



Draft Minutes

Regular Meeting of the
Commission Streamlining Task Force
City and County of San Francisco

Daniel Lurie
Mayor

Wednesday, July 16, 2025
1:00 pm

City Hall, Room 408
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Agenda

1. Call to Order

Chair Ed Harrington called the meeting to order at 1:05pm

2. Roll Call

Ed Harrington, Chair	seat 4 - Board of Supervisors designee (public sector labor representative)
Jean Fraser, Vice Chair	seat 5 - Mayor's designee (expert in open and accountable government)
Andrea Bruss	seat 3 - City Attorney's designee
Sophie Hayward	seat 1 - City Administrator's designee
Natasha Mihal	seat 2 - Controller's designee

Hannah Kohanzadeh called roll. With all five members present, a quorum was established.

3. Announcements (Informational Item)

Chair Harrington confirmed that the meeting needed to adjourn by 4:00 p.m. New clerk Hannah Kohanzadeh introduced herself.

4. General Public Comment

Public comment was received from three speakers:

- Debra Walker, a longtime commissioner, expressed appreciation for the Task Force's work and emphasized the need for consistency, jurisdictional clarity, and clearly defined roles for commissions versus departments, the Mayor, and the Board of Supervisors. She cited her experience on the Building Inspection, Police, and Arts Commissions and stressed the value of commissions when they are focused and purpose-driven.

- Stacy Smith recommended displaying each Task Force member's title or affiliation during roll call and encouraged members to speak directly into microphones for accessibility in meeting recordings
- Patrick Monette-Shaw provided comment and submitted the following written summary:
I again recommend your staff create a new section on your website to organize and group major documents your Task Force has written and authored, so they are available from a single central page for easier access by the public. Your "Planned Schedule of Meetings" by date is one such document, and your Microsoft Excel "Commission Workbook" is another. The upcoming BLA and City Controller analysis underway of costs of each Advisory Committee and Commission is another such document.

Also, the 83-page "Templates and Criteria for Advisory and Governance Bodies" document is another candidate for the centralized web page. And if you develop separate "Templates" for "Appeals and Regulatory" vs. "Other Bodies," those templates should be placed there too, particularly to provide successive iterations of any revisions and updates to those documents.

Will each policy body receive a separate one- or two-page analysis formatted like the template?

5. Approve Minutes – [June 18, 2025 meeting](#) (Action Item)

The Task Force considered approval of the draft minutes from the June 18, 2025 meeting.

During public comment, one speaker, Patrick Monette-Shaw, provided comment and submitted the following written summary:

Thank you for including my 150-word written public comments for several agenda items in these meeting minutes. Overall, Ms. Alonso and her staff are doing an incredibly great job preparing this Task Force's meeting materials, and she has been very responsive to my e-mail questions. But I prefer she not edit my 150-word written comments, and prefer she include them in your minutes as submitted, without editing to add clauses like "He also recommended," or "He asked the Task Force to" I don't want her to waste her valuable time editing my written testimony.

Unfortunately, although I had submitted specific written testimony for Agenda Item #7 "Future Agenda Topics," for the June 18 meeting minutes, they were not included and were eliminated, however inadvertently. I ask this Task Force to delay approving the June 18 meeting minutes until they are revised to include my written comment for Item 7.

Chair Ed Harrington responded that the minutes prepared for the Task Force exceed legal requirements in their level of detail, and that public comments are not required to be included verbatim as long as the minutes provide an accurate summary of the discussion.

Following discussion, the Task Force proceeded with a motion to approve the minutes initiated by Vice Chair Fraser. The motion was seconded by Andrea Bruss and passed unanimously by voice vote.

6. Inactive Bodies (Action Item)

Materials: [Staff Memo](#) and [Presentation](#)

Henry O'Connell, Senior Performance Analyst from the Controller's Office, presented a staff recommendation regarding 34 public bodies identified as inactive. Staff recommended eliminating 31 bodies and deferring action on 3 bodies to the subsequent discussions by policy area.

The recommendation was based on follow-up with departments to understand why each body had stopped meeting, whether its functions were still needed, whether responsibilities had shifted elsewhere, and whether reactivation was planned. For each body, staff prepared a rationale to support the proposed action.

The three bodies recommended for deferral were:

- Board of Examiners – fulfills a specialized function for the Department of Building Inspection but has met infrequently; additional evaluation is needed once templates are finalized.
- Long-Term Care Coordinating Council – closely tied to the Dignity Fund Oversight and Advisory Committee in the City charter; proposed for future discussion with related bodies.
- Our Children, Our Families Council – may be reactivated following a recent ballot measure; staff recommended waiting to assess alignment with new policy direction.

Four members of the public spoke during public comment:

- Stacy Smith, who urged the Task Force to reflect on whether the group's focus should be solely on elimination or if there would be opportunities to modify or combine bodies. Chair Harrington clarified that future Task Force meetings would include discussions of modifying or combining bodies.
- Patrick Monette-Shaw provided comment and submitted the following written summary:
My letter to this Task Force noted you must ignore the Long-Term Care Coordinating Council (LTCCC) decision to self-disband. City bodies don't generally have the authority to unilaterally self-disband.

Before you make a decision in October about whether to eliminate the LTCCC, this Task Force should revisit my letter and consider recommending retaining this policy advisory Council with a much smaller membership. It should focus on the need for institutional-based long-term care facilities in San Francisco, that are greatly needed to prevent the massive out-of-county discharges, discharges that disenfranchise San Franciscans as they age and face illnesses, and need custodial care at the end-of-life. San Francisco's Health Commission is doing an insufficient job of developing long-term care facilities, or even focusing on institutional-based skilled nursing care. There is still a great need for an oversight policy body to focus on accountability for the need for in-county, long-term care institutional settings.

- David Pilpel generally supported the staff memo but recommended expanding the explanatory content in future reports regarding the context and legal framework by which some of the bodies were established. He urged the Task Force to clarify which state-authorized but non-mandated bodies were being eliminated and to note when successor programs or functions still existed elsewhere in City government.
- Niall Murphy raised an audio accessibility issue and recommended exploring technical solutions to improve hearing conditions for in-person attendees. Chair Harrington responded that hearing room 408 was known for having the worst acoustics in the building.

- Stacy Smith returned to the podium and emphasized that Proposition E was intended to improve the quality, not just reduce the quantity, of public bodies.

Task Force members supported the recommendations:

- Chair Ed Harrington clarified that this was a procedural clean-up and emphasized that elimination today would not prevent the Task Force from revisiting these bodies in future meetings if needed. He also noted a request to revive the Housing Stability Fund Oversight Board but stated that the Task Force's role is not to identify new work for inactive bodies.
- Natasha Mihal emphasized that eliminating a body does not mean the policy area is unimportant, and that the City could reestablish bodies in the future if needed.
- Vice Chair Jean Fraser praised the staff's detailed memo and stated the goal was not to reduce the number of commissions arbitrarily, but to recognize when bodies have effectively disbanded or become obsolete.
- Andrea Bruss agreed with deferring action on the three specified bodies and clarified that certain recommendations, such as those requiring action by the Ethics Commission, would not be forwarded until the end of the Task Force's process, when other legislation is addressed.

Following discussion, Vice Chair Jean Fraser moved to adopt staff's recommendation to eliminate the 31 inactive bodies and defer decision-making on the remaining three. Natasha Mihal seconded the motion, and the Task Force approved the action unanimously by voice vote

7. Templates and Criteria for Advisory and Governance Bodies and Staff Working Groups (Action Item)

Joanna Bell from the Controller's Office presented draft evaluation criteria and structural templates, tools designed to guide future decisions about whether to retain, modify, consolidate, or eliminate public bodies. The discussion focused on finalizing general-purpose evaluation criteria and templates for advisory bodies.

The **first part of the presentation** covered evaluation criteria, which are intended to serve as a consistent, objective framework across body types. Task Force members reviewed proposed refinements to categories and cutoffs, including meeting frequency and vacancy rates. The Task Force supported a threshold defining "**borderline inactivity**" as:

- Fewer than four meetings held in the previous year, or
- More than 25% of seats vacant.

The Task Force then reviewed proposed criteria for **identifying overlapping functions and potential redundancies**. Members agreed to remove two questions related to similar power/authority and added value, stating these were already captured in other tools or too subjective. The remaining criteria focused on whether multiple bodies serve the same policy area or department or similar functions, with members requesting that such overlaps be highlighted in future staff reports.

A third set of evaluation questions concerned **influence and interests**. The Task Force supported retaining two questions:

1. Whether the body is tied to a narrow funding source or niche interest.
2. Whether another body serves the same constituents.

Task Force members requested to remove a third question—whether a body helps elevate the voice of underrepresented communities—due to concerns about subjectivity.

A fourth section on **costs** was removed from the evaluation criteria and will instead be provided as informational context since it is unlikely to drive decisions on its own.

The Task Force then reviewed **criteria specific to advisory bodies, focusing on public participation and representation**. Members supported evaluating whether a body:

- Provides a unique pathway for public input not otherwise available.
- Brings in outside expertise that would otherwise be absent from policymaking.

One proposed question regarding increasing representation of underrepresented communities was removed. The group agreed that equity considerations would be reflected in broader policy discussions rather than in specific evaluation criteria.

Lastly, the group reviewed a general criterion to determine whether a body should be purely advisory (i.e., has no binding legal authority). Task Force members agreed the existing criteria were sufficiently clear and nothing additional was necessary.

In the **second part of the presentation**, the Task Force moved onto a discussion of structural templates for advisory bodies. Senior Analyst Joanna Bell informed the Task Force that while they may elect to apply the templates to future bodies created by ordinance by adding restrictions to the charter, it would be impossible to restrict future bodies created in the charter to the template vision.

Appointing Authority and Confirmations

Task Force members agreed not to prescribe a standard appointing authority in the template. Instead, they supported the position that it should be determined at the time the advisory body is created, based on its purpose and context.

- Chair Ed Harrington, Vice Chair Jean Fraser, and Sophie Hayward emphasized flexibility in matching appointments to need.
- The group agreed to retain language confirming that each appointing authority is entitled to appoint its designated members without secondary confirmation.

Commissioner Removal and Term Lengths

The Task Force reaffirmed previous decisions:

- Members of advisory bodies may be removed at will by their appointing authority.
- Terms should not exceed the advisory body's sunset period. For example, if the body sunsets after three years, member terms may not be longer than that.
- Staggered terms may be addressed at the time of reauthorization.

Qualifications

After discussion of the complications that can arise with overlapping appointment requirements, members agreed to include only one component in the template:

- If no formal qualifications are required, appointing authorities should briefly state why their nominee is qualified to serve.

This decision removed earlier draft language on body- vs. seat-level qualifications and avoided prescriptive requirements in the template itself.

Compensation and Benefits

The group reached consensus on two points:

- The advisory body template will not include a standard for stipends or compensation.
- Members of advisory bodies should not be eligible to purchase health benefits through the City
- Vice Chair Jean Fraser noted that while stipends may serve equity goals, health benefits are a separate matter and not an appropriate justification for appointing or retaining members.
- Andrea Bruss supported stating explicitly that advisory body members are not eligible for health benefits and that compensation decisions remain at the discretion of the appointing authorities.

Establishing Authority

Members unanimously agreed that:

- Advisory bodies should not be placed in the City Charter.
- Existing advisory bodies located in the Charter should be relocated to the Municipal Code, with the Administrative Code being the preferred home for all formal advisory bodies; scattered bodies currently located in other parts of the Municipal Code (e.g., Park Code) should be moved into the Admin Code for transparency and consistency.

Sunset Dates

Members previously agreed that advisory bodies should sunset within three years. Chair Harrington requested the sunset dates be staggered so all bodies do not come up for reauthorization at the same time.

Purpose, Activities, and Reauthorization

The Task Force supported requiring a statement of purpose only at the time of body creation and reauthorization, rather than annually.

- Sophie Hayward and Chair Ed Harrington also supported including a statement of purpose and summary of activities at reauthorization to help justify the body's continuation.
- Vice Chair Jean Fraser expressed interest in the City Attorney's Office prohibiting "default" reauthorizations; the Board of Supervisors should be required to take affirmative action to extend an advisory body beyond its sunset date.

Limits on Public Hearings and Directives

The group discussed concerns about advisory bodies overstepping their roles by calling hearings or directing staff.

- Members agreed that the template should define advisory bodies as limited to providing expertise and input to the appointing authority or department—not issuing directives or initiating policy independently.
- There was consensus to include a clear statement of role and limitations in the general purpose language of the advisory body template.

Naming Conventions

The Task Force discussed standardizing the naming of advisory bodies as "advisory committees."

- Vice Chair Jean Fraser and Chair Ed Harrington supported using consistent nomenclature, noting that terms like "commission" can be misleading.
- Sophie Hayward raised potential political concerns, especially if some existing commissions are reclassified as advisory committees.

- The group agreed to propose “advisory committee” as the default name but allow exceptions to be handled on a case-by-case basis during policy-area reviews.

The third and final part of the presentation turned to the **type-sorting criteria and structural templates for governance commissions**. Staff asked the Task Force to consider key threshold questions to help differentiate governance bodies from other public bodies. The conversation focused on when governance commissions are appropriate and whether multiple types of governance templates are needed.

Vice Chair Jean Fraser supported creating a governance template for fiduciary commissions that require political insulation due to long-term responsibilities (e.g., infrastructure, physical assets, trust obligations), distinct from general-purpose governance commissions that oversee departments. She emphasized that fiduciary commissions are appropriate when decisions have long-term public impacts and must be insulated from short-term pressures. Chair Ed Harrington noted an additional grouping of public bodies that are called commissions but which do not perform governance functions and may need to be renamed or reclassified.

Presenter Joanna Bell prompted the Task Force to consider in which situations governance bodies may be appropriate, taking into account department oversight; department size; and/or policy area, funding sources, or functions. Task Force members were in general agreement that governance commissions must oversee departments, noting that some exceptions may be needed for “agencies” or “offices.”

Sophie Hayward suggested that rate-setting authority could be one marker of when a governance commission is appropriate, especially when public input is essential. Andrea Bruss agreed but also expressed caution about over-relying on this criterion, noting that many departments set fees and rates but have other more primary functions, thereby not warranting a governance commission. Vice Chair Jean Fraser countered that public hearings on rates are not always the best way to make prudent long-term decisions. She argued that some governance commissions should be established precisely to resist political or public pressure and to ensure sound, forward-looking financial decisions, especially when overseeing infrastructure.

As the end of the meeting drew near, the Task Force turned to a discussion of process, the usefulness of templates for governance bodies, and the need to enable staff to begin developing body-by-body recommendations. There was general agreement that for the next iteration of templates, staff will draft specific proposals for Task Force members to react to, rather than asking questions.

Public comment included the following points:

- Patrick Monette-Shaw provided comment and submitted the following written summary:
How will these templates be used? Will they be turned into separate analyses reports assessing performance of each policy body and governance commission to recommend retaining or eliminating?

Slides 31 and 73 discuss “Annual Reports” required by City Charter §4.103 that each Commission issue — separate and distinct from a City Department’s annual report — describing activities the governance body conducted during the year and recommendations it made. These Annual Reports are different from “Annual Reports” City Department’s that are operational entities with broader responsibilities submit, describing their overall performance, budget execution, and performance data in the department. They were meant to be two different kinds of Annual Reports.

The Annual Reports describing Governance Body’s performance should be retained to evaluate how the body is performing governance oversight. You shouldn’t eliminate those Annual Reports simply because it’s unclear whether Commissions have not been complying with the City Charter requirement to produce them.

- David Pilpel suggested that the Charter should include governance bodies (but not advisory bodies) and that relevant code sections should cross-reference associated public bodies. He also noted concerns about meeting frequency, special meetings, committees, and whether the Asian Arts Museum, Fine Arts Museums, and War Memorial require their own commissions under trust agreements. He supported templates with exceptions and emphasized thoughtful categorization of appeals and rate-setting functions.

8. Future Agenda Topics (Discussion Item)

Materials: [Planned Task Force decision calendar](#)

Project Director Rachel Alonso presented an updated decision calendar for the Task Force, including proposed sequencing for policy-area discussions and remaining template finalization. She also emphasized the importance of completing template work by the August 6th meeting in order to enable 1) the inaugural policy area discussion on September 3rd and 2) the timeline for posting staff recommendations two weeks in advance.

Task Force members agreed that legally required bodies and staff working groups did not require separate in-depth discussion, suggesting instead that staff flag such bodies during policy-based meetings as needed. Chair Ed Harrington requested a brief five-minute discussion on staff working groups to determine whether the Task Force should provide any guidance or recommendations.

Chair Harrington and Sophie Hayward noted that the Public Safety policy-area discussion scheduled for September 3rd may not require a full meeting. Sophie Hayward also complimented the pre-meeting preparation materials, describing them as challenging but helpful. She suggested continuing this approach, with pre-meeting “homework,” particularly as the Task Force shifts from template design to policy application.

During public comment, David Pilpel questioned the grouping of the Airport under economic development rather than infrastructure. Patrick Monette-Shaw encouraged the Task Force to consider adding additional meetings in the fall to ensure there is enough time to review recommendations, draft the final report, and prepare proposed Charter amendments for submission in early 2026.

9. General Public Comment – Continued from item 4 if necessary

Item 8 was not needed, as item 4 did not exceed 15 minutes.

10. Adjournment

Chair Harrington adjourned the meeting at 4:07pm.

Minutes prepared by Rachel Alonso, Project Director