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Economy & Efficiency Commission Presentation

Editorial Note: Although every effort has been made to insure the accuracy of the material in this presentation, the scope of the material covered and the discussions undertaken lends itself to the possibility of minor transcription misinterpretations.

A DELIBERATIVE SESSION Conducted by the Members of the Economy and Efficiency Commission

Topic: A Discussion to Review the Operations of the Commission

October 2, 2003

At the beginning of the session Chairman Philibosian turned over the floor to Commissioner Crowley and Commissioner Oaks to lead the discussion.

Commissioner Oaks commented that the basic foundation of this deliberative session is to consider and understand how the County works. One can review the organization chart, but before it can be criticized its operations and structure need to be understood. This is a problem that lends itself to an exchange of ideas.

Agenda Preparations

In response to a general question from the floor on how the agenda is prepared, Mr. Staniforth responded that the agenda for the monthly meeting is prepared in a relatively routine manner. If there is a non-routine item on the agenda, it is approved by the Chairman prior to the agenda's publication.

Commissioner Hill inquired on the procedure for commissioners to place something on the agenda? Mr. Staniforth replied that a commissioner can contact him at anytime to place an item(s) on the agenda. This item(s) will normally be noted under new business.

Commissioner Crowley asked Chairman Philibosian to address the process of how a speaker is invited to make a presentation to the Commission and whether the speaker is asked to comment on ongoing Commission issues. Chairman Philibosian commented that presenters are asked to address concerns of the Commission. For example, we recently had the Sheriff speak to us and, based upon his presentation, the Court Transportation Task Force was formed. Also, we talked about Workmans Compensation, and county fraud which provided the incentive to have the Auditor-Controller, Tyler McCauley, make a presentation. Some other presentations are more general in nature, such as those of the CAO, DA and County Counsel.

Commissioner Crowley felt that a report from a Task Force should be coordinated with the choice of the speaker. The objective of this coordination would be to get the best out of the Task Force reports and to develop the opportunity to determine what should be done as a result of the report. Commissioner Hill observed that the Economy and Efficiency Commission has been successful in using this process to develop recommendations that have been positively received by the Board of Supervisors. Almost all of the

Commission's reports have had action taken on their recommendations.

Commissioner Crowley asked Mr. Staniforth about the procedures for revisiting reports that are a year or two old that have not had any activity. Mr. Staniforth responded that it is a matter of Commission priorities and what is considered by the Commission to be an appropriate use of staff time. For example, there are currently five or six assignments that require attention, which leaves little time to review previous work. Of course, it would be done if it were a Commission priority, as was the case in the recent review of the recommendations made in the Unincorporated Area Study.

Commissioner Oaks asked if there would be any merit to disturbing a draft agenda to the commissioners a week before distributing the final agenda. Mr. Staniforth said that it is possible to e-mail the agenda and commissioners could note changes in a return e-mail. Since an e-mail reminder of the monthly meeting is sent, a statement can be added to the effect that commissioners should notify the office of any changes or additions to the agenda. The information should be submitted to the office by Tuesday of the week before the Commission meeting to facilitate the preparation of the agenda packet. Chairman Philibosian stated that when the reminder of the monthly meeting is sent it can also establish a date for the receipt of any agenda change information. Commissioner Padilla asked that the meeting's scheduled speaker be included in the monthly e-mail reminder. Commissioner Sylva suggested that in order to comply with the Brown Act and to assist staff in agenda preparation, any suggestion(s) include a short explanation of its content.

Commissioner Hill noted that informing everyone on new department heads would be valuable, along with inviting them to make a presentation to the Commission. In relation to the Commission's reports, Commissioner Hill felt a need to be more proactive in order to maximize the value of the Commission's research to the County.

Commissioner Crowley continued with the agenda by asking about bringing together the input from various sources, while at the same time addressing the issues of Commission concern. Commissioner Fuhrman mentioned that a speaker often makes a generalized presentation on the department/issues, rather than directing comments to what the Commission's task forces are considering at the time. These individuals should be made aware of what the Commission's task forces are doing, so as to be able to address these concerns. His second point was to discuss more fully what each task force was doing. The Commission has an opportunity to discuss the final report of the task force when it is presented for approval, but at this point, it may be too late to make any changes. It would be valuable to spend more time responding to the direction and processes of the task force early in the process, rather than upon receipt of the draft final report. Commissioner Oaks responded that he felt it was a good idea and that every speaker should be provided with a one or two page description of what the Commission is and does, along with what task forces are in place. Commissioner Fuhrman asked Mr. Staniforth whether a pre-information sheet is distributed to the speakers prior to the monthly meeting. Mr. Staniforth replied that in some instances, based upon the nature of the presentation, a briefing sheet on the issues is prepared for the speaker, as was done for Tyler McCauley's presentation. In most instances speakers were referred to the Commission's website which has all the necessary information on the Commission and the task forces.

Commissioner Oakes expanded upon Commissioner Fuhrman's second point concerning fully airing the progress of task forces. It seems there is an opportunity to extend the two or three minute report to a five or ten minute report with input from task force members to discuss issues.

News Clippings

Commissioner Oaks asked the Commission for feed back on receiving copies of the selected news clippings. Commissioner Crowley observed that he found the articles were very informative. Commissioner Sylva commented that she felt that the Commission should focus on issues that the County can address internally rather than addressing external issues. Chairman Philibosian observed that the Commission's relationship with various groups outside the County could prove to be beneficial if only by receiving information that they have compiled.

In response to a question on the structure of the article distribution which is received electronically from the

Public Information Office, Commissioner Oakes commented that the division into two sections is a great idea. One question is whether anyone feels that he/she is getting too much information on certain areas or not enough information? It was agreed that the distribution seemed to be adequate to meet the informational needs of the Commission.

Commissioner Crowley observed that to capitalize upon the knowledge and experience of individual commissioners issues need to be brought to the attention of the Commission more often. Perhaps commissioners could suggest topics for later meetings.

Decision Making

Commissioner Padilla believed that commissioners wanted to have more time available for decision making. Additionally, he felt that Commission should find out what the Board is interested in to facilitate the Commission's response to their needs. He also thought that having a deliberative session or round table discussion prior to the final reports being published would be beneficial to the final results.

Commissioner Sylva mentioned that in downloading the County budget it became clear what the issues were that needed to be addressed by the County. This document provides an excellent guideline as to those issues that are important to the Board of Supervisors. Commissioner Fuhrman, commenting on the asset management issue, noted that the Commission could do a small report about what the County does with its balance sheet. Another area he thought was of interest is what type of health care should the County be offering.

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