

From: [tony higgins](#)
To: [Myra Maravilla](#)
Cc: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Please replace my Nov 18 written Comm with this - pls ack - tks
Date: Monday, November 20, 2023 4:46:59 AM

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November 20, 2023

Dear City Council,

RE: Remote Participation

I believe Councilman Jackson and City Manager Lowenthal's efforts to derail zoom remote participation is fundamentally inconsistent with our community's values.

Our community deserves the best remote participation community engagement tools NOT the minimum required by law.

But remote participation minimums are exactly what City Manager Lowenthal & Councilman Jackson are advocating in their efforts to derail zoom & dial-in at City Council & Commission meetings.

The question is why?

City Manager Lowenthal's strategy will be to provide a list of 10 cities that have disallowed remote participation as if that justifies eliminating it.

The right question is will Hermosa choose to be a leader in using effective tools like zoom & dial-in to maximize community engagement?

Are our city leaders willing to take some risks to develop & encourage community engagement and give voice to those that cannot attend council and commission meetings or will city leadership deny those voices?

City Manager Lowenthal and Councilman Jackson will also tell you that Written-Communications are a good substitute for remote participation.

What they wont tell you is Written-Communications are buried 3 levels down in the agenda where few residents ever find or read them and usually ignored by the Council, Staff and the public.

The simple truth is you are much more likely to have your issue discussed and/or agendized if

you speak in person or via zoom and eliminating remote participation will only repress community engagement.

It's the same with the city's archaic eComment system that is simply no substitute for remote participation. eComment doesn't even allow edits, images, slides or video attachment capabilities that are available on almost every other social media platform. It's a dinosaur.

City Manager Lowenthal & Councilman Jackson know full well a live human voice is far more effective at raising public awareness on an issue than eComment or Written-Communication; so why line up against it?

The Hermosa Beach general plan says:

The City regularly identifies and implements new communication techniques and methods to improve service delivery and open avenues of communication between the community and their City government.

Goal 2.11

Social media and technology applications:

Enhance the City's social media presence and use of technology applications as tools to notify, provide updates, and engage the community.

Finally, consider City Attorney Donegan's words below related to remote participation at commission meeting:

"[Each] commission has the discretion to set its own [remote] public participation policy if that is something the commission wants to explore".

But as soon as the Public Works commission started to investigate the possibility of remote participation Assistant City Attorney Natalizio started walking back City Attorney Donegan's statements and signaled that remote participation may really only be under the commission's purview so long as the commission supports the restrictions imposed by the City Manager. Otherwise the Council would step in.

It was a mistake for the City Manager to have imposed her will and suddenly suspend zoom remote participation & dial-in without any deliberation or public input.

It's time to correct that mistake forthwith and give remote participation a fair and unbiased public hearing.

Anthony Higgins