
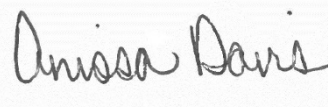


Date: September 30, 2021

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Dr. Anissa Davis, Long Beach Health Officer 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council and all Boards and Commissions

Subject: **Recommendation Regarding Physical Distancing and Virtual Meetings**

Assembly Bill 361 (AB 361), which becomes effective on October 1, 2021, allows for certain waivers of Brown Act teleconference requirements during declared states of emergency when certain conditions have been met. These “waivers” promote physical distancing to minimize the spread of COVID-19 by allowing legislative body members to take meetings from outside the body’s jurisdictional boundaries, as well as allowing public access and comment through phone and/or internet services only, among other things which seek to protect the community and staff. One condition to authorize such virtual meetings of legislative bodies is that state or local health officials have imposed or recommended measures to promote physical distancing during a proclaimed state of emergency. Accordingly, I am making the following recommendations for the City’s legislative bodies to meet virtually, to the extent possible, under the relevant provisions of AB 361, and that this recommendation be forwarded to those bodies.

I strongly recommend that physical distancing measures continue to be practiced throughout Long Beach communities, including at meetings of the City Council, including its boards, commissions, and committees (hereafter “the City”), to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

While unvaccinated individuals are more likely to contract COVID-19, the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control caution that the Delta variant of COVID-19 is more transmissible than prior variants of COVID-19. Delta is more transmissible than prior variants of COVID-19, it may cause more severe illness, and both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals are at risk for contracting the Delta variant resulting in spreading COVID-19 to other members of our communities. (See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/delta-variant.html>). Physical distancing, masking, staying home when sick, and frequent handwashing remain crucial infection control measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including its variants.

To the extent possible, virtual meetings are strongly recommended as they allow for the participation of the community, City staff, presenters, Councilmembers, commissioners, committee members, and board members with no risk of contagion. As an alternative, the City could implement hybrid meetings (i.e. meetings that are both in-person and virtual) with infection control measures outlined below to minimize the spread of COVID-19 while operating in-person.

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Where in-person meetings are deemed necessary based on varying circumstances and/or conditions, I strongly recommend that infection control measures are implemented, including: (1) where feasible, maintaining at least six-foot physical distance from other individuals, even when wearing a face mask; (2) washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, as frequently as possible; (3) covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve, elbow, or tissue, not hands); (4) regularly cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces; (5) avoid physically intimate forms of greeting such as shaking hands, hugging, and kissing; (6) stay home when sick; (7) to the extent feasible, avoid eating and drinking in public places; and (8) wearing a face mask securely over one's mouth and nose.

This recommendation does not apply to those meetings of a quasi-judicial nature that have been meeting in person prior to September 20, 2021, (e.g. where it is necessary to allow for credibility determinations of witnesses).

I will continue to evaluate this recommendation on an ongoing basis and this recommendation will remain in place until amended, replaced, or repealed. If you have any questions regarding this recommendation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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