



POLICY AND SERVICES COMMITTEE FINAL MINUTES

Regular Meeting
August 11, 2020

The Policy and Services Committee of the City of Palo Alto met on this date by virtual teleconference at 7:01 P.M.

Present: Cormack, Filseth, Kou

Oral Communications

None.

Agenda Items

1. Discuss Process for 2020 National Community Survey.

Monique leConge Ziesenhenné, Assistant City Manager remarked that a third party administered the survey to gain insight from the community on the level of satisfaction of different Palo Alto (City) services, initiatives and suggestions. The City conducted the survey annually by paper and the survey was used for Priority Setting and the City's Budget process. Staff was seeking feedback from the Policy and Services Committee (Committee) on the frequency of the survey, the format and the function.

Cherrill Spencer suggested future reports include a comparison between men's and women's answers to the questions.

Council Member Filseth saw the survey as the closest thing the City could do to get a statistically flat sample and stated that the mail distribution helped with tampering. He appreciated that the survey provided benchmarks that could be compared against other cities and showed trends within the City over the years. The custom questions helped Council determine key areas within the City that needed to be addressed and he supported doing the survey annually.

Council Member Kou agreed with Council Member Filseth's comments. She supported the annual frequency.

Chair Cormack asked how Staff used the report.

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Ms. Ziesenhenne remarked that Staff used it for benchmarking and performance measures for the annual budget. The survey was used a couple of times a year by Staff.

Chair Cormack questioned why the response rate dropped in 2018.

Ms. Ziesenhenne believed it had to do with the change in the number of available surveys.

Chair Cormack inquired what other methods and options the City had to administer the survey.

Ms. Ziesenhenne articulated the other options included an invitation only mail-in paper survey, an online-only survey that was open to everyone or a hybrid option of paper and the online method.

Chair Cormack articulated that more people may fill out the survey if it was shorter.

Ms. Ziesenhenne concurred that a shorter survey resulted in more responses. The only drawback with a shorter survey was there would be no benchmarking components to compare to other cities.

Chair Cormack requested that the survey be shortened and she supported a hybrid option.

Council Member Filseth agreed that the survey should be shortened. In the past the City Auditor asked Council Members if they had any questions they wanted to see included in the survey. He supported testing out an online survey option.

Ms. Ziesenhenne noted that the survey company saw an increase in people taking the survey online between the ages of 35-55; anything above that age group preferred paper surveys.

Council Member Kou supported a shorter survey but was concerned about skewed information from an online survey. She wanted to retain questions that were asked by other Cities to preserve the benchmarking data.

Ms. Ziesenhenne disclosed that citizens taking the online survey received an individualized unique URL that could only be used once.

Chair Cormack suggested that Staff reach out to all Council Members and request questions they wished to see included in the survey. She suggested an Ad Hoc Committee work with Staff to refine and draft the survey.

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MOTION: Chair Cormack moved, seconded by Council Member Filseth to recommend the City Council take the following action on the 2020 National Community Survey:

1. Have the City Manager's Office inquire of the City Council for questions to be included, any questions less relevant and any questions to add;
2. Use a Hybrid Option of paper and electronic format;
3. Send out as many surveys as possible within the budget;
4. Appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to work directly with the City Manager's Office to finalize the survey questions; and
5. Finalize the results by the end of October, 2020.

Council Member Kou asked how many surveys would be sent out using the hybrid method.

Ms. Ziesenhenne explained that 4,500 surveys were sent out in the previous cycle and the vendor's recommendation is 2,700 surveys.

Chair Cormack suggested that Staff and the Ad Hoc Committee work within the budget to figure out how many they were able to send out.

Council Member Kou agreed with that recommendation.

Ms. Ziesenhenne responded that Staff wished to have the responses by the end of October 2020.

Council Member Kou asked if Council Members would have access to the raw data.

Ms. Ziesenhenne assured the Committee that they would have access and believed it was available to the public through the Open Data Platform.

MOTION PASSED: 3-0

Chair Cormack confirmed she would choose someone for the Ad Hoc Committee.

Future Meetings and Agendas

Chair Cormack reported that in terms of the renter protection topic, she believed it was superseded by the State.

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Council Member Kou expressed that she needed some time to review the State legislation.

Chair Cormack summarized that Safe Parking would come to City Council (Council) as an Action Item in September 2020. In terms of working from home, she asked what Council Member Kou was seeking from that topic.

Council Member Kou hoped that the Policy and Services Committee (Committee) was able to draft a policy to recommend to Council regarding telecommuting.

Chair Cormack requested that Council Member Kou discuss that with the City Manager. She suggested that Council Member Kou bring up Airplane Noise and Emissions at the roundtable during Council Member Comments and Questions.

Council Member Kou specified that Airplane Noise did come before the Committee in a prior year but would look into when that was going to happen.

Chair Cormack asked for other topics for future Agendas.

Council Member Filseth indicated that the Audit Plan needed to be updated.

Cherrill Spencer wanted to see the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Ordinance be agendized.

Chair Cormack reiterated that on August 13, 2020 there was a scheduled discussion with Council regarding inequities within the City.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 P.M.