

WHAT THE STAFF CAN DO TO HELP THE COUNCIL BECOME A MORE EFFECTIVE GOVERNING BODY

- ❖ **Staff provides background information that assists the City Council in decision making through:**
 - Council Action Forms (include staff recommendations)
 - Staff Reports (include options, but not staff recommendations)
 - Manager Alert memos
 - Monthly Departmental Highlight Reports
 - Council Referral Updates
 - Conversations with the City Manager (hopefully at least once per week – need to schedule)
 - Inquiries to City staff members
- **The staff will treat Council members like any other citizen when it comes to requests for information. Information requests from the City Council do not have to come through the City Manager's Office, but it is preferred they do.**
- **When passing on a constituent complaint to a staff member, please do not express to a staff member your preference for how the complaint should be resolved.**
- **Any request for information to a staff member that requires time to prepare a report or analysis should come from the total City Council, not from a single member.** Don't be offended if the staff member suggests that this request be taken first to the City Council for direction.
- **Information provided to one Council member by a staff member will be provided to all Council members.** In addition, don't be surprised if the City Manager is copied on the response, because the City Manager will be interested in what the City Council members are interested in.
- ❖ **Staff provides the City Council with “professional” recommendations, even if they might be unpopular with you and/or your constituents.**
 - **It is important that the City Council encourages an environment where the City staff does not have to fear personal attacks from Council members or citizens as a result of their professional opinions or recommendations.** The Council will not

benefit from staff advice that is influenced by the direction the political winds are blowing.

- ❖ **Staff members perform most of the legwork by meeting with neighborhood groups or developers to work out issues before they are brought before the City Council.**
 - **If Council members are asked and feel it is important to meet outside of the Council meetings with citizens to discuss an issue, it is preferred that the staff members not be in attendance.** In this way, a separation is maintained between political and professional environments. In addition, it is advisable that the City Council members not insert themselves into the negotiations. If an impasse is reached, the City Council will serve as the ultimate arbiter at a City Council meeting.

- ❖ **Staff will be asked to follow-up on a number of City Council referrals that are sent out in the non-agenda packet on Friday in response to requests for action by citizens.**
 - The City Council should be aware that every referral results in a substantial amount of time on the part of the City staff to respond. Therefore, before referring an item to staff, it is important that the Council members determine if the request is a priority as it relates to other outstanding staff work assignments. The City Council must understand that not all issues brought before you should be referred.
 - When the Council members do choose to refer a request to the staff, it is important that the direction be as specific as possible. For example, do you want a simple memo summarizing the issues distributed to the Council? Do you want the issue to be discussed at the next Council meeting? Do you want the staff to go ahead and perform the analysis needed to bring the request back to the Council for approval (traffic study, LUPP amendment, Zoning Code language change). What date do you expect the staff assignment to be completed?