



# Agenda Report

May 4, 2020

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** City Manager

**SUBJECT: SCHEDULE OF CITY COUNCIL AND PUBLIC, BROWN ACT MEETINGS**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to state CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption); and
2. Affirm that video and audio teleconferenced City Council special meetings will be convened on May 11, and 18 and on June 1 and 8 at 2 pm, with special meetings set for closed session items on a different day, and that the goal is that regular meetings be convened as of June 15, 2020;
3. Affirm that the following Planning related meetings will be convened electronically on or around the following dates: Planning Commission: May 27; Design Commission: May 12 and 26, and June 9; Hearing Officer: May 20 and June 3, 2020;
4. Establish a priority for special meetings of the standing committees of the City Council, with the recommendation that there be a meeting of one of the standing committees per week.
5. Affirm that other City Commissions will not meet through June 15, 2020 except where a specific decision must be made by that Commission under state or local law or regulation.

## **SCHEDULE OF CITY COUNCIL AND PUBLIC, BROWN ACT MEETINGS**

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### **BACKGROUND:**

On March 12, 2020, State of California Executive Order N-25-20 was issued, establishing, among other things, that local legislative bodies are authorized to hold public meetings via teleconferencing.

While teleconferencing allows the elected officials and the public to participate remotely, convening a meeting requires that staff come into the office and interact with one another extensively to prepare for the meeting, to convene the meeting and to participate in the meeting. Some members of City Staff participating in this process are from high risk demographics. Staff seeks to limit its own exposure to COVID-19 while ensuring that essential City business moves forward.

As every other city in California, Pasadena has been wrestling with the technology for these meetings. Although Zoom, Skype and similar platforms are used for the meetings, convening meetings is a staff intensive process because of the need for Brown Act compliance and public participation. It is not as simple as convening a normal family or business Zoom session. As of today, other cities have had their challenges, and we were not able to identify any California city that is back to normal in terms of public meeting frequency under the new teleconferencing rules.

Staff is recommending that the City Council affirm that its Monday meetings take place at 2 pm by teleconference through the meeting of June 8, 2020, with the hope that the regular meeting schedule can be restored by June 15, 2020. Staff is also recommending that special meetings be convened for the purpose of closed sessions since public observation is not an element of those meetings.

Although other Commissions and bodies of the City are important, to the extent that they are advisory and not decision making, it is recommended that those meetings be deferred through June 15, 2020.

Staff is also recommending that City Council affirm the scheduled meetings of the Planning Commission, Design Commission and Hearing Officer through June 15. In addition, the City Council is asked to set priorities for the meetings of the standing committees of the City Council. Especially given the likely duration of the Monday City Council meetings and related special meetings for closed sessions, as well as the Planning related meetings, it is requested that no more than one additional public meeting of a City Council standing committee occur per week.

Should it become evident that the regular meeting schedule cannot resume as of June 15, 2020, staff will return to City Council in advance for further direction.

**COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

The proposed action is consistent with the City Council's strategic planning goal to ensure public safety by sustaining and enhancing the City's ongoing response to COVID-19 to protect the health and safety of all those who reside, visit, or work within the City of Pasadena.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

The actions proposed herein have been determined to be exempt from the CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3), the common sense exemption (formerly the "general rule") that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. The proposed resolution ratification does not involve any direct physical changes in the environment. Therefore, the actions proposed herein are exempt from CEQA per Section 15061(b)(3) (common sense exemption).

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The future costs of responding to COVID-19 are unknown at this time due to evolving conditions. With the California state declaration of a health emergency, local COVID-19 response efforts may be eligible for state or federal reimbursement. Until there is a final determination on potential reimbursement, all expenditures will be recorded and tracked in the Health Fund and/or General Fund using existing appropriations.

Respectfully submitted,



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City Manager

Prepared by



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