

November 6, 2024, GPAC Agenda Item IV.e Comments

The following comments on an item on the Newport Beach [General Plan Advisory Committee agenda](#) are submitted by: Jim Mosher (jimmosher@yahoo.com), 2210 Private Road, Newport Beach 92660 (949-548-6229)

Item IV.e. December Workshops: Arts and Cultural and Historical Resources, and Land Use and Harbor, Bay, and Beaches

The recommendation for “*the Land Use Subcommittee and the Harbor and Bay Subcommittee to clear the draft content for the workshops without subsequent GPAC review*” seems questionable from a [Brown Act](#) perspective. Specifically, pursuant to California [Government Code Subsection 54952\(b\)](#), the subcommittees were created solely to formulate recommendations for consideration by the full GPAC, which allowed them great flexibility in their meeting formats.

While I appreciate City staff has gone to considerable lengths to ensure the public is aware of and able to attend the subcommittee meetings, should they be empowered, as recommended, to substitute their judgment for that of the full GPAC, their meetings would be subject to additional constraints, including, among others, adherence to a formally posted agenda.

Setting that concern aside, the subcommittee members will evidently be commenting on the consultant-prepared workshop materials, including possible goals and policies to implement what the consultant sees as “guiding values” (formerly, and by most other cities, called “guiding principles”).

In that respect, I think it is useful to remember that the [Introduction](#) to the [current General Plan](#) says (near bottom of page I-10) that the goals and policies it contains were also guided by principles developed through extensive public outreach and GPAC debate:

“In the next step of the process, guiding principles were developed. These principles were used to guide the General Plan alternatives and policies, and cover the following topics: Circulation, Economic Development, Community Character, Affordable Housing, Environmental Conservation, and Environmental Hazards. They were developed with input from the Visioning Process, GPAC, as well as public comments heard at the GPAC meetings.”

Those principles guiding the development of the 2006 General Plan goals and policies, and an explanation of how they were arrived at, can be found in a [July 28, 2004, memo](#) to that prior GPAC and in an [August 6, 2004, memo](#) prepared after review by the City Council and Planning Commission.

Since it seems unlikely that the aspirations of our community have changed greatly in the last twenty years, reviewing those memos seems useful not only to search for principles and values that may have been overlooked in the present process (and that should be folded back in), but also to reflect on the level of local control over land use decisions that was assumed in 2004. I believe the loss of much of our local control, and the constraints that places on the General Plan Update needs to be conveyed at the workshops.