

From: [Dave](#) [REDACTED]
To: [-- City Clerk](#)
Subject: Comment on Item 4 of March 6, City Council Meeting
Date: Sunday, March 5, 2023 8:15:31 PM

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This comment is offered in response to the City Council agenda item on changing the status of the General Plan Advisory Committee while maintaining the meeting format.

I appreciate the conundrum faced by Planning staff with the ending of the pandemic-driven Brown Act leniency. Similarly, I appreciate the wariness of some members of the General Plan Advisory Committee to return to face-to-face meetings. It has been an uncomfortable three years of pandemic with the risks not yet fully abated. However, I don't concur with the direction offered this evening for Council approval.

Human beings have many ways to communicate. We use not only their voices, but our facial expressions, our body movements, and even at whom look as we speak. Zoom, as marvelously helpful as it has been during the pandemic, does not support this full panoply of human communication.

Most of us who volunteered to serve on the GPAC did so out of a deep commitment to the best possible future for our town and have devoted long hours to the effort, with many of us eagerly awaiting the day when we can again meet face-to-face for the more productive conversations regarding our shared future. Those who felt that way are distressed by the path proposed this evening.

I understand removing the GPAC from the auspices of the Brown Act and have no objection to that proposal. But to continue relying solely on Zoom for the GPAC meetings diminishes the role that could and should be played by the GPAC.

Over the last few days, I've heard suggestions that every other monthly GPAC meeting be held in person, that there be large open-air community General Plan gathering(s) conducted over the summer, and that the formation of additional working groups be encouraged with the meetings of those working groups posted on the [planpetaluma](#) website for anyone in the public to attend. I support all of these suggestions and other ideas that may result from continued problem-solving.

I asked the Council to continue this evening's decision and to request Planning to return with a plan that more fully embraces the participation of the GPAC and the general public.

Thank you for reading. - Dave Alden c: [REDACTED], [REDACTED],
Petaluma