

Attachment B

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Petition to Phoenix City Council

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CITY CLERK DEPT.

Petitioner Information:

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Increase Public Access to Phoenix City Council Meetings

The impact and importance of civic participation on a local level cannot be understated, particularly in these politically turbulent and fraught times. A person's greatest sphere of influence is their local government, yet many Phoenixians are realistically unable to take an active role in their city government due to meeting times that are incompatible with the majority of working persons' lives. As a result, Phoenix City Council meetings are for all practical purposes completely inaccessible to a large swath of residents.

Although the City of Phoenix is in technical compliance of open meeting law, the current meeting times of both the policy sessions and formal meetings have a chilling effect on public participation.

True, meeting agendas are posted online within the required times and meetings are streamed online and available shortly afterward. Accommodations are available for those with disabilities. A great many staff members work diligently every week to compile an immense amount of technical information and ensure it is accessible in both digital and physical formats.

However, compliance with the letter of the law does not equate compliance with the spirit of the law.

Ultimately the end result of mid-week, 2:30 p.m. meeting is a diminished ability for Phoenixians to take an active role in their municipal government in a timely manner. Watching a meeting online two days after it occurred simply does not equate the ability to see one's government in action in real-time, particularly since watching a recording of the meeting robs a person of the opportunity to submit a public comment card and directly address their elected officials in real time.

For this reason, I and the undersigned residents of the city request that Phoenix City Council change the meeting time of both the policy session and formal meetings. We ask that Phoenix City Council policy sessions be split into multiple meetings in a way that

maximizes the potential for residents to actively participate in ongoing meetings.

Specifically, we suggest the following changes to the current Phoenix City Council meeting schedule:

- Split city council meetings into **administrative** and **constituent-focused** meetings.
 - **Administrative meetings** would include consent agenda items, standard/routine contracts, and routine municipal business. Uncontested zoning hearings could be held during this meeting. These meetings would become what is currently the formal city council meeting and would remain scheduled for the afternoon.
 - **Constituent-focused meetings to be held at least twice monthly and scheduled in the evening, with the earliest start time being 6 p.m.**
 - One constituent-based meeting would be reserved specifically and only for *contested* zoning hearings.
 - The other meeting(s) would have municipal business and administration items as agendized items (not as consent agenda items). These would include:
 - Utility rates
 - Park improvements
 - Budget items
 - Major infrastructure projects
 - Police and Fire Departments administration
 - Public transit
- Some **constituent-based meeting** items would be **automatically subject to an evening meeting**, specifically public transit, police and fire administration, and budget.
 - Other items, such as park improvements or more minor infrastructure improvements, could be included based on a threshold of the number of residents and/or geographic area impacted. When that threshold is reached, the item is automatically placed on an evening agenda.

At the very least myself and everyone who has signed this petition believe it is a fair starting point for serious discussion and respectfully request the city council to consider our request.



Christina S. Eichelkraut