

Patrick Monette-Shaw

San Francisco, CA 94109

Phone: [REDACTED] • e-mail: [REDACTED]

October 13, 2025

Ed Harrington, Chair
Commission Streamlining Task Force
c/o City Administrator's Office
City Hall, Room 316
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102-4694

Re: **Commission Streamlining Task Force's
Motions Are Exceedingly Unclear**

Dear Mr. Harrington and Commission Streamlining Task Force Members,

It's somewhat shocking that the draft meeting minutes of this Task Force's October 1 meeting indicate four problems with the motions made regarding keeping, eliminating, or combining various Boards and Commissions during that meeting.

While it has been a standard practice for Ms. Alonso or other staff members present a report and recommendations about each body being discussed, the motions made by Task Force members are usually not very specific about what Task Force members understood during their debate about the substance of the staff proposal and recommendations, particularly after Task Force members have lengthy debate amending specific text in the support staff's proposal and recommendations.

That procedure may work correctly **only** when the recommendation and eventual motion is clearly understood not only by all Task Force by all members, but also clearly understood by members of the public who are attending in person or attending remotely. Often it is not at all clear whether the debate among Task Force members has actually altered staff recommendations.

I have urged you in the past to clearly state the motions you are making before taking a vote, because all too often there is confusion about what the motions actually entail. Task Force Chair Harrington, another Task Force member, or Support Staff should **clearly** restate the actual motion made *before* voting begins, and not simply make a motion that states only "*to accept the staff's recommendation*," especially when there has been an extended gap of time during discussion by Task Force members recommendation and a significant amount of time has passed following the staff's presentation.

Under *Robert's Rules of Order* motions introduced and then seconded must be much more formal motions, and not so lax.

Also **under *Robert's Rules of Order*, a motion to adopt a recommendation without stating its contents is generally improper and can create procedural confusion.**

Unclear Motions Made on October 1

There were at least four problems with motions in the October 1 meeting minutes:

- First, on page 9 of your draft minutes for October 1 reveals in the "*Track Changes*" comment sidebar, Hannah Kohanzadeh raised a question that Natasha Mihal did not include keeping the Library Commission in the Charter in her motion, but Ed Harrington had previously said that was his preference. She wrote: "*On the slides tracking discussion, you included keeping the body in the Charter as part of Natasha's motion.*" Ms. Kohanzadeh questioned whether the Task Force needed to "*reconcile*" that.
- Second, on page 12 of your draft minutes there were two problems regarding the discussion on four separate bodies, including 1. Board of Appeals, 2. Board of Examiners, 3. Abatement Appeals Board, and 4. Access Appeals Commission. First, Chair Harrington made a "*motion in alignment with Vice Chair Bruss' summary.*" But it's not clear if Harrington's motion also included Member Hayward's intervening comment that the Board of Examiners,

" Task Force Chair Harrington, another Task Force member, or Support Staff should clearly restate the actual motion made before voting begins, and not simply make a motion that states only '*to accept the staff's recommendation*'. "

" Under *Robert's Rules of Order*, a motion to adopt a recommendation without stating its contents is generally improper and can create procedural confusion. "

October 13, 2025

Commission Streamlining Task Force's Motions Are Exceedingly Unclear

Page 2

Abatement Appeals Board, and Access Appeals Commission would all be eliminated. So, Harrington's motion was insufficient accepting on Bruss' comments, but not Hayward's, and nowhere was it clear whether other **functions** of each of the three bodies ostensibly being eliminated would be transferred to the Board of Appeals. **Nor was there any discussion about whether the Board of Appeals has the bandwidth to take on the functions of the Abatement Appeals Board, as Doug Engmann advised you to consider the Board of Appeals' workload before assigning it more tasks, and whether the Board of Appeals may be inappropriate because it lacks the relevant subject matter expertise.**

A "motion (to adopt) in alignment with a previous summary" without stating the summary's contents also seems to be generally improper under *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Second, Ms. Kohanzadeh noted in a "Track Changes" comment sidebar that the motion may not have been properly "seconded," and asked whether it had been Sophie Hayward who had seconded Harrington's motion.

- Third, on page 14 of your draft minutes regarding discussion and voting on the Airport Commission, there are two sidebar notes, one from Andrea Bruss (about a concern about the issue of Airport Commission member qualifications vs. "No qualifications"), and an additional comment (apparently from staff member Chelsea Hall) saying "But upon reviewing the meeting recording, the TFM did *not* explicitly decide this for the Airport Commission. Didn't add to minutes."

It's not clear what the "TFM" abbreviation means: "Task Force Motion" vs. "Task Force Memo"? So it's unclear whether the issue of Airport Commissioner qualifications needed to be placed in the meeting minutes, and/or also added to the motion before the vote on the Motion was taken.

- Finally, a fourth problem with motions on page 15 involved the Small Business Commission. Ms. Alonso did an excellent job of stating clearly **all** of the various elements in the motion. **Alonso's motion should be the ideal, precise type of motions this Task Force should be stating clearly before voting on each motion!**

Unfortunately, Ms. Hall noted in another "Track Changes" comment sidebar that there was no "second" made to Vice Chair Bruss' motion introduced.

This Task Force must begin following *Robert's Rules of Order* more closely when it comes to making motions before voting on them, as these are **not** isolated examples.

All motions made must *clearly* state which **functions of a body being eliminated are handed off to another body, or to departmental City staff.**

The errors with these motions are bad enough. But in addition I have repeatedly asked this Streamlining Task Force to clearly state both in any motions made on retaining, eliminating, or combining any Body or Commission, and in your meeting minutes the specific **FUNCTIONS** of any Body being **combined** with either another body, or handed off to a City Department to perform those functions.

This Task Force obdurately continues to fail including what functions are being transferred. And worse, your "Decision Log" has failed so far to list which bodies have been "combined" as an outcome, listing only "kept" or "eliminated" as outcomes, which is deceptive of your deliberations, at best.

Sincerely,

/s/

Patrick Monette-Shaw

cc: Rachel Alonso, Project Director, City Administrator's Office

" All motions made must *clearly* state which **functions of a body being eliminated are handed off to another body, or to departmental City staff. "**

" This Task Force must begin following *Robert's Rules of Order* more closely when it comes to making motions before voting on them, as these are not isolated examples. "
