



CITY OF COSTA MESA

Agenda Report

77 Fair Drive
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

File #: 25-368

Meeting Date: 7/8/2025

TITLE:

REVIEW OF CITY COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

DEPARTMENT: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE/CITY CLERK DIVISION

PRESENTED BY: BRENDA GREEN, CITY CLERK

CONTACT INFORMATION: BRENDA GREEN, CITY CLERK (714) 754-5221

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council discuss the City's Commissions and Committees, along with the Commission and Committee Member Handbook, and provide feedback and direction.

BACKGROUND:

Costa Mesa's system of commissions and committees provides a mechanism for residents with specialized experience or interests to participate in the City's decision-making process by advising the City Council on numerous issues. The commissions and committees' system provides the opportunity to interact creatively with people of all ages, interests, and backgrounds. Democracy can be realized when community members are able to come together across diverse neighborhoods and economic backgrounds to assist in making community decisions that will improve the quality of life in our City.

In September 2023, the City Council reviewed the City Committees, including their scope of work, membership, criteria for forming Ad Hoc committees, and the alternate positions. Below are the detailed changes:

- Approved the City Council Liaisons recommendations on the Committees' Scopes of Work, including updating the Active Transportation Committee scope to support the implementation of the City's the Active Transportation program, and for the Mobile Home Park Advisory Committee clarification on the membership.
- Streamlined all Committees to seven (7) members, through attrition as terms expire, except for the Active Transportation Committee, Mobile Home Park Advisory Committee and the Traffic Impact Fee Committee.
- Consented to the formation of an Ad Hoc Committee (e.g. standing committees, subcommittees, working groups) upon approval of the City Council Liaison and City Attorney.
- Requested staff to meet with the Costa Mesa Historical Society on a potential merger of the Society and the Historical Preservation Committee.
 - In April 2024, the Historical Preservation Committee dissolved in lieu of merging with the Costa Mesa Historical Society and transferred the Committee's funds to the Costa Mesa Historical Society.

- Changed the Finance and Pension Advisory Committee appointment terms to 4-years.
- Approved only the Orange County Model Engineers as the ex-officio/non-voting member to the Fairview Park Steering Committee, removed alternates, and kept meetings dates to once every other month.
- Changed the Mobile Home Park Advisory Committee appointment terms to 4-years and clarified the memberships as follows:
 - Three Costa Mesa Mobile Home Park Owners or their Representative
 - Four Mobile Home Park Residents

Based on direction from the Council, staff incorporated the recommended changes and revised Council Policy 000.2, as well as updated the Commission and Committee Member Handbook accordingly. (Attachment 1)

Three Commissions have duties and powers established by the City's Municipal Code, while the eight Committees' responsibilities and assignments are defined in the Commission and Committee Member Handbook. The following is a list of the current City Commissions and Committees and their scope of work:

COMMISSIONS

Planning Commission

The Commission meets twice a month and consists of seven (7) Council appointed positions. Members must be residents of Costa Mesa. The Commission derives its power from the provisions of the California Government Code and functions as an advisory body to the City Council on issues related to the long-term growth and development of the community, on requests for general plan amendments, rezones, specific plans, environmental impact reports and amendments to the City's Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission has authority to take final action on a variety of planning applications, including conditional use permits, variances, planned development projects, and tentative tract and parcel maps. Appeals of the Planning Commission's decisions are considered by the City Council. The Municipal Code Section 13-10 outlines the specific powers and duties of the Planning Commission. (Attachment 2)

Parks and Community Services Commission

The Commission meets monthly and consists of seven (7) Council appointed positions. Members must be residents of Costa Mesa. The Commission assists the City Council and various City departments with matters relating to public parks, parkways, recreation programs, and community services. The Municipal Code Section 12-71 outlines the specific powers and duties of the Parks and Community Services Commission. (Attachment 3)

Arts Commission

The Commission meets monthly and consists of seven (7) Council appointed positions. Four (4) members must be residents of Costa Mesa and up to three (3) non-residents that are affiliated with the Arts. This commission represents the Council's desire for an ongoing policy focus, along with vigilant oversight of City investments in the arts. With a motto of "City of the Arts", the City holds in highest regard the vital role of the arts in the community. The general objectives of the arts commission shall be to ensure that the City of Costa Mesa is a place where creativity and creative people can flourish; imagination, inspiration and innovation are held in high regard, arts education is

essential to all and that arts and culture promotes civic pride and enriches the daily lives of Costa Mesa residents. The Municipal Code Section 12-75 outlines the specific powers and duties of the Arts Commission. (Attachment 4)

COMMITTEES

Access, Building, Fire & Housing Board of Appeal

The Committee meets on an as needed basis and consists of five (5) regular members who are appointed by City Council who live or work in Costa Mesa and who are qualified by experience and training to advise on matters pertaining to building construction and who are not employees of the jurisdiction. The Board also hears appeals from determinations and orders by the building official and/or the fire marshal.

Housing and Public Service Grants Committee

The Committee meets twice a year; March and September and consists of seven (7) regular member positions. The committee helps to promote understanding of the community development process and activities funded by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD), and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Additionally, the committee rates and ranks applications for CDBG public service grants, ultimately developing funding recommendations for City Council recommendations.

Mobile Home Park Advisory Committee

The Committee meets quarterly and is comprised of nine (9) members: Three (3) Costa Mesa mobile home park owners (or their representative); four (4) mobile home park residents; and two (2) independent citizens at-large with no affiliation or relationship with mobile home parks. The goal of the Mobile Home Park Advisory Committee is to help improve the quality of life in mobile home parks and to review matters concerning mobile home parks in the City of Costa Mesa through healthy communication with park owners, mobile homeowners, and the City Council.

Finance and Pension Advisory Committee

The Committee meets monthly and is comprised of seven (7) regular member positions. The scope and purpose of the Finance and Pension Advisory Committee ("FiPAC") is to advise the City Council in advance of significant votes, on issues related to significant financial matters. The FiPAC shall advise the City Council annually on the adoption of the City's budget (both the operating budget and the Capital Improvement Program), the allocation of any budget surpluses, the City's investment performance and policies, multi-year forecasts presented by City staff to the City Council, and adjustments under consideration at the time of the mid-year budget report. At the request of City staff or the City Council, FiPAC shall advise the City Council prior to a vote on material financial decisions, including, for example, review of fees to be charged by the City, incentive programs, and development agreements. FiPAC's meetings will coincide with the City Council meetings and will be scheduled in advance. FiPAC will provide a memorandum in advance of the City Council meeting as to their recommendation. A majority of the committee must agree on the recommendation.

Animal Services Committee

The Committee meets monthly except for August and December and consists of seven (7) regular members. The purpose of the Animal Services Committee (ASC) is to provide advice and recommendations to the City Council on animal services issues and to promote pet licensing, assist with planning and implementation of animal-related events (e.g., Barktober). In addition, the Animal

Services Committee's purpose is to maintain, educate, enrich, and promote animal services programs and resources throughout the City, and to monitor the animal care and control function of the City (e.g., live release rates, adoption, veterinary care, fostering, pet licensing) and advise the City Council of any issues that should be addressed.

The Committee shall:

- Make recommendations to the City Council to improve animal services throughout the City, including pet licensing, animal shelter and adoption services, and responsible pet ownership.
- Support animal related community events, such as pet adoptions, vaccination clinics, micro-chipping, etc.
- Advise the City Council in advance of significant votes on issues related to the animal care and control functions of the City.

Fairview Park Steering Committee

The Committee meets every other month and consists of seven (7) regular member positions and includes the Orange County Model Engineers as an ex-officio/non-voting member. The committee evaluates the Fairview Park Master Plan, evaluates park enhancement opportunities that are compliant with Measure AA, makes recommendations to the Parks and Community Services Commission and the City Council.

Active Transportation Committee

The Committee meets monthly and consists of nine (9) regular member positions, with one appointment by each Council Member, and two at-large members, the two at-large members should ensure broad representation of different mobility options and experiences (e.g. walk, bike, bus, and age ability), and Newport Mesa Unified School District as one ex officio/non-voting member. The Committee helps plan and implement an Active Transportation network for the City by improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the City.

The mission of this committee is to:

- Support implementation of the City's Active Transportation Program.
- Evaluate the bikeability and walkability of our City in order to make recommendations for improvement to the City Council.

Traffic Impact Fee Ad Hoc Committee

This Committee meets on an as needed basis and consists of five (5) appointed positions with one representing the Chamber of Commerce, one representing major developers, one representing small developers, and two at-large positions. City Council and Planning Commission liaisons are appointed by the Mayor and Planning Commission Chair, respectively. The purpose of the traffic impact fee is to fund the necessary transportation/circulation improvements, which are related directly to the incremental traffic impacts imposed on the City's transportation system by the development of new and/or changing commercial, industrial, and residential uses as permitted by the General Plan. The traffic impact fee committee assists staff on all aspects related to the updating and revision of traffic impact fees.

ANALYSIS:

The City Council requested staff to bring forth a report on the scope of work of Commissions and Committees, particularly as it pertains to Commissions and Committees bringing forth recommendations to City Council for their consideration. Staff has summarized the roles and duties of the Commissions and Committees and provided their scopes of work. The Commission and Committee Member Handbook, p. 23, defines the reporting out of Committee activities, recommendations, forthcoming work and funding requests through an “Annual Report” requirement.

Similarly, the Municipal Code delineates Planning Commission recommendations to the City Council. While the Municipal Code articulates that the Parks and Community Services Commission and the Arts Commission are to report its findings and recommendations to the City Council on various subject matter, it does not state how. The Council may want to specify the pathway in which to receive the recommendations. For consideration is similar language for the Finance and Pension Advisory Committee: *A memorandum from the Chair will be provided to the City Council as to their recommendations. A majority of the Commission must agree on the recommendation.*

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council may provide alternative direction to staff on the Commissions and Committees and Member Handbook.

FISCAL REVIEW:

This item has no fiscal impact.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney’s Office has reviewed this report and approves it as to form.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

This item is administrative.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends the City Council discuss the City’s Commissions and Committees, along with the Commission and Committee Handbook, and provide feedback and direction.