

Board and Commission Council Committee Agenda Item Request

Name of Board or Commission: Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission

Request Number: 20201209-3B

Description of Item:

WHEREAS, the City of Austin Boards and Commissions are an important tool for citizen oversight of government operations, and,

WHEREAS, many City of Austin Boards and Commissions have vacant positions because of persistent challenges to recruitment and retention of qualified members, and,

WHEREAS, teleconferencing is a recognized option for city meetings, and,

WHEREAS, the Texas Open Meetings Act specifically allows teleconferencing, and,

WHEREAS, the City of Austin ordinance requires the physical presence of members at Boards and Commission meetings, and,

WHEREAS, the Austin Audit and Finance Committee directed the Clerk's Office to lead a working group to pilot remote participation at commissioner meetings in partnership with the Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission, and,

WHEREAS, the Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission piloted remote participation at its January meeting, and,

WHEREAS, the governor issued an emergency declaration on March 13, 2020 in response to COVID-19 that suspended certain State restrictions on public meetings, and,

WHEREAS, City Council waived Section 2-1-6(E) of City Code and declared an emergency on March 26, 2020 which enabled board and commission meetings to occur remotely, and,

WHEREAS, all board and commission meetings thereafter were held remotely via web conference (to present), and,

WHEREAS, the Governor's emergency declaration could expire or be revoked at any time, and,

WHEREAS, an unplanned transition away from emergency practices could result in mandatory in-person participation by board and commission members, and,

WHEREAS, the City should be focused on the health and safety of its employees and volunteers, including board and commission members

WHEREAS, many board and commission members are at high risk of COVID-19 transmission, and,

WHEREAS, the deployment timeline of a successful vaccine is still uncertain, and,

WHEREAS, fully remote meetings over the extended period of the COVID-19 crisis has allowed these commissions to continue to meet,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION:

Recommends the City Council establish a timeline to report on the feasibility of permanent availability of remote participation options for board and commission members and urges the Clerk's Office, Communications and Technology Management Department, and Law Department to create and implement a plan to support permanent multi-

modal model of participation in public meetings. This includes fully remote, fully in-person, and a mix of in-person and remote participation at public meetings

Board or Commission Vote to refer item to Council:

Motion to approve the Council Committee Agenda Request on Remote Participation at Commission Meetings made by Commissioner Yeatts and seconded by Commissioner DasGupta passed on a vote of 6-0.

Date of Approval of Request: 12/9/2020

Attachments: Yes No

If yes, please list the attachments:

Attest:

Jesse Rodriguez, Telecommunications and Regulatory Affairs

MAYOR'S OFFICE USE ONLY

Council Committee Assigned:

- Audit and Finance Committee
- Austin Energy Utility Oversight Committee
- Mobility Committee
- Health and Human Services Committee
- Housing and Planning Committee

Recommend a Fiscal Analysis be completed?

Recommend a Legal Analysis be completed?

Notes:

Mayor Signature & Date: