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San Francisco Commission Streamlining Task Force
City Hall, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102
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RE: Recommendations regarding the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force

Dear Commission Streamlining Task Force Members,

Your staff recently released a memorandum regarding general administrative and finance bodies, including a summary of and recommendations for the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force (SOTF). I generally agree with the memorandum; however, I believe two of the recommendations are very problematic: the recommendations to reclassify the SOTF as an “Advisory Committee” and to include a sunset date for the SOTF.

The Commission Streamlining Task Force created the “Advisory Committee” template earlier this year to apply to bodies with “no decision-making authority.” While the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force is responsible for many advisory duties, it is primarily *a decision-making body*. As noted in a previous correspondence¹ to the Commission Streamlining Task Force, San Francisco voters entrusted the SOTF to *enforce* the Sunshine Ordinance, including the ability to *order* – not merely advise – City departments and officials to comply with requests for public records. The City Attorney’s Office has long recognized² that the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force has decision-making authority and has included it among the minority of boards and commissions whose members are required to file Statements of Economic Interest. This recognition has also been routinely reaffirmed by the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor through the SOTF’s inclusion in Section 3.1-103 of San Francisco’s Campaign and Governmental Conduct Code. Therefore, reclassifying the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force as an “Advisory Committee” with “no decision-making authority” would not only be improper, but it would also suggest that the SOTF does not have the ability to enforce the Sunshine Ordinance as intended by San Francisco voters.

Equally concerning is staff’s recommendation to automatically sunset the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force after three years unless it is reauthorized by the Board of Supervisors. In its memorandum, staff correctly states that the “SOTF plays a well-known role in ensuring Sunshine Ordinance compliance that San Franciscans trust and rely on.” Government transparency requires an ongoing commitment and should not expire. A sunset date would allow a future Board of Supervisors to dissolve the SOTF by simply not taking action to reauthorize it. The SOTF’s well-known role in upholding government transparency should be allowed to continue unless the *voters* decide otherwise.

I urge the Commission Streamlining Task Force to carefully consider the points above when it makes its final recommendation for the Sunshine Ordinance Task Force.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Yankee

¹ https://media.api.sf.gov/documents/2025.10.14_Sunshine_Ordinance_Task_Force_Yankee_and_Pilpel.pdf

² <https://www.sfcityattorney.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Memo-re-Boards-and-Commissions-November-2024.pdf>