

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

CITY OF LOS ANGELES  
Department of Recreation and Parks

March 7, 2001

TO: BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

FROM: ELLEN OPPENHEIM  
General Manager



SUBJECT: Special Agenda Usage for Commission Meetings

The Ralph M. Brown Act, also known as the Open Meetings Law, requires legislative bodies, including this Commission, to publicly post agendas for Regular Meetings 72 hours in advance of the meeting. In conformance with these provisions, the practice of the Commission Office is to complete Regular Meeting Agendas by the Wednesday prior to the regular Wednesday meetings, so that the Agenda can be duplicated and mailed on the Thursday before the Wednesday meeting. It is also scanned for the Department's Internet website and usually uploaded to the City's server by Thursday evening.

To maintain this public notice schedule, items to be considered by the Board at a Regular Meeting must be ready for placement on the agenda at least seven full working days prior to the Board meeting, in order to provide time for review and approval by senior staff and the General Manager. More complex issues or those needing review by multiple parties require more advance time. If an item is not ready for the Regular Agenda, then the matter may be held for inclusion in the next upcoming Regular Agenda. This could result in an issue being delayed nearly three weeks before consideration by the Board, or up to five weeks during the late summer or holiday schedule when the Board meets only once a month.

The Brown Act also expressly provides for the calling of a Special Meeting by a legislative body with at least 24-hour notice to the public. There are no criteria established for what constitutes a Special Meeting (as distinguished from an Emergency Meeting, for example, which can be called with one-hour notice but requires that the Commission make the specific findings contained in Government Code Section 549565 that the business is of an emergency nature). However, the items on the Special Agenda shall be the only items considered at that time, and public testimony must be allowed.

A number of Regular Meetings of the Board in the last several months have been accompanied by Special Meeting Agendas. The items on these Special Agendas have been issues that came to fruition in the time between finalization of the Regular Agenda and the Monday before the meeting. A delay of those issues would have reduced the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department in delivering service. Often, the items on Special Agendas have related to Planning and Construction issues, such as change orders or contract awards, and represent efforts encouraged throughout the Department to respond expeditiously to problems as they arise, especially on capital projects.

Special Agendas are completed and publicly posted within 24 hours of the meeting as required. Because of the timetable for uploading to the Internet, they may not always appear on the website 24 hours prior to the meeting. In the future, every effort will be made to have Special Agendas completed by noon on the Monday before the Wednesday meeting, in order to provide additional time for uploading to the Internet.

Report prepared by Linda Barth