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**Neighborhoods Commission  
City of San José**

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Business of Building Communities

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**Neighborhoods  
Commission  
Caucus  
Processes**

Neighborhoods Commission  
1/13/16, Item D3

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**Submitted: January 7, 2016**

# DRAFT

## Neighborhoods Commission Caucus Processes

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### A. The Recruitment and Application Process

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1. Candidates for the Commission will be recruited at least one month before their selection caucus and provided with a job description.
2. Candidates must reside in the Council District for which they are applying, and must meet the City's requirements to serve on a Board or Commission.
3. Candidates will submit their applications through the City Clerk's office. Email to [cityclerk@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:cityclerk@sanjoseca.gov) or call 408-535-1260 for details.

### B. Caucus Preparations Process

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1. Candidates should submit a written statement of up to 250 words explaining their candidacy, skills, experience and prior service to the community. The statements are due two weeks before the caucus meeting. Candidate statements and background information should be emailed to [ncstaff@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:ncstaff@sanjoseca.gov) and will be posted on the City's Neighborhoods Commission website.
2. Commission and Council Districts Staffs will secure locations and schedule the caucus meetings.
3. Each Neighborhood Group\* must register in advance with Commission Staff and select up to three Delegates that will vote at the meeting. Delegates will register with the Secretary/Recorder when they arrive at the meeting.
4. No delegate shall cast a ballot on behalf of more than one Neighborhood Group.
5. Commission Staff will recruit the Support Staff needed for the caucus meeting, with preference being given to Neighborhoods Commissioners who are not standing as Candidates.
6. Commission Staff will gather and prepare all support materials needed for the caucus meeting:
  - Sign-in Sheets
  - Timing Device
  - Pencils and Pens
  - Candidate Order Cards
  - Ballots
  - Time Prompt Signs (30, 10, Stop)
  - List of Candidates
  - Ballot Box
  - Index Cards for Questions
  - List of Delegates

\* A neighborhood group is defined by City of San Jose Planning Outreach Policy 6-30 as: "a group or organization that is representative of its specific neighborhood, and whose primary purpose is the improvement of that neighborhood."

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## C. Caucus Participants and Their Roles

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1. **Delegates** represent their Neighborhood Group and vote for the Candidates. Delegates must reside in the District in which they are voting.
2. **Candidates** wish to represent their Council Districts on the Neighborhoods Commission. Candidates are encouraged to be present at the caucus and may not have “stand-ins” speak on their behalf.
3. A neutral **Facilitator** controls all aspects of the meeting, observes the vote counting process and reports the results of each ballot. The Facilitator is also responsible for training the Support Staff and establishing the order of the Candidates.
4. **Commission Staff** prepares all the necessary materials and supports the Facilitator. Commission Staff has no official duties at the caucus meeting.
5. The **Support Staff** provides the services needed to operate the meeting. The support staff can consist of from one to five individuals. The following positions can be combined:
  - a. The **Secretary/Recorder** manages the sign-in sheet and registers the Delegates. The Secretary/Recorder distributes the ballots and counts the votes under the observation of the Facilitator. If multiple votes are needed, the Secretary/Recorder will amend the ballots. The Secretary/Recorder is also responsible for documenting the process, giving special attention to any issues that arise which can be prevented in future caucus meetings.
  - b. Up to three neutral **Coordinators** select one of themselves to act as the **Lead Coordinator**. Coordinators distribute cards for questions to any person in attendance, with no limits. Coordinators collect the question cards, combine similar questions and eliminate questions that they consider unnecessary. Coordinators may limit the number of questions based on the number of Candidates in order to keep the meeting from running too long. The Lead Coordinator has final say in all matters, although the number of questions can be increased at the discretion of the Facilitator
  - c. A **Time Manager** uses a timing device to ensure that Candidate opening and closing statements do not run long. The Time Manager holds signs indicate that 30 seconds remain, ten seconds remain and that the Candidate’s time has ended. The Facilitator ensures that the Candidates honor the time limits. The Time Manager also tracks the Interview Times, verbally announcing when two minutes remain, 30 seconds remain and “Time is Up!”
  - d. **District Assigns**. Neighborhood Commissioners from districts not holding caucuses will be assigned to support the caucuses. Following are recommended assignments:

Caucus District	NC District Assigned		Caucus District	NC District Assigned
2	1		1	2
4	3		3	4
6	5		5	6
8	7		7	8
10	9		9	10

6. **Other Interested Parties** observe the process. Anyone can attend the meeting, submit questions and participate in the Interview Time. Only Delegates can vote.
7. **City Councilmembers** may not endorse individual candidates or take steps to influence the outcome of the Neighborhood Caucus.

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## D. The Caucus Meeting

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1. **Sign In:** All caucus meeting attendees sign in, including Delegates, Candidates, the Facilitator and Staff.
2. **Call to Order:** The Facilitator will welcome the Caucus Participants, introduce the Candidates and Staff, review the ground rules and explain the process. The Facilitator will also solicit questions for the candidates.
3. **Opening Statements:** Each Candidate will be given two minutes for opening remarks. The ordering of the Candidates will be established by drawing numbers out of a bowl or paper bag or drawing cards before the meeting convenes, and will be announced by the Facilitator.
4. **Questions and Answers:** The Facilitator will read the Delegates' questions one at a time. Each Candidate will have one minute to answer the question. The ordering of the Candidates will shift one name forward for each round so that the first response comes from a different Candidate.
5. **Interview Time:** Candidates will disperse around the room to be interviewed by the Delegates and Other Interested Parties. The initial Interview Time will be ten minutes. The Interview Time can be extended in five-minute increments, as deemed necessary by the Facilitator. The Time Manager will announce when time is expiring.
6. **Closing Statements:** Each Candidate will be given one minute to summarize their candidacy. The ordering of the Candidates will shift one name forward from the last Question and Answer round.
7. **First Ballot:** Each Delegate will be given a paper Ballot with the names of all Candidates. A Delegate can vote for up to two Candidates, placing the completed Ballot in the Ballot Box. The Secretary/Recorder will count the votes and announce the totals under the supervision of the Facilitator. A plurality (most votes) of the Delegates' votes is needed to elect a Candidate. If the second and third place candidates are tied, neither is elected and a Subsequent Ballot is required.
8. **Subsequent Ballots:** If both seats are not filled on the first round, the voting process continues with a reduced list of Candidates. The name of any elected Candidate OR the Candidate receiving the lowest number of votes in the previous round is removed from the Ballot. Up to three rounds of balloting are allowed.
9. **Insufficient Votes:** After three rounds of balloting, unfilled Commission seats will be left vacant. Vacant seats will be filled by the Councilmember of the District, subject to appointment by the full Council.

## E. Post Caucus Process

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1. **Appointment:** Candidates elected by the Caucus Process must be subsequently appointed by the City Council. The ordinance governing the Commission states, "Members shall be appointed by the City Council, after taking into consideration nominations provided by Neighborhood Groups in each Council District following a caucus process."
2. **Post Caucus Meeting:** The Commission Staff and the Support Staff will meet within one month of the Caucus meeting to discuss the process and suggest changes to future meetings.
3. **District Assigns After Caucus Review:** An after caucus review will be conducted to assess the effectivity of having Neighborhood Commissioners assigned to support caucuses.
4. **Orientation of Elected Commissioners:** An orientation will be held for elected commissioners. The orientation should be conducted prior to the swearing in of the commissioners.

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## San José Neighborhoods Commission Caucus Key Events and Responsibility Assignments

Item	Responsibility	Point(s) of Contact	Schedule/Date	Comment
Determine Caucus Dates and Locations	Commission Staff Council District Staffs Current Commissioners		One month before caucus meeting.	
Candidate Recruitment	Commission Staff Council District Staffs Current Commissioners			
Submit Applications to City Clerk	Candidates	City Clerk	? what does Clerk need	
Submit Written Candidate Statement	Candidates	Commission Staff	Two weeks before caucus meeting	
Recruit Facilitator and Support Staff	Commission Staff			
Register Neighborhood Groups and Delegates	Council District Staffs Commission Staff			
Prepare Sign-in Sheets, Ballots, List of Candidates, List of Delegates	Commission Staff			
Secure Ballot Box, Timing Device, Time Prompt Signs, Index Cards for Questions, Pencils/Pens, Deck of Playing Cards	Commission Staff			
Recruit Support Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secretary/Recorder</li> <li>• Coordinators (3)</li> <li>• Time Manager</li> </ul>	Commission Staff Current Commissioners		Two weeks before caucus meeting	

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Item	Responsibility	Point(s) of Contact	Schedule/Date	Comment
Caucus Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting Mgmt</li> <li>• Train Support Staff</li> <li>• Draw Cards for Candidate Order</li> <li>• Sign in sheets and Delegate Register</li> <li>• Ballot Distribution</li> <li>• Ballot Count and Verification</li> <li>• Q &amp; A Mgmt</li> <li>• Time Keeping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator</li> <li>• Facilitator</li> <li>• Facilitator</li>   <li>• Secretary/Recorder</li>   <li>• Secretary/Recorder</li> <li>• Secretary/Recorder and Facilitator</li> <li>• Coordinators</li> <li>• Time Manager</li> </ul>			Support Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ballots</li> <li>• Ballot Box</li> <li>• Timing Device</li> <li>• Time Prompt Signs</li> <li>• Q &amp; A Index Cards, pencils/pens</li> <li>• List of Candidates</li> <li>• List of Neighborhood Groups and Their Delegates</li> <li>• Sign-in Sheets</li> </ul>
Submit Caucus Results for City Council Approval	Commission Staff Secretary/Recorder			
Schedule and Moderate Post Caucus Meeting	Commission Staff			
Submit Summary Report to Full Commission	Commission Staff			

