

ALBANY CALIFORNIA



CITY OF ALBANY
1000 SAN PABLO AVENUE
ALBANY, CA 94706
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28 September 2022

MEMORANDUM

To: Albany City Council Members

From: Mayor Jordan

Re: Presiding Officer for the October 17th City Council meeting

RECOMMENDATION

Appoint Councilwoman Gary Presiding Officer for the October 17th City Council meeting.

BACKGROUND

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during its current 2021-22 session the City Council met in person for the first time on 2 May 2022. Due to the occurrence of the fifth wave of the pandemic, the City Council returned to meeting virtually until its last meeting, which was on September 19th.

Section C-1 of the City Council's Rules of Procedure/Order states, "In the absence of the Mayor, and the Vice Mayor, the City Clerk shall call the Council to order, whereupon a temporary Presiding Officer shall be elected by the Council Members present to serve until the arrival of the Mayor, or Vice Mayor, or until adjournment."

DISCUSSION

The City Council appointed Councilwoman Gary Mayor at its meeting on 14 December 2020. She served through its next annual reorganization meeting on 20 December 2021, when the Council appointed the next Mayor (myself).

At the end of the first in-person meeting of the current Council on May 2nd of this year, it occurred to me Councilwoman Gary was precluded the opportunity to preside over an in-person meeting during her entire tenure as Mayor due to the pandemic. Having just experienced the difference between presiding over such a meeting and those held virtually, it seemed unfortunate that Councilwoman Gary was denied that experience. As a result, I asked the Councilwoman if she would like to preside over an in-person meeting, and she expressed her interest.

The fifth wave of the pandemic necessitated the Council return to meeting virtually the following meeting. In early September, community transmission having returned to a low level in Alameda County, the Council was able to take up meeting in-person again as of its second meeting of the month. As the state of the pandemic in the County has been stable for a month in this regard, during which time the Council has met twice in person, I bring this recommendation to Council at its second meeting of this period in the hope that its third meeting will also be in person so that Councilwoman Gary can preside if the Council chooses to appoint her.

The Council's Rules of Procedure/Order specify that in the instance both the Mayor and the Vice Mayor are absent, the Council elects a Presiding Officer until the arrival of either of those officers or meeting adjournment if that does not occur. To my knowledge, this will not be the situation at the October 19th meeting. As such the Rules of Procedure/Order do not provide for the action I am recommending. Given that they do not anticipate the phenomenon of the last two and a half years that precluding the Council from meeting in person, I hope the Council will make an exception by appointing Councilwoman Gary as the presiding officer for its next meeting.

In considering making this recommendation, I consulted with the City Attorney. The course of action she suggested, if my understanding is correct, was for me to state my intention to bring this item to the Council under the future agenda item section of a meeting and to place it on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The recommended action does not have sustainability implications.

SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONSIDERATIONS

This action provides the opportunity for equity amongst the Members of the City Council by allowing Councilwoman Gary the opportunity to preside over a Council meeting in-person, which was not possible during her tenure as Mayor due to the pandemic.

CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

The proposed action does not have a nexus with any Strategic Plan goal, objective, or workplan item.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The recommended action does not have financial implications.