



**Council Meeting: March 10, 2009**

**SUBJECT: New Council Policy for “Roles and Responsibilities of Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers”**

**REPORT IN BRIEF**

At the Council meeting of February 3, 2009, Council conducted its annual review of the City’s Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials (RTC 09-036). As a part of that review, Council directed staff to create a separate policy focusing on the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers (Attachment A). This report presents that policy for Council’s consideration.

**EXISTING POLICY**

Attachment A details a section of the 2008 edition of the Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials (as it appeared in RTC 09-036) which Council directed be relocated to a separate policy. Minor additions are noted in the “Discussion” section below.

**DISCUSSION**

Attachment A presents a new, stand-alone Council policy titled “Roles and Responsibilities of Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers”. The only substantive change from information previously located in the Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials is the addition of the “policy purpose” and the following language to section 1.D “Roles and Responsibilities of the Mayor” (both identified in red in Attachment A):

- May revise the date or time a specific agenda item appears on the Tentative Council Meeting Agenda Calendar without Council vote.

Staff believes that this addition reflects existing practice, as well as Council’s preference regarding the Mayor’s role.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

**PUBLIC CONTACT**

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; and by making

the agenda and report available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's Web site.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve the policy titled "Roles and Responsibilities of the Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers" as depicted by Attachment A.
2. Approve the policy titled "Roles and Responsibilities of the Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers" as depicted by Attachment A, with modifications as determined by Council.
3. Do not approve the policy titled "Roles and Responsibilities of the Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers" as depicted by Attachment A.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends Alternative 1: Approve the policy titled "Roles and Responsibilities of the Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers" as depicted by Attachment A. This action would be consistent with Council's February 3, 2009 direction regarding RTC 09-036.

Prepared by: Robert Walker, Assistant City Manager

Approved by:

Gary M. Luebbers  
City Manager

**Attachments**

- A. Proposed Council policy "Roles and Responsibilities of the Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers"

## COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

## Policy x.x.x Roles and Responsibilities of Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers

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### **POLICY PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor, Vice Mayor and Councilmembers. Previously, this information was contained in the City's Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials, but it was determined that the emphasis of this policy was not on ethical behavior or proper conduct, and that a separate policy would assist those searching for related information. Other resources that are helpful in defining the roles and responsibilities of elected officials can be found in the Sunnyvale City Charter and in the Leadership Guide for Mayors and Councilmembers published by the League of California Cities.

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

#### **1. Roles and Responsibilities of the Mayor**

- A. Serves at the pleasure of the Council (Sunnyvale City Charter, Section 605)  
Acts as the official head of the City for all ceremonial purposes (Sunnyvale City Charter, Section 605)
- B. Chairs Council meetings (Sunnyvale City Charter, Section 605) – See Section 4 below
- C. May add items to the Council agenda without Council vote
- D. May revise the date or time a specific agenda item appears on the Tentative Council Meeting Agenda Calendar without Council vote
- E. Calls for special meetings (Sunnyvale City Charter, Section 609)
- F. Recognized as spokesperson for the City Council on City positions
- G. Selects substitute for City representation when Mayor cannot attend
- H. Makes judgment calls on proclamations, Special Orders of the Day, etc.
- I. Recommends subcommittees as appropriate for Council approval
- J. May appoint “blue ribbon” committees as sees fit
- K. Serves as the liaison between the Council and the city manager and city attorney in regards to employee relations
- L. Leads the Council into an effective, cohesive working team
- M. Signs documents on behalf of the City
- N. Serves as official delegate of the City to the U.S. Conference of Mayors and other events and conferences (and receives additional travel allowance for this purpose)
- O. Determines theme and venue for annual State of the City event
- P. Reviews all mail addressed to Mayor
- Q. May administer counseling, verbal reprimands and written warnings ~~written reprimands~~ to board and commission members, and call for investigations of board and commission member conduct

#### **2. Roles and Responsibilities of the Vice Mayor**

- A. Serves at the pleasure of the Council (Sunnyvale City Charter, Section 606)
- B. Performs the duties of the Mayor if the Mayor is absent or disabled (Sunnyvale City Charter, Section 606)

## COUNCIL POLICY MANUAL

- C. Chairs Council meetings at the request of the Mayor
- D. Represents the City at ceremonial functions at the request of the Mayor
- E. Reports closed session actions at public Council meetings
- F. Initiates routine motion for consent calendar items on the City Council agenda

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities of Councilmembers

All members of the City Council, including those serving as Mayor and Vice Mayor, have equal votes. No Councilmember has more power than any other Councilmember, and all should be treated with equal respect. Therefore, no ranking or pecking order shall be established for predetermining the order of roll call votes (which shall be determined on a random basis by the City Clerk) or public introductions, except that the Mayor and Vice Mayor shall be introduced first at public meetings and events. All Councilmembers should:

- A. Fully participate in City Council meetings and other public forums while demonstrating respect, kindness, consideration, and courtesy to others
- B. Prepare in advance of Council meetings and be familiar with issues on the agenda
- C. Represent the City at ceremonial functions at the request of the Mayor
- D. Place activities and events on the Council's weekly activities calendar that invite official participation of all Councilmembers. A list of the activities of individual Councilmembers may also be submitted for public record at the option of the Councilmember
- E. Be respectful of other people's time. Stay focused and act efficiently during public meetings
- F. Serve as a model of leadership and civility to the community
- G. Inspire public confidence in Sunnyvale government
- H. Provide contact information with the Council Executive Assistant in case an emergency or urgent situation arises while the Councilmember is out of town
- I. Demonstrate honesty and integrity in every action and statement
- J. Participate in scheduled activities to increase team effectiveness and review Council procedures, such as this Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials

### 4. Roles and Responsibilities of Meeting Chair

The Mayor will chair official meetings of the City Council, unless the Vice Mayor or another Councilmember is designated as chair of a specific meeting.

- A. Maintains order, decorum, and the fair and equitable treatment of all speakers
- B. Keeps discussion and questions focused on specific agenda item under consideration
- C. Makes parliamentary rulings with advice, if requested, from the city attorney who acts as an advisory parliamentarian. Chair rulings may be overturned if a Councilmember makes a motion as an individual and the majority of the Council votes to overrule the chair.

### 5. Former Councilmembers

Past members of the City Council who speak to the current City Council about a pending issue should disclose who they are speaking on behalf of (individual or organization).