

December 19, 2023

Ms. Andrea Schlageter, Chair  
Community Planners Committee (CPC)

Re: Process for Resolving Complaints Against Planning Groups

Hi Andrea,

Thank you for reaching out for clarifications on resolving planning group-related complaints. We understand the importance of having clear and consistent guidance available to planning groups. The City Planning Department's process for addressing complaints against individual planning group members or the planning group as a whole is reviewed by staff and applied consistently in each situation where alleged complaints have arisen. Depending on the situation, guidance on addressing complaints is offered by the Department upon request by the planning group, or in instances where the Department receives a complaint. This process draws upon direction in the current [Council Policy 600-24](#) as well as procedures in the previous policy and [Administrative Guidelines \(2015\)](#), that contain relevant guidance on this particular matter.

- **Complaints related to alleged violations by an individual planning group member.** It is the responsibility of a planning group, not the City, to address alleged violations of Council Policy 600-24 by individual planning group members. The steps in this case involve:
  1. A written complaint is brought to the attention of the Chair. If the complaint is against the Chair, then it should be forwarded to the Vice-Chair or other officer of the planning group.
  2. The planning group would conduct an investigation in accordance with Council Policy 600-24 and their operating procedures to determine if a violation has occurred and seeks a remedy that corrects the violation and allows the member to remain as a member of the planning group. City staff may, upon request by a planning group, offer guidance on how to proceed, based on experience with how other groups have addressed similar situations.
  3. If corrective action is not feasible, any action by a planning group to discipline or remove a group member must occur at a scheduled planning group meeting and be noticed on the agenda as an action item. An action to remove a member from a community planning group must occur by a 2/3 vote of the voting members of the group unless the group's operating procedures include specific alternative requirements for the removal of an appointed member.
  
- **Complaints related to alleged violations by multiple members of the planning group or the planning group as a whole.** It is the responsibility of City staff to investigate and attempt

to resolve alleged violations against multiple group members or against the entire community planning group. The steps in this case involve:

1. Upon receipt of a written complaint, City staff will conduct an investigation to determine if a violation has occurred with respect to the Brown Act, Council Policy 600-24 and/or a planning group's operating procedures. The investigation could involve discussions with the public, with individual planning group members, or with an entire community planning group, and review of group minutes, correspondence, or other documents.
2. City staff will notify the Chair of the planning group regarding the complaint. The planning group may respond to the City in a dialogue to determine the validity of the complaint.
3. If a violation is determined, City staff will notify the Chair, provide the findings of staff's investigation, offer guidance and work collaboratively with the planning group on corrective action(s) for the planning group to take to address the violation(s).
4. Should the planning group fail to take corrective action, the City Council may revoke the planning group's recognition status. The City Council may also prescribe conditions under which official recognition may be reinstated.

Should you or any of the CPC members have questions regarding this process, please contact Marlon Pangilinan, Program Coordinator at [mpangilinan@sandiego.gov](mailto:mpangilinan@sandiego.gov).

Sincerely,



Heidi Vonblum  
Planning Director  
City Planning Department

Cc: Michaela Valk, Director of Community Engagement, Office of the Mayor  
Tait Galloway, Deputy Director, City Planning Department  
Alejandra Gavaldon, Deputy Director, City Planning Department  
Seth Litchney, Program Manager, City Planning Department  
Anisha Gianchandani, Program Manager, City Planning Department  
Coby Tomlins, Program Manager, City Planning Department  
Marlon Pangilinan, Program Coordinator, Planning Department