

KEY CITY OF SAN DIEGO DECISION FORUMS

THE MAYOR

Effective January 1, 2006, the City of San Diego changed from a City Manager form of government to a Strong Mayor form. Approved by voters in November of 2004, the Strong Mayor form of government will remain in place through December of 2010 when voters will need to decide whether to make the change permanent.

Under the Strong Mayor form of government, the Mayor is the City's chief executive officer and assumes the responsibilities previously held by the City Manager. These include administering the operations of the City, hiring managers, preparing the annual budget and recommending actions to be taken by the City Council.

THE CITY COUNCIL

In addition to the Mayor, who is elected by all City voters, the City Council is made up of eight nonpartisan Councilmembers who are nominated and elected by district. Members serve overlapping four year terms, with Council elections occurring on odd-numbered years (Districts 1, 3, 5 and 7 elected in 1993, 1997, etc., Districts 2, 4, 6 and 8 elected in 1995, 1999, etc.) The City Council elects one of their members to serve as Council President for a one year term.

The City Council is San Diego's governing legislative body. It is responsible for the City's laws, policies, and programs. As representatives of the citizens, members of the Council have certain authority delegated to them by the City Charter. The Council has the authority to approve all ordinances; resolutions and contracts; adopt the annual budget and provide for revenues; and make or confirm appointments to various City Boards and Commissions.

The Council is organized into five standing committees to facilitate the legislative process: Rules, Open Government and Intergovernmental Relations; Natural Resources and Culture; Land Use and Housing; Public Safety and Neighborhood Services; and Budget and Finance. Each of the five committees meets once or twice a month to hold public hearings and review legislation and departmental actions before such matters are considered by the full Council.

In addition to regular weekly City Council and committee meetings, the Council meets as the San Diego Housing Authority and the San Diego Redevelopment Agency.

Legislative programs from the state and federal government that affect San Diego are developed for City Council approval by the Department of Intergovernmental Relations. This department maintains offices in Washington D.C., and Sacramento, and it works with federal and state legislatures, agencies and departments on matters of interest to San Diego.

City Council Meetings

The City Council meets weekly in the Council Chambers on the 12th floor of the City Administration Building. Except for holidays or special adjournments, the full City Council



meets weekly on Monday afternoon and all day Tuesday. Planning matters are most often heard on Tuesday.

All Council meetings are open to the public, except for "closed sessions", when the Council discusses personnel or judicial matters. Taking part in the Council meetings are the eight Councilmembers, the City Attorney, the City Clerk and interested citizens.

Council Meeting Procedures

At least five members of the eight-member Council must be present to constitute a quorum. If there is a quorum, the City Clerk "calls the roll" or takes attendance, and the Council begins to transact the City's business.

The Council's business is listed on a printed "docket" or agenda. The Council proceeds item by item on the docket. As consideration of each item is ended, a vote is taken by the Council to approve or reject the item, or to refer it for further study, continue it until a later meeting, file it or take other action. The web site address to access City Council agendas is <http://clerkdoc.sannet.gov/Website/city-docket>.

Many of the items on the Council docket have been studied and debated in Committee meetings or have been the subject of written reports from the Mayor's Office or the City Attorney before the Council meets in full session. This procedure permits some items to be acted upon routinely. Other items may call for an extended public and Council discussion before a vote is taken. Any member of the public may be heard on an item, as long as a form with the person's name and address is filled out ahead of time. These forms can be obtained in the Council Chambers or in the 12th floor hallway. Normally, a limit is placed on the amount of time allowed each speaker. Members of the Council then discuss the item and ask the members of the Council to vote. A telephone line to listen to the Council hearing over the phone from remote locations is available at 619-533-4001. The web site address for the San Diego City Council is: <http://www.sandiego.gov/city-council/>.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Duties:

Conducts hearings on special use permits, all re-zoning, all community plans, and the General Plan. Considers land use ordinances and such other improvements as Council may, or by ordinance, determine. The Planning Commission meets weekly on Thursdays. The web site address for San Diego Planning Commission is <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning-commission/>.

Appointment:

Appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

HISTORICAL RESOURCES BOARD

Duties:

To advise the Mayor, City Council, City Planning Commission, and Park and Recreation Board



resources in the City. The Historical Resources Board's monthly agendas can be accessed at: <http://www.sandiego.gov/historical/agenda.shtml>. Complete details regarding the Historic Resources Board can be found in Section 111.0206 of the Land Development Code.

Appointment:

Appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

SAN DIEGO HOUSING COMMISSION

Duties:

Investigate and improve dwelling conditions in the City of San Diego. Review and recommend revisions, actions, including recommendations on all matters before the Housing Authority. Approve plans, specifications, agreements, expenditures and such other matters as the Housing Authority may from time to time delegate by resolution to the Commission. The web site for the San Diego Housing Commission is:

Appointment:

Appointed by the Mayor confirmed by the City Council. If the Mayor does not appoint a member within 45 days after a vacancy occurs, the Council shall make such appointment. Councilmembers may be appointed as members of said Commission in those membership positions other than the two (2) low-income tenant positions.

PARK: AND RECREATION BOARD

Duties:

Advise the Council on public policy matters relating to the acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of parks, beaches, playgrounds, and recreational activities; review the recreational program; coordinate the work of such committees as may be established; conduct investigations, studies and hearings.

Appointment:

Appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council.

HEARING OFFICER

Duties:

The Hearing Officer acts as the decision maker for permits, maps, and other matters in accordance with the decision-making procedures of the Land Development Code. The Hearing Officer shall preside at a public hearing and make an impartial decision on a permit, map, or other matter based on the application, written reports prepared prior to the hearing, and information received at the hearing.

Appointment:

To be determined under the new form of government structure.

