COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

PROCEDURAL RULES FOR COUNTY COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

BASED ON ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER (ABRIDGED) AND IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE BROWN ACT

MEETINGS - TIME AND PLACE OF REGULAR AND SPECIAL MEETINGS

REGULAR MEETINGS. The Commission or Committee shall provide by resolution, bylaw, or other rule, the time and place for holding regular meetings.

REGULAR MEETINGS, NOTICE. At least 72 hours before a regular meeting, an agenda shall be posted which contains a brief general description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR MEETING. Any regular meeting may be adjourned to a time and place specified in the order of adjournment.

LACK OF A QUORUM. If less than a quorum is present at any meeting, the members present may adjourn the meeting to a time and place specified in the order of adjournment.

NOTICE OF ADJOURNMENT WHERE NONE OF THE MEMBERS ARE PRESENT. If all members are absent from any regular or adjourned regular meeting, the Clerk or Secretary may declare the meeting adjourned to a stated time and place and shall cause a written notice of the adjournment to be given to each of the members of the Commission or Committee in the manner required for special meetings.

POSTING OF NOTICE OR ORDER OF ADJOURNMENT. A copy of the order or notice of adjournment shall be conspicuously posted on or near the door of the place where the regular, adjourned regular, special or adjourned special meeting was held within twenty-four (24) hours after the time of adjournment.

SPECIAL MEETINGS. A special meeting may be called at any time by the Presiding Officer(Chair) or by a majority of the members of the Commission or Committee, by delivering written notice to each member of the Commission or Committee and to each local newspaper of general circulation and radio or television station requesting notice in writing.

SPECIAL MEETINGS, NOTICE. The notice shall be delivered personally or by mail at least twenty-four (24) hours before the time of such meeting as specified in the notice.

NOTICE, CONTENTS. The notice shall specify the time and place of the special meeting and the business to be transacted or discussed. No other business shall be considered at a special meeting.

MEETINGS SHALL BE PUBLIC. All meetings of the Commission or Committee shall be open and public, and shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Brown Act.

BUSINESS

ORDER OF BUSINESS. The following is usual:

(1) Call to order/ establishment of quorum;

(2) Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting;

(3) Reports of officers and standing committees;

(4) Reports of special committees;

(5) Specific items/motions requiring action;

(6) Announcements (optional);

(7) Public comment; and

(8) Adjournment.

MOTIONS MUST BE STATED BY THE CHAIR. After a motion has been made, the Chair must state the motion before the Commission or Committee. The Chair alone puts the motion before the Commission or Committee. He must either rule it out of order, or state the question on it so that the Commission or Committee may know what is before it for consideration and action.

MODIFICATION OF A MOTION BEFORE DEBATE. Before a motion is stated or ruled out of order, no debate or other motion is in order, but members may suggest modifications of the motion, and the mover has the right to make

modifications or to withdraw his motion. After the motion is stated by the Chair, the mover cannot modify or withdraw his motion without consent of the Commission or Committee.

DEBATING THE MOTION

WHAT MAY BE DEBATED. All resolutions, committee reports, communications, and all motions, except undebatable motions[1] may be debated before final action is taken on them.

DISPOSAL OF MOTION WITHOUT DEBATE. The Commission or Committee may by a two-thirds vote decide to dispose of a resolution, committee report, communication, or motion without debate.

SUBJECT MATTER OF DEBATE. Debate must be limited to the merits of the immediately pending question, except that in a few cases the main question is also opened to debate.[2]

RIGHT TO DEBATE. Every member of the Commission or Committee has the right to speak on every debatable motion before it is finally acted upon. This right cannot be interfered with except by a motion to limit debate.

METHOD OF LIMITING DEBATE. The debate, by a two-thirds vote, may be limited to any extent desired. The maker of the motion is entitled to close the debate.

VOTING ON THE MOTION

CALLING THE QUESTION. When the debate appears to the Chair to be finished, he should inquire as to whether the Commission or Committee is ready for the questions. If, after a reasonable pause, no one claims the floor, the Chair may proceed to put the question to vote and to take the vote on the question.

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[1] Undebatable Motions: 1) Adjourn; 2) Take a recess;3) Suspension of the rules; 4) Objection to the consideration of a question; 5) Lay on the table; 6) Take from the table; 7) Motions to close, limit, or extend the limits of debate; 8) Amend an undebatable motion; 9) Reconsider an undebatable motion; and 10) Dispense with reading the minutes.

[2] Motions that Open the Main Question to Debate: 1) Postpone indefinitely and 2) Reconsider a debatable question.

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION. In stating the question, the Chair should make perfectly clear what the question is that the Commission or Committee is to decide.

ORDER OF VOTE. The Chair must first call for the affirmative and then the negative votes and the abstentions.

MAJORITY VOTE. Unless special rules apply, a majority decides. A majority is more than half of the votes cast by Commission or Committee members legally entitled to vote, excluding abstentions.

TIE VOTE. On a tie vote, the motion fails.

DUTY OF THE CHAIR TO VOTE. The Chair, as a member of the Commission or Committee, has the same duty as any other member to vote on every question submitted to the Commission or Committee.

VOTE MUST BE ANNOUNCED. The Chair must announce the vote. Announcing the vote is a necessary part of putting the question, and the vote does not go into effect until announced.

METHOD OF ANNOUNCING THE VOTE. In announcing the vote the Chair should state first whether the motion is carried or lost; second, what is the effect or result of the vote; and third, what is the immediately pending business, if any.

MINUTES

MINUTES ARE THE OFFICIAL RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMISSION OR COMMITTEE. Minutes are to be a record if what was *done* at a meeting, not what was *said* by the members. It is a summary of what transpired, not a transcript.

OPEN FOR INSPECTION. The minutes of the Commission or Committee meetings are public records.

MOTIONS

MAIN MOTION. This motion is necessary to bring up a particular subject. It cannot be made when any other question is before the Commission or Committee, and it yields to all privileged, incidental, and subsidiary motions, i.e.,

any of those motions can be made while a main motion is pending. A main motion is debatable, subject to amendment, and can have any subsidiary motion applied to it. Generally, a main motion requires for its adoption a majority vote.

SUBSIDIARY MOTION.[3] This motion is applied to another motion for the purpose of disposing of it. Thus, by means of this motion, the original motion may be changed, it may be referred to a committee, action may be postponed, etc. When applied to any main motion, it supersedes the main motion and must be decided before the main motion can be acted upon. With the exception of the motion to amend and those motions affecting the limits of debate, the subsidiary motion cannot be applied to a subsidiary, incidental, or privileged motion. And with certain exceptions,[4] the subsidiary motion may be amended. A motion to amend anything which has already been adopted is not a subsidiary motion but is a main motion.

INCIDENTAL MOTION.[5] This motion arises with relation to a pending motion and therefore must be decided before the motion out of which it arose is acted upon. It yields to a privileged motion and to the motion to lay on the table. It is undebatable and cannot be amended.

PRIVILEGED MOTION.[6] This is the highest ranking motion, used to bring an important and urgent matter before the Commission or Committee. Although it has no relation to the pending question, it takes precedence over all other motions, and thus it is undebatable and, with certain exceptions,[7] cannot have any subsidiary motion applied to it.

OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

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[3] Subsidiary Motions: (Arranged in the order of their precedence; when one of these motions is the immediate question, every motion above it is in order and every one below it is out of order.) 1) Lay on the table; 2) The previous question; 3) Limit or extend limits of debate; 4) Postpone definitely, or to a certain time; 5) Commit or refer, or recommit to committee or otherwise; 6) Amend; and 7) Postpone indefinitely.

[4] Unamendable Subsidiary Motions: 1) Lay on the table; 2) The previous question; and 3) Postpone indefinitely.

[5] Incidental Motions: 1) Questions of order; 2) Suspension of the rules; 3) Objection to the consideration of a matter; and 4) Requests growing out of business pending or that has just been pending; as, a parliamentary inquiry, a request for information, for leave to withdraw a motion, to read papers, to be excused from a duty, or for any other privilege

[6] Privileged Motions: 1) Fix the time to which to adjourn (if made while another question is pending); 2) Adjourn (when unqualified); 3) Take a recess (if made when another question is pending); and 4) Raise a question of privilege.

[7] The Following Privileged Motions Can Be Amended: 1) Fix the time to which to adjourn, and 2) Take a recess.

PRESIDING OFFICER (Chair). The Chair's duties are generally as follows: To open the session, by taking the chair and calling the members to order; to announce the business before the Commission or Committee in the order in which it is to be acted upon; to recognize members entitled to the floor; to recognize members of the public who wish to address the Commission or Committee; to state and to put to vote all questions which are regularly moved or which arise in the course of the proceeding and to announce the result of the vote; to protect the Commission or Committee from the annoyance of frivolous or dilatory motions by refusing to recognize them; to assist in the expediting of business in every way compatible with the rights of the members, as by allowing brief remarks when undebatable motions are pending if he thinks it is advisable; to restrain the members when engaged in debate, within the rules of order; to enforce the observance of order and decorum among the members, deciding all questions of order unless when in doubt he prefers to submit the question for the decision of the Commission or Committee; to inform the Commission or Committee on any point of order or practice pertinent to pending business; to authenticate, by his signature, when necessary, all the acts, orders, and proceedings of the Commission or Committee.

The Vice Chair, in the absence or incapacity of the Chair, shall perform the duties of the Chair. Should the office of the Chair become vacant, the Vice Chair shall perform the duties of the Chair until the Commission or Committee members elect a new Chair.

SECRETARY OR CLERK. The secretary is the recording officer of the Commission or Committee and the custodian of the records. He is also obligated to keep a roll of the members and to call the roll, to notify officers and committees of their appointments, and to furnish committees with all papers referred to them. He should send out all proper notices of all called meetings and conduct the correspondence of the organization. The secretary should make out an order of business for each meeting. In the absence of the Chair and if there is no Vice Chair, the secretary should call the meeting to order and preside until the election of Chair, pro tem, which should take place immediately.

ELECTION AND TERMS OF OFFICERS

The Chair, and Vice Chair shall be elected from among the members of the Commission. The contact person shall be the secretary.

The Commission or Committee members may appoint such other officers (permanent, acting, or temporary) as may be appropriate. The members may fix and determine the qualifications and duties of the officers.

The Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected each year at the annual meeting of the Commission or Committee. The terms of offices of Chair and Vice Chair are for the calendar year or for the portion thereof remaining after election to office. Should any of the offices of Chair or Vice Chair become vacant, the Commission or Committee members at the next regular meeting shall elect a successor for the unexpired term. The Chair and Vice Chair shall hold such offices until successors are elected and assume office.

(rev. 2/2008)