



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 21-0121 **Version:** 1

Type: *Gen. Bus. - Staff Report **Status:** Passed

In control: City Council Regular Meeting

On agenda: 4/6/2021 **Final action:** 4/6/2021

Title: Report on In-Person City Council Meetings (City Clerk Tamura and Information Technology Director Hackelman).
 a) RECEIVE REPORT
 b) DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION

Sponsors:

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Attachments: 1. In-Person City Council Meeting Facility Comparison

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
4/6/2021	1	City Council Regular Meeting	approved	Pass

TO:
Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH:
Bruce Moe, City Manager

FROM:
Liza Tamura, City Clerk
Terry Hackelman, Information Technology Director
Robert Rodriguez, Information Systems Specialist
Martha Alvarez, Senior Deputy City Clerk

SUBJECT:
Report on In-Person City Council Meetings (City Clerk Tamura and Information Technology Director Hackelman).
a) **RECEIVE REPORT**
b) **DISCUSS AND PROVIDE DIRECTION**

RECOMMENDATION:
Staff recommends that the City Council receive the report on conducting in-person City Council meetings and provide direction.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:
There are no fiscal implications from this report. However, there will be costs associated with modifying operations to accommodate for COVID-19 protocols, including securing cleaning supplies, purchase of mobile and stationary plexiglass partitions, face coverings, additional janitorial cost, and purchasing a device for the integration of Zoom meetings with the web and MBTV broadcast. Total costs will be determined upon City Council direction.

BACKGROUND:

Following the State of California and Los Angeles County declarations of emergency due to the COVID-19, the City Council declared a State of Emergency on March 13, 2020, and closed numerous City facilities, including City Hall, City Council Chambers, Joslyn Community Center, Police/Fire Conference Room, Manhattan Heights and other indoor spaces to the public.

At the onset of closing City Hall and the City Council Chambers, City Council meetings were conducted using cable livestream and teleconferencing. Starting with April 29, 2020, City Council meetings were conducted via Zoom.

While outdoor City facilities began reopening beginning summer 2020, the City's indoor workspaces have remained closed to the public, including City Council Chambers due to an abundance of caution and to adhere to Los Angeles County Public Health Officer guidance.

The State of California provides guidance on reopening activities through the Blueprint for the Safer Economy, which assigns one of four tiers to every county. These tiers, Widespread (purple), Substantial (red), Moderate (orange) and Minimal (yellow) indicate the level of risk for the spread of COVID-19 in that county. Upon an assignment of a tier, county health agencies provide a specific county health order to apply the tier guidances to that county. Since the inception of the Blueprint, Los Angeles County has been in the Widespread tier, signifying the need to take utmost caution to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

With the recent movement of Los Angeles County to less restrictive tiers, the City is able to consider reopening City Hall and City facilities to the public in a manner that continues safeguards against COVID-19 in accordance with Federal, State, and County regulations.

It is also important to note that there are applicable regulations governing public meetings. Specifically, the General Social Distancing guidance ([Reopening SocialDistancing.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/protocols/Reopening_SocialDistancing.pdf)) ([lacounty.gov](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov)) [<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/protocols/Reopening_SocialDistancing.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/docs/protocols/Reopening_SocialDistancing.pdf) > and also the office-based worksites guidance. The Office-Based Worksites Guidance limits these meetings to 15 people, including city staff. The protocol is unclear as to whether it allows for a rotating number (for example, members of the public cycle in and out), but rotating certainly would not meet the intent of staying as safe as possible, and would highly impact effectiveness of contact tracing ([Reopening OfficeBasedWorksites.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/docs/protocols/Reopening_OfficeBasedWorksites.pdf)) ([lacounty.gov](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov)) [<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/docs/protocols/Reopening_OfficeBasedWorksites.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/docs/protocols/Reopening_OfficeBasedWorksites.pdf)>).

DISCUSSION:

At the February 16, 2021, City Council meeting, Councilmember Franklin and Mayor Hadley requested for City Council consideration to agendize a discussion on returning to City Council Chambers with safety precautions considered in order to conduct City Council meetings in-person.

The item returned for consideration at the March 2, 2021, City Council meeting where a third vote was made by Councilmember Montgomery requesting for the item to be agendized and include an analysis with the various locations for in-person City Council meetings.

To ensure compliance with restrictions on indoor gatherings in each tier designated to continue to

reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, below is a comparison of City facilities and the necessary accommodations required for returning to an in-person City Council meetings.

Option # 1 - City Council Chambers:

Hold in-person meetings, with Councilmembers and key staff in the City Council Chambers with public participation via Zoom. Under this option, the City Council Chambers will be set up with plexiglass added to the dais for social distancing between City Councilmembers and the Executive Team as needed.

Pros:

- Technology in place to livestream meetings.
- Allows for six-feet social distancing between City Councilmembers, City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk with the Executive Team as needed.
- With the purchase of an encoder device, the City will have the capability to broadcast the in-person livestream and Zoom for public participation.
- Use of VoteCast by City Councilmembers as used prior to COVID-19.
- Floorplan designated for City Council meetings only.

Cons:

- Additional staff will be required to run meetings from City Council Chambers (City Clerk's Office and Information Technology Department).
- No in-person public participation.

Option # 2 - Joslyn Community Center Auditorium:

Hold in-person meetings for the City Councilmembers, Executive Staff, and limited members of the public, along with continuing to allow for the public to participate in-person or via Zoom. Plexiglass, floor decals, additional hand sanitizer dispensers and cleaning wipes will be added throughout the auditorium to allow for social distancing and proper safety measures for participation.

Pros:

- Technology in place to livestream meetings.
- Allows for six-feet social distancing between City Councilmembers, Department Heads, Staff and the Public.
- With the purchase of an encoder device, the City will have the capability to broadcast the in-person livestream and Zoom for public participation.

Cons:

- Additional staff will be required to run meetings from City Council Chambers and Joslyn Community Center (City Clerk's Office, Information Technology Department, Police Department, and Parks and Recreation Department).
- Staff will need to set-up and break-down the City Council floorplan after every meeting to allow the room to be used for other activities.

Option # 3 - Police/Fire Conference Room:

Hold in-person meetings with Councilmembers and key staff in the Police/Fire Conference Room with public participation through Zoom. Under this option, the Police/Fire Conference Room will be set up with plexiglass and social distancing between City Councilmembers and the Executive Team as needed.

Pros:

- Technology in place to livestream meetings.
- Allows for six-feet social distancing between City Councilmembers, City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk with the Executive Team as needed.
- With the purchase of an encoder device, the City will have the capability to broadcast the in-person livestream and Zoom for public participation.

Cons:

- Additional staff (City Clerk's Office, Information Technology Department, and Parks and Recreation Department) will be required to run meetings from both City Council Chambers and Police/Fire Conference Room.
- Concern that the floorplan will be unable to accommodate the camera angle and the six-foot social distancing requirement.
- No in-person public participation.

Option # 4 - Manhattan Heights:

To hold City Council meetings at Manhattan Heights will require a large investment in technology in order to have the room ready for conducting City Council meetings and that will require additional time as well.

Pros:

- The room size is comparable to the Joslyn Community Center Auditorium,
- Allows for six-feet social distancing between City Councilmembers, Department Heads, Staff and the Public.

Cons:

- Facility is not equipped with the necessary technology to livestream City Council meetings.
- Additional staff (City Clerk's Office, Information Technology Department, Police Department and Parks and Recreation Department) will be required to run meetings from both City Council Chambers and Manhattan Heights.

Additional Items Needed At All Facilities:

- Signage to direct the public for all City Council meetings.
- Purchase of additional microphones and equipment.
- Purchase of additional screen(s) and equipment.
- Purchase of additional camera(s) and equipment as needed.
- Social distancing and directional markers based on protocol requirements.

- Face covering required signage.
- Disposable face coverings for the public.
- Disposable gloves for staff use.
- Purchase of additional hand sanitizer dispensaries and cleaning wipes.
- Additional janitorial staff member on-site to clean restrooms.
- Additional staff member to monitor temperature checks and tracing log sheets if needed.
- Additional staff member for wiping chairs and podium microphone used by the public.
- Purchase of mobile or stationary plexiglass partitions.

Staff recommends that the City Council review the options above and provide direction on their preferred format for in-person City Council meetings. An attached comparison spreadsheet is provided to assist in the review of options.

PUBLIC OUTREACH:

After analysis, staff determined that public outreach was not required for this report. However, depending on City Council's direction, staff will conduct extensive outreach which will include: advertising through the City's website, The Beach Reporter, social media, and eNotifications to inform the public of options available on how to participate at City Council meetings.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

The City has reviewed the proposed activity for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the activity is not a "Project" as defined under Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines; therefore, pursuant to Section 15060(c)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines the activity is not subject to CEQA.

Thus, no environmental review is necessary.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney has reviewed this report and determined that no additional legal analysis is necessary.

ATTACHMENT:

1. In-Person City Council Meeting Facility Comparison