

Requirements for Public Meetings of Local Policy Bodies*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Approved Digest
On: Monday, August 3, 2015
Members: Packard, Fasick, Fraps, Jorgensen, Unruh
Word count: (suggested 300-word limit)

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: 5:10 p.m. on Tuesday, August 4, 2015

The Way It Is Now: State law and the Sunshine Ordinance approved by San Francisco voters set rules and procedures for public access to City meetings. These meetings include City boards, commissions, their committees and task forces, advisory bodies, and any other group created by City Charter, ordinance, or resolution.

Members of the public must have an opportunity to testify on any matter discussed at a public meeting. Every person must have an equal opportunity to speak. The public cannot testify from remote locations. If a member of the public submits pre-recorded video testimony, the video does not need to be played during the meeting.

An agenda for every City meeting must be published at least 72 hours in advance. The agenda must include a meaningful description of each item of business. The agenda must state the time that a meeting will start, but it need not state the time a specific item will be discussed.

The City broadcasts live on the Internet and on its television channel meetings of the Board of Supervisors and its committees, and some other City boards, commissions, and committees. Meetings are generally recorded and stored.

The San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education (School Board) and the San Francisco Community College District Governing Board (Community College Board) are under the jurisdiction of State public meeting laws but not the City's Sunshine Ordinance.

The Proposal: Proposition E would amend the Sunshine Ordinance to require the City to broadcast all City meetings live on the Internet.

This measure would also allow members of the public to submit electronically during the meeting live, written, video, or audio comments from any location. If the testimony is not in English, the City would be required to translate it, either with subtitles or a voice-over.

Proposition E would require that pre-recorded video testimony submitted 48 hours or more before a meeting be played during the period for public comment.

Proposition E also would allow a board, commission, or committee member, or a group of 50 or more members of the public, to request that discussion of a particular agenda item begin at a certain time, and that a designated amount of time be allotted for public comment on that item. The request must be made in writing at least 48 hours before a meeting. The request must be granted unless it is unreasonable or would interfere with the proper conduct of the meeting.

Proposition E states that it would also apply to all meetings of the School Board and the Community College Board.

Proposition E may be amended to further its purposes by an ordinance passed by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Supervisors and signed by the Mayor.

**Working title, for identification only. The Director of Elections determines the title of each local ballot measure; measure titles are not considered during Ballot Simplification Committee meetings.*

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want to amend the Sunshine Ordinance to require the City to broadcast all City meetings live on the Internet; allow members of the public to submit electronically during the meeting live, written, video, or audio comments from any location; require pre-recorded video testimony to be played during a meeting; and allow the public or board, commission, or committee members to request that discussion of a particular agenda item begin at a particular time.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote "no," you do not want to make these changes.