

From: [Alameda Citizens Task Force](#)
To: [Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft](#); [Tony Daysog](#); [Trish Spencer](#); [Malia Vella](#); [Tracy Jensen](#)
Cc: [Manager Manager](#); [City Clerk](#); [Yibin Shen](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Item 3-A, April 24, 2023, City Council Agenda-Alameda Strategic Plan
Date: Monday, April 24, 2023 3:59:54 PM

ACT

Alameda Citizens Task Force

Vigilance, Truth, Civility

Dear Mayor Ashcraft, Vice Mayor Daysog & Councilmembers Spencer, Vella and Jensen:

ACT urges that you consider amending Section 4 of the City Council Rules of Order as an additional project in the category of "Practice Fiscally Responsive and Inclusive Governance".

The current rule reads as follows:

"Consent Calendar Items. Agenda items listed under the Consent Calendar are considered routine and will be enacted, approved, or adopted by one motion without discussion.

Members of the public can comment once on the entire Consent Calendar. Public comments shall be limited to two (2) minutes or less. Any Councilmember may request removal of a specific item for discussion or explanation. Councilmembers can record a vote other than aye without removing/"pulling" an item from the Consent Calendar. The removed/"pulled" item will be voted on separately. Each Councilmember may ask questions and deliberate for up to five (5) minutes on each item removed/"pulled" from the Consent Calendar."

The current rules contain no criteria for qualification of a business item for the Consent Calendar, other than it is "routine", with no definition of the term. This permits expenditures of large amounts of money to be placed on the consent calendar and thereby inhibits public scrutiny. One egregious example is the collective bargaining agreements with public employee unions. These agreements may be routine for Councilmembers who have already considered them in closed sessions, but they are certainly not routine for the public. Another example is the hiring of consultants at significant cost. Some cities place a dollar limit on expenditures that are over a fixed amount. However, trying to clearly define and get Council approval of the criteria for the Consent Calendar may not be practical.

The basic defect in the current rule is not just the definition of "routine", but the fact that Consent Calendar items, even if "pulled" by a Councilmember are subject to much shorter timelines for both public and Councilmember comment, and that the Chairperson calls for and receives public comment **before** seeking Councilmember requests to remove an item from the

Calendar and then does not allow separate public comment on the removed item.

The proposed amendment below simply returns to the prior process where the chairperson at the outset of the Consent Calendar allows Councilmembers to remove any item to the beginning of the Regular Agenda. Once it is so moved the item is treated as any other regular agenda item with regard to both public and Councilmember comment. This approach allows an individual Councilmember to determine if a matter does not belong on the consent Calendar. This process was in place for many years and was not abused.

Suggested wording for a new Section 4 follows:

"Consent Calendar Items. Agenda items listed under the Consent Calendar are considered routine and will be enacted, approved, or adopted by one motion without discussion. Prior to presentation of the Consent Calendar the presiding officer shall give any Councilmembers the opportunity to move any item to the beginning of the Regular Agenda. Members of the public can then comment once on the entire remaining Consent Calendar. Public comments shall be limited to two (2) minutes or less. Councilmembers can record a vote other than aye without moving an item to the Regular Agenda."

Thank you for your consideration of our proposal.

Alameda Citizens Task Force Board of Directors