



Memorandum

TO: RULES AND OPEN
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

FROM: Mayor Mahan
Councilmember Foley
Councilmember Cohen

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: June 1, 2023

Approved:

Date: 6/1/23

**SUBJECT: STUDY SESSION: COUNCIL GOVERNANCE - DEVELOPMENT OF
COUNCIL NORMS AND PROCEDURES**

RECOMMENDATION

1. Direct the City Clerk to set a City Council Study Session entitled City Council Governance: Developing Norms and Procedures in August or September 2023.
2. Direct the City Manager and City Attorney to develop an agenda and facilitate the Study Session with the objectives and goals mentioned below.

DISCUSSION

The City Council can be proud of the work we have accomplished in the first five months of this year. We've worked through the budget together and tackled complex public policy questions, all while our new councilmembers and new mayor have transitioned into their roles, set up their offices, and set priorities for their staff. The pace has sometimes been hectic, but it's evident that as a Council we are willing to work hard and are deeply committed to serving our community.

As the budget process draws to a close, we believe that our work as a Council can be enhanced further by taking a moment to consider how we can work together most effectively. In any workplace, it's important to have norms that establish shared expectations for how colleagues will work with each other. The same is true for the City Council—shared norms and procedures can help us conduct our business efficiently and effectively, deliberate and make decisions on challenging issues, and work collaboratively with City staff—all critical to organizational success.

We recommend that the City Council hold a study session in August or September for the purpose of discussing shared norms and procedures that can enhance our work. The City

RULES AND OPEN GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

June 7, 2023

Subject: Study Session: Council Governance

Page 2

Manager and City Attorney should develop an agenda for this study session and facilitate the discussion. The bullet points below highlight some of the areas the study session should cover and the importance of developing City Council norms and procedures:

1. Ensures Consistency and Efficiency: By establishing clear norms and procedures, the City Council can operate with consistency and efficiency—helping ensure all meetings and decision-making processes are carried out in a timely and orderly manner, and that everyone involved knows what to expect.
2. Promotes Transparency and Accountability: Clear norms and procedures also promote transparency and accountability. When all members of the City Council understand how decisions are made and the rules they must follow, they can hold each other accountable for their actions. This can help to build trust among council members, as well as with the public.
3. Encourages Public Participation: City Council norms and procedures can also encourage public participation. By establishing clear guidelines for public comment periods and other forms of citizen input, the City Council can create a welcoming environment that encourages community engagement. This can help to ensure that all voices are heard and that the needs of the community are considered in decision-making processes.
4. Reduces Conflicts and Misunderstandings: When norms and procedures are not established, conflicts and misunderstandings can arise. Different council members may have different expectations and interpretations of how meetings should be conducted, and decisions made. Establishing clear norms and procedures can help to prevent these conflicts and ensure that everyone is on the same page.
5. Enhances Professionalism: Finally, developing City Council norms and procedures can enhance professionalism. When meetings are run in an organized and efficient manner, it reflects positively on the City Council as a whole. This can help to build respect for the Council and increase its effectiveness in representing the community.

In conclusion, developing City Council norms and procedures is essential for ensuring consistency, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes. We believe taking a brief pause to discuss and develop how we do the work together will better serve the full Council, organization, and community.

The signers of this memorandum have not had, and will not have, any private conversation with any other member of the City Council, or that member's staff, concerning any action discussed in the memorandum, and further state that each signer's staff members have not had, and have been instructed not to have, any such conversation with any other member of the City Council or that member's staff.