

March 7, 2002

Honorable Mayor and Members of
the Hermosa Beach City Council

Regular Meeting of
March 12, 2002

AGENDA FORMAT – “WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS” CATEGORY

Recommendation:

That the City Council review the attached material and provide direction to staff on the “Written Communications” category.

Background:

The City Council, at its meeting of February 12, 2002, directed staff to return with a report on the “Written Communication” category on the agenda. Attached are copies of the minutes for this category showing all of the items that have been included for the last two years. This category has been part of the agenda since 1981. The subject matter of items that have been considered varies greatly. The category has been used often to bring items to the attention of the City Council that for one reason or another probably would not appear on the agenda elsewhere. These items are often the expression of the opinion of the letter writer. Community based groups also have used this category to obtain approval for an event, waiver of fees or some other issue related to a activity that cannot wait to go through the normal process. Most items that have appeared under this category have not had a staff report prepared primarily because of when they are received.

The Council has several options:

1. Eliminate the category - This would generally mean that groups that wished to express an opinion, announce an event, or request a waiver or other council action could do so under oral communications. Groups requesting permission for an event or some other item requiring City Council approval would follow the normal agenda deadline. This would mean the request, along with a report, would appear on the agenda under the appropriate category. This could be a public hearing, consent calendar, etc. depending on the requested action. During the past two years, one of the most frequent uses of the category has been to express opinions about issues, sometimes within the jurisdiction of the City Council, sometimes not. These could be acknowledged, explaining the existing city policy. Copies of the letter would go members of the City Council and, if desired, the issue or idea contained in the letter could then be agendized with a staff report and any other related material.
2. Revise “Written Communications” to be like “Oral Communications”. This would mean that the City Council would receive the letter and refer it to another meeting or to staff to resolve. In order to take an action, the City Council would have to add it to

the agenda by a 4/5 vote. The letters would simply be listed on the agenda without any recommendation and the category explanation would be changed to state that the City Council acknowledges receipt of the letter and may take action to set it for a future agenda.

3. Leave the category as it is with further direction on what you will consider under "Written Communications".

Generally speaking, most City's do not have a "Written Communications" category like we have. If they have a place for letters, they are often treated just like oral communications.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen R. Burrell
City Manager