



Memorandum

To: Rules Committee

FROM: Councilmember Pierluigi Oliverio

SUBJECT: Move 1:30 Tuesday Council Meeting to Tuesday Evening

DATE: April 12, 2013

Approved Pierluigi Oliverio
by D.F.

Date April 12, 2013

RECOMMENDATION

Change the current 1:30 PM City Council meeting schedule to the evening, thus allowing more residents to attend.

BACKGROUND

The City of San Jose currently holds its City Council meetings on Tuesday at 1:30 PM. These meetings are important. The council votes on issues that include allocating over a billion taxpayer dollars over the course of a year on a variety of items, changing/altering ordinances, making land use and transportation planning decisions, and implementing policies that affect our community. However, because council meetings are held in the middle of the day, public attendance is very low. As a consequence, it is difficult for residents to be engaged and participate by voicing their opinions and/or concerns on agenda items.

I propose that the City change its current 1:30 PM time to a more resident accessible hour to facilitate public attendance and participation. As an alternative, I suggest starting closed session at 1:30PM and starting the public session at 4:30PM. If it is anticipated that more time may be needed for closed session, then the City can always schedule closed session earlier that day. Typically the first 30 minutes of every council meeting is filled with ceremonial items, so in all likelihood the council would not act on agenda items prior to 5PM. The suggested timeline for the implementation of this schedule change would be end of August 2013. Based on a typical afternoon session, I would anticipate that most meetings would finished by 9:30PM.

The City has implemented changes to the meeting schedule in the past. For example, in 2004, the Council implemented a change to the meeting schedule specifically to meet its own needs and that of city staff. The City supported eliminating council meetings on Tuesdays after a Monday holiday, reasoning that there was not enough time to prepare for a council meeting upon returning from a three-day weekend. The entire council supported this change, and, we continue to abide by it today.

Continuing to have meetings at 1:30 PM does not accommodate public attendance and participation; it hinders both. The City made changes to the council meeting schedule to fit their needs, and I would argue that it is now time to make changes in order to accommodate the needs of San Jose residents.