

POLICY FOR ESTABLISHING CITY COUNCIL NORMS OF OPERATION

I. PURPOSE

The successful operation of any public or private organization and agency requires that rules, standards, or norms be established to define the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the governing board and staff in the operation of the organization. The establishment of Norms of Operation by a City Council will promote understanding and trust among members of the City Council and City staff concerning their roles, responsibilities, and expectations for the operation of the City. The establishment and periodic review of the City Council Norms of Operation will assist each new member of the City Council to better understand his/her responsibility and role as a Council Member.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all elected officials and employees of the City.

CITY COUNCIL NORMS OF OPERATION

Section 1. OPERATION OF CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

A. The Council shall meet the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Closed Sessions of the City Council shall normally be conducted after the Redevelopment Agency, Housing Authority, and Surplus Property Authority meetings.

B. In order to ensure that all members of the public have an opportunity to speak and that the Council is able to complete its business, the Council may, under normal circumstances, invoke a three-minute limitation on comments by the public unless otherwise prohibited by law. In order to effectively enforce this rule, the Presiding Officer may employ the electric timer on the dais.

C. Council Members should avoid, when possible, a debate with a member of the public or staff at Council meetings.

D. After a public hearing is closed, Council Members may ask questions of staff, or anyone in the audience, provided the audience member speaks from the podium. The public will be allowed to address the City Council after the close of the hearing only if the hearing is reopened by a majority vote of the Council.

E. All Council Members need not speak or provide their viewpoints during every public hearing or every Council consideration if their concerns have been addressed by other Council Members. On critical or significant issues, all members of Council may want to indicate

their opinions on the issue. Council Members may elect to make a statement about their vote if they vote outside the majority action of the Council or are supporting an item for special reasons.

F. Any written correspondence or other materials received at a Council meeting shall be documented with a receipt time and date by the City Clerk. If the City Clerk does not receive a copy of the written submittal, it shall not be considered to have been received or acted upon by the City Council.

G. At the conclusion of each public hearing, prior to Council action, the Mayor, or his/her designee, may review or summarize the proceedings.

H. The Council may not take action on matters brought up during Open Forum. The Council may, however, direct staff to agendize the matter for a future meeting. If properly noticed, the Council can take action under Council Reports.

Section 2. CITY COUNCIL RELATIONS WITH CITY STAFF

A. City Staff should not debate with Council during a public meeting.

B. Mutual respect shall be shown during public session from both Council Members and staff regarding their respective roles and responsibilities.

C. City staff shall acknowledge the Council as having the final authority to make policy decisions. The City Council shall acknowledge staff as implementing and administering the Council's policies.

D. Any concerns by a Council Member over the behavior or work of a City employee should be directed to the City Manager privately to ensure the concern is resolved.

E. All requests for information or questions by the City Council to staff shall be directed to the City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk, or Department Directors. All complaints should be submitted to the City Manager.

F. All written informational material requested to be prepared for individual Council Members shall be submitted by staff to all Council Members. This does not apply to conflict of law information and certain personal questions regarding Council Member rights addressed to the City Attorney.

G. Council Members should not attempt to coerce or influence staff in the making of appointments, awarding of contracts, the selection of consultants, the processing of development applications, and the granting of City licenses or permits. The Council should not attempt to change or interfere with the operating policies and practices of any City department.

H. Mail that is addressed to the Mayor and City Council shall be circulated by the City Clerk to the City Council. The City Clerk shall not open mail addressed to individual Council Members unless otherwise directed to do so.

I. A Council Member should not direct staff to initiate any action or prepare any report that is significant in nature or initiate any project or study without the approval of a majority of the City Council.

Section 3. CITY COUNCIL RELATIONSHIP WITH CITY COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES AND COUNCIL MEMBER REPRESENTATION TO OTHER AGENCIES AND GROUPS

A. Members of the City Council may, from time to time, discuss topics of interest with their respective appointees to various City Boards and Commissions. It is important for commissions and committees to make informed, objective recommendations to the City Council on items before them.

B. Individual Council Members should have the right to attend meetings but are cautioned about becoming involved in the meeting's discussions.

C. City Council representatives serving on a local board or committee shall abstain from voting on any issue if it will later be submitted to the City Council for consideration.

D. If a member of the City Council represents the City before another governmental agency or organization, the Council Member should first indicate the majority position or opinion of the Council. Personal opinions and comments may be expressed only if the Council Member clarifies that these statements do not represent the position of the City Council.

Section 4. CITY COUNCIL HANDLING OF LITIGATION AND OTHER CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.

A. City Council Members should keep all written materials and verbal information provided to them on matters that are confidential under law in complete confidence to insure that the City's position is not compromised. No mention of information in these materials should be made to anyone other than Council Members, City Attorney, or City Manager.

B. If the City Council in closed session has provided direction to City staff on proposed terms and conditions for any type of negotiations whether it be related to property acquisition or disposal, a proposed or pending claims or litigation, and/or employee negotiations, all contact with the other party should be by the designated City Council Member or staff representative handling the negotiations or litigation. A Council Member should not have any

contact or discussion with the other party or its representative(s) involved concerning the negotiation during this time and not communicate any discussion conducted in closed sessions. All public statements, information, press releases, should be handled by the designated staff spokesperson.

Section 5. CITY COUNCIL REORGANIZATION.

A. Annual reorganization as a norm is considered desirable because it allows for expanded leadership opportunities, provides personal growth, and enhances the public's image of the City Council's operation.

B. At the first meeting in December of each year. the Council's reorganization will be placed on the City Council Agenda. At this time the Council may reorganize and select one of its members as Mayor, and one of its members as Mayor Pro Tempore.

Section 6. CONFLICT WITH MUNICIPAL CODE.

A. If there is any conflict contained hereinabove with Federal or State law or with the City's Hueneme's Municipal Code, such laws shall prevail.

Council Approved: February 21, 2001