

RESOLUTION: ELECTRONIC MEETING PARTICIPATION

FEBRUARY 20, 2024
TOWN COUNCIL



OVERVIEW

- Town Council at its February 6 meeting discussed its current Electronic Participation, Connected & Hybrid Meeting Policy and directed staff to bring back for Council's consideration a Resolution to update the policy
- The purpose of this item is to present that Resolution, which would discontinue Council's current Hybrid Meeting practice in favor of Electronic Participation, should Council wish to proceed in that manner
 - Additionally, staff is presenting a Neighborhood Meeting Policy relative to land use items, for Council's review and discussion

CML ARTICLE EXCERPTS

- “Just because technology makes remote comment possible, however, does not mean that continuing it is in the best interests of the municipality.”
- “Remote comment options are no longer necessary to ensure public health and have become primarily a method of inclusion in government. ... The value of expanded participation is diminished, however, if business is delayed or if members are distracted by the commentary.”
- “The simplest solution may be to remove remote comment options entirely. ... Speaking at a meeting may carry unique weight, but alternate methods of communication can provide the same or better access to officials. E-mail, online comment submittal forms, town hall-style meetings, and one-on-one communications allow a member of the public to speak directly their representatives. Other means of communicating also support reasonable restrictions on commenters. The time to evaluate whether this manner of public comment should be tolerated is before it occurs, not as a quick reaction to a troubling meeting.”

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

- Hybrid would remain the primary option
- The Development Services Director would be allowed to approve virtual only meetings in some cases for smaller and/or noncontroversial projects

OF NOTE

- A separate board and commission policy provides the Town Manager discretion on the conduct of those meetings
 - Staff's intention is to follow Council protocols for boards and commissions – i.e. Electronic Participation would be allowed for board/commission members and Council liaisons (policy requests 24 hours notice), but Hybrid Meetings would be discontinued for boards hearing land use items



PROPOSED MOTION

"I move to approve the Resolution as introduced by title."