

Note: Emphasis has been added by Novato.Exposed highlighting specific points being made.

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Date: Tue, 13 Feb 2018 18:14:52 -0800

Subject: **Transparency - Novato Council Agenda 2/13/18**

Dear City Manager Candelario, Mayor Fryday, and Council:

I wish to call to your attention to an **issue of transparency on the 2/13/18 council agenda**. I am unable to attend the meeting but I would like my comments put in the public record on this issue.

On Item J-11 in the General Business section of the agenda, the item is listed as:

11. **City Council to review, discuss, approve, and/or provide direction on recommended changes to the Council Policy Manual.**

There is no description provided on this item. The Council Policy Manual is a broad document and If one is able to access a computer and click a link, they would find that the items addresses changes on Social Media Policy, Proposed Legislation Procedures, Disruption of Council meetings, and a vague reference to remaining suggested changes.

Those changes include review of the Manual with regard to "agenda setting" section (3.02 (f) which include pages 6-12 of the Manual. Closed Sessions was another item that is not in the description.

The Brown Act for transparency requires specificity on the item being addressed by the Council so that the public knows if they wish to participate. A brief description was not included on this item and therefore not properly noticed to the public.

I wish to also **comment on the suggested changes that you have in the staff report on the Agenda Setting section (3.02).**

3.02 Procedure (c). - Is it possible when cancelling a meeting, to leave the proposed agenda with a watermark stamped CANCELLED. Often, the public may wish to look at the contents of a meeting that was cancelled to see if the item was later placed on a future agenda.

3.02 1(b). - I wish for the Council to note that in previous revision the council has removed the four minute time limit to discuss placement of an item on an agenda. This was done instead of changing it to a more "reasonable" limit for discussion. **It is important that a standard time limit be in place so that the "agenda setting" process does not become a "council meeting" on the issue.**

3.02 2(b). - **When an agenda item is proposed during the Councilmember/City Manager Reports, I have noticed that there is no call for "Public Comments".** I believe that a call for public comments should be the rule on that agenda item. Even if there is no proposed agenda item, members of the public may wish to comment on the activities of the council, as those activities are made on behalf of the citizenry.

3.02 2(i) - It is very confusing to the public on when a request for agenda items from members of the public will be taken up by the council. I believe that it would be in the best interest of transparency and timeliness that the Councilmember Reports be moved to after Public Comments. This would give an opportunity for the council to consider the item for agendaing if necessary.

3:03 d(**Closed Sessions**). This section requires that "Real Property" must be announced in an open agenda first prior to closed session. It would be helpful to the public to reference that open session announcement date on the closed session description. Additionally, the City of Novato continues to use APN numbers exclusively to identify parcels, rather than listing property common names or addresses.

3:03 d(**Closed Sessions**). The litigation title must be identified in open session prior to the closed session. Again, it would be worthwhile to reference the date that the litigation was identified in open session for the public.

Thank you for considering my comments for changes to the Council Policy Manual that will result in the greatest level of transparency and open government for Novato.

Sincerely,

Tracey Ruiz
Novato CA