


MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Ed Lavallee, City Manager 

RE: Discussion Section on Council Agenda

DATE: February 2, 2016

At the January 26, 2016 City Council meeting, Council approved a change in the Council meeting agenda to reduce the mid-day lunch break from 1 ½ hours to 1 hour. Other changes have been discussed including modifications to the order of agenda elements. One such change would separate Council discussion items that often take place during the *Council Reports* section of the agenda and move those discussion items to an earlier position on the agenda. The *Council Reports* section currently occurs as the last segment of a Council meeting. In this segment Council members may report on activities of various boards and commissions to which the respective Council members may have liaison responsibility. In this segment of the meeting Council members may also bring up topics for discussion not previously discussed in the meeting. It has been noted from time to time that the advanced hour of this segment of the meeting causes Council members to cut short or defer to another meeting discussion on issues of general interest.

A suggestion to move general Council discussion items to an earlier place on the agenda has merit. The suggestion is to reserve the *Council Reports* section of the agenda for Council members to report on their council and board liaison activities. A provision for the other general discussion issues would be made proximate to, or part of, the *Council Action* segment. Restrictions of discussions among Council members imposed by the Sunshine Law limits open Council discussion to pre-advertised public forums such as City Council meetings. To afford ample opportunity for Council members to raise issues and engage in open public dialogue a *Council Discussion* agenda segment of regular Council meetings would be beneficial. At the discretion of the Chair, such discussion could be controlled in time to allow for a number of topics among members to be introduced at one meeting. This activity could stand alone as a specific agenda segment or incorporated into the *Council Action* segment of the existing agenda format. Placing these discussion items earlier in the agenda format may also facilitate public awareness as it appears that the typical audience trend is more members of the public attend the earlier segments of the Council meetings and leave either at the lunch break or in the afternoon well before the meeting ends.

EL/las