

Subject: FW: Amended City Council Protocols

From: Norma Citron <ncitron@pacbell.net>

Subject: Amended City Council Protocols

Date: January 23, 2024 at 11:37:38 AM PST

To: Alicia Weintraub <aweintraub@cityofcalabasas.com>, Peter Kraut <pkraut@cityofcalabasas.com>, James Bozajian <jbozajian@cityofcalabasas.com>, David Shapiro <dshapiro@cityofcalabasas.com>, Ed Albrecht <edwardalbrecht4@gmail.com>

Dear Mayor Weintraub and Councilmembers,

I see the Amended City Council Protocols are on the agenda for the January 31, 2024, Council meeting.

In reading through the current draft of the Amended City Council Protocols discussed at the October 11, 2023, Council meeting, I did not find a reference to Council duties or roles before, during or after a declared emergency or disaster.

In the Calabasas Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), I found Section 4.2 entitled Role of Elected Official which, I believe, would be helpful to have as a reference in the draft Amended City Council Protocols now being reviewed.

In addition to the important roles of leadership and support mentioned in the EOP, I believe there are certain critical activities that you might consider including in the your new Amended Protocols.

For example, there are explicit Council duties and roles related to:

“Support and work with emergency management officials”

“Facilitating communication”

“Obtaining assistance from other agencies”

“Declaring a state of emergency”

“Issuing emergency orders such as imposing curfews etc..”

Two additional statements related to communication of accurate information, could also be added for clarity. I believe it would be important to note that during an emergency/disaster, the EOC Public Information Officer is the Council’s primary source for vetted information. Also there is a reference to communicating with the EOC Liaison to help Council stay informed during the emergency/disaster.

It might be worthwhile to consider having a Council Disaster Organizational Chart outlining duties and responsibilities mentioned above for the Mayor and Councilmembers.

The critical duties as well as direction to the PIO or EOC Liaison might be considered for inclusion in the Amended Protocols. If the Inclusion is thought to be too cumbersome, direction to the Council could be accomplished by simply providing a reference in the updated Protocols with direction to Section 4.2 in the City's EOP.

The Brown Act mentions state of emergency and teleconferencing rules specifically relative to Dire Emergencies and Council duties during that time. Some of our current Councilmembers are familiar with the emergency rules due to the recent pandemic; however, in my opinion, we could reference the

Brown Act to ensure new Councilmembers are familiar with the emergency rule change and documentation required during Dire Emergencies.

In closing, there may be implied direction for the Council to follow the City's EOP in the event of a disaster/emergency. If so, as stated above, I believe it would be more helpful to have a written reference to the EOP in the Amended City Council Protocols acknowledging the Council's vital disaster/emergency roles and duties.

Best regards,
Norma Citron

<https://www.cityofcalabasas.com/home/showpublisheddocument/28595/638320984207130000>

Subject: FW: City Council 1-31-24 meeting - agenda item #2 - Public Comments

From: Joe Chilco <joe.chilco@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, January 26, 2024 1:05 PM

To: info <info@cityofcalabasas.com>

Subject: City Council 1-31-24 meeting - agenda item #2 - Public Comments

Mayor Weintraub and City Councilmembers,

I have the following comments regarding agenda item #2, concerning City Council protocols:

In the Table with Committee Goal/Protocols document it states, “Public Meetings - #22 - Staff requests time to further evaluate this change based on recent issues during public comment over Zoom in other cities.”

While I appreciate the concern that inappropriate disruptions have occurred and present a difficulty, particularly through participation on Zoom, I have serious concerns that removing that ability limits the means by which Calabasas residents can speak with their elected representatives and participate in the democratic process. I know that radio and television broadcasters use an electronic means that allows for a delay in any audio “going out over the air”. There is an aspect of “free speech” involved, however, a solution that eliminates the ability of Calabasas residents to participate remotely by Zoom is an infringement of their “free speech rights”. The City cannot allow “disruptors”, who seek only to further their agenda, to limit the residents’ Constitutional rights.

Considering only the number of residents who participate by Zoom at any given City Council or city commission meeting as a true indication of the need to provide this option is a fallible approach. Calabasas residents may not be in a position to participate in-person, either due to health concerns or time constraints. Public participation cannot increase by eliminating Zoom participation. The City must encourage and facilitate greater public participation.

The matter of the cost of providing Zoom participation, which includes finding a solution to the “disruptors” problem, has been raised. There are instances of the City taking on the cost of providing certain services that benefit a limited number of residents. For example, costs related to bird control around Calabasas Lake, which is restricted to use by only certain residents. These are not an insignificant amount that total approximately \$160,000 of all Calabasas taxpayer’s money.

I ask that the City Council find solutions to the above issues outlined that serve the needs of the residents without infringing their right to participate in local government processes.

On another matter, the Staff Report states, “Discuss and provide direction on the weekly Mayor’s Letter to the community”, and in the PowerPoint presentation document it states, “City Council Protocols Committee recommends that the Mayor’s Weekly Letter be suspended.”

As neither of these mentions includes any information identifying exactly what the concern is here, I offer the following observations.

The Mayor’s Weekly Letter was an effective method to convey information and perspective on events that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic. I believe it provided Calabasas residents with a certain amount of reassurance that the City was actively involved in dealing with the crisis, and in many ways, comfort that our

then-Mayor was “on it”. Providing accurate information and leadership in the form of a guiding hand and an empathetic ear to residents at a time when our ability to “live life as we knew it” was severely impacted was critical to our City’s recovery.

The practice was continued when the Mayor’s role was passed on subsequently to each successive Mayor pro tem since. I believe it has provided a platform by which our residents can be informed on important public safety concerns, as well as issues facing our City that impact quality of life. It also provides a level of transparency to our local government, and conveys the impression that our Mayor is accessible to all our residents, and takes the time to “speak to us” on a regular basis.

If there is a concern that any content in the Mayor’s Weekly Letter may not reflect the position of the City Council, or may unfairly provide an advantage to a sitting mayor to pursue a private agenda, then a possible solution might involve review of the content by all City Councilmembers prior to its public distribution.

I urge the City Council to take these comments into consideration when discussing this matter. “Throwing the baby out with the bath water” is rarely a prudent approach.

Thank you.

Joe Chilco
Calabasas resident
(address on file)

January 30, 2023

Greetings,

Here are a few thoughts regarding the Protocols that are being reviewed by the council tomorrow night. First, I was concerned when I saw there are 124 pages provided in this packet. I read some pages, but then decided it was too much to process. Thus, I decided to just provide my suggestions.

Addressing a Motion-- First, the council discusses an agenda item and then a motion is presented and second. Then, sometimes there is discussion. Then, what usually happens, each council member wordsmiths the motion. This can easily last for over 10 minutes with some back and forth. Then, a vote is taken, and it passes. While watching these meetings, I am left very confused, and I think others might be too. Its not clear what exactly was in the motion.

Here is my suggested solution. It is the Mayor's job is to run the meeting and summarize the discussion. Within that process, the Mayor should ask the attorney to read the motion that is finally clearly and precisely written. Instead of voting on a "muddy" motion that leaves some doubts, everyone will know what just happened, including the staff.

Commissions- Some Commissioners do not attend meetings. The privilege of serving in such an important capacity requires reliable attendance. Perhaps this might be addressed.

Also, some "projects of significance" should come to the Commissions before the Council. By doing so, Commissioners can ask stimulating questions and provide useful suggestions that might provide insights city staff can use when writing more thorough agenda reports for the council. This will shorten or even reduces the number of council meetings and save staff time and expenses. If in doubt, city staff can seek guidance from the City Manager to determine what might be a "project of significance."

City Council Meetings- The Mayor should consider asking for a summary of what was discussed at a relevant commission meeting. Please remember each council member has an appointed commissioner and might want to know, in a generally way, what was discussed.

Commissioners- I think, once a year, each council member might consider having an informal coffee with all of their commission appointees. It's a team building exercise that might yield unexpected dividends.

Mayor's Letter- I like it.

Thank you for your consideration,

Charlotte Meyer