plan items moving between formal committee meetings. Informal subcommittees may meet with residents, volunteers, and City staff, but may not discuss committee related information with other committee members outside of a public meeting. Informal subcommittees are generally not subject to the Brown Act (open meeting law); however, certain committee actions related to subcommittees may trigger Brown Act requirements. Committees should seek guidance from City staff and Council liaisons when establishing informal subcommittees.

## VI. **HELPFUL TIPS FOR RUNNING A GOOD MEETING**

The job of the committee Chair is to keep things on track and ensure the following:

- a. Make everyone feel welcome.
- b. Meetings should start promptly at the assigned start time.
- c. Make sure everyone is treated with respect: committee members, public, and staff.
- d. When taking public testimony:
  - 1) Announce in advance any time limits and procedures to be followed.
  - 2) It may be helpful to let members of the public know that their comments will be heard but often there is no dialog between the committee and the public during the public comment portion of the meeting and that, generally, discussion of comments raised on items not on the agenda are not allowed.
  - 3) When appropriate, remind speakers that they may simply say, "I agree with the prior speaker."
  - 4) The Chair and all committee members should give each speaker their undivided attention.
- e. Make sure everyone on the committee or in the audience is heard once before anyone is heard twice. The Chair typically speaks last.
- f. The Chair's role is to consolidate the committee's discussion and find consensus among the members.
- g. Ensure that questions from members of the public are addressed only to the Chair and not to other committee members, Council or staff liaisons, or other members of the public.

- h. The Chair should take the lead on enforcing the Code of Civil Discourse and Supplemental Policy Related to the Code of Civil Discourse regarding committee member and public conduct at the meeting.
- i. Absent unusual circumstances, the following process for running a meeting is recommended:
  - i. Staff or sub-committee report to present the item;
  - ii. Take questions from committee members — this is the time for questions, not stating opinions;
  - iii. Take public testimony; and
  - iv. Committee discussion and action - this is the time for committee members to express opinions. Generally, the Chair will speak last.

## **VII. WORK TASKS AND TAKING ACTIONS**

Taking action on an item is one of the most important things an advisory committee does. When doing so, the following guidelines should be followed:

- a. Make sure the proposed action item has been properly noticed and placed on the agenda.
- b. Make sure it falls within the scope of the committee's mission and any applicable City goals and priorities.
- c. Recognize that, normally, all committee actions seeking City action or commitments will be in the form of a recommendation to Council.
- d. Review the proposed action with City staff and Council liaison(s) in advance, especially if it requires a commitment of City staff time or resources.
- e. Remember that the committee is advisory to the City Council and should not undertake to act independently.
- f. If there is a new item the committee would like to work on, send a request to the Council through the Council liaisons(s) for approval before starting work.
- g. If the committee wants to comment to an outside agency or person, for example on an environmental document, send the committee's draft comments via the Council liaison(s) to the City Council for approval, recognizing only the City Council can speak for the City.
- h. Advisory committee requests to staff or outside agencies should be submitted directly to the Council liaison(s).
- i. If an advisory committee receives a request from an outside organization, the request should be forwarded to the City staff and Council liaison(s). The advisory committee should not respond directly to the requestor without authorization from the Council liaison(s).

## **VIII. REPORTING/RECORDS**

### **A. Records**

Committees shall record actions taken at their meetings by producing meeting minutes, which should include the following:

- a. The name of the committee.
- b. The date, time and place of the meeting.
- c. The time the meeting began.
- d. The names of those committee members in attendance.
- e. The names of those Council liaison(s) and staff in attendance.

- f. Approval of the previous meeting minutes.
- g. A brief summary of the discussion for each agenda item and a description of the actions taken by and recommendations of the committee.
- h. The hour of adjournment.
- i. Names of public speakers and a brief summary of their input.

The Administrative Services Department will maintain the final approved minutes for the City's official record. The minutes, records, reports, and documents of the committee are public record.

## B. Reporting

- a. All advisory committees will briefly report on their activities to the City Council annually. This may be done in-person (typically by the Chair) at a City Council meeting, or in writing and included in the City Council agenda packet as a report related to the standing Committee Update section of the City Council agenda.
- b. All advisory committees will use their Council approved charter and City Council Goals and Priorities as a guide in developing an annual work plan and schedule for Council consideration. At the conclusion of work, a summary report will be submitted to the City Council by the Chair to document the findings or rationale of the concluded work. If the committee has both a majority and minority opinion, both reports may be submitted to the City Council for consideration. The summary report may be presented to the Council liaison(s), or to the full Council, and will be filed with the Administrative Services Department for the City's official record.
- c. Only Del Mar advisory committee members designated in the Del Mar Conflict of Interest Code will file Conflict of Interest Statements with the Administrative Services Department in accordance with the regulations of the California Fair Political Practices Commission and the Del Mar Conflict of Interest Code.

## IX. **WORKING WITH COUNCIL LIAISONS**

Council liaison(s) are there to assist committees by:

- a. Providing a communication channel between the committee and the Council.
- b. Advocating to Council in support of committee recommendations.
- c. Helping committees to interface with City liaisons.
- d. Assisting and advising on proper meeting procedures, answering questions, and in other respects as the committee carries on its work.

More information about the role of City Council liaisons can be found in City Council Policy 202 – Responsibilities and Expectations of Council Liaisons to City Advisory Committees and of Council Representatives to Outside Agencies