



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

Independent Redistricting Commission

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AGENDA ITEM

DATE: February 25, 2021

Item 4

TO: Independent Redistricting Commission

**SUBJECT: STAFF REPORT ON PROCESSES USED FOR CHAIR AND VICE
CHAIR SELECTION AND ROTATION FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS**

OVERVIEW:

On December 10, 2020 (Item 6) the Independent Redistricting Commission unanimously selected David Bame as Chair, and Sonia Diaz as Vice Chair for an interim period through February 28, 2021. Today's meeting is the final regular Commission meeting scheduled in that interim period.

At the December 10, 2020 meeting, the Commission also requested to revisit the Chair and Vice Chair positions and consider a rotating Chair/Vice Chair. This staff report provides additional background information about Chair/Vice Chair rotation and selection.

BACKGROUND:

The approved Bylaws and Operating Procedures of the County of San Diego Independent Redistricting Commission describe the duties of the Chair and Vice Chair, which include:

Chair

- Convene and preside over regular and special Commission meetings
- Perform duties otherwise established by the Bylaws and Operating Procedures
- Sole official spokesperson for the Commission unless this responsibility is delegated in writing
- Any inquiries will be directed to the attention of the Chair
- Assigns coordinating duties to the Vice Chair as necessary
- If an office is vacated, the Chair may temporarily appoint a member of the Commission to fill the vacancy until a new officer is selected by the full Commission
- May formulate additional specific procedural rules of order to govern the conduct of Commission meetings
- May increase or decrease the public comment time per person in the exercise of the Chair's sound discretion, provided, however, that to the extent time is increased or decreased, all persons speaking on a particular item will be given equal time
- May reopen public comment on an item on the agenda in the exercise of the Chair's sound discretion

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Vice Chair

- In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair assumes the duties and responsibilities of that office

The idea of rotating Chair/Vice Chair is to distribute the responsibilities, challenges, and benefits of leadership among members of a group. Specifically, benefits include broader exposure to various points of view and leadership styles, improved collaboration, and shared responsibilities among all members for required duties. On the other hand, some drawbacks of implementing a Chair/Vice Chair rotation include potential lack of continuity and loss of efficiency created by transition efforts.

OTHER JURISDICTIONS:

Of the seven local jurisdictions researched, including the Cities of Berkeley, Chula Vista, Escondido, Los Angeles and San Diego and the Counties of Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, none have implemented a rotation for Chair and/or Vice Chair. The County of Los Angeles Citizens Redistricting Commission considered rotating Chairs and Vice Chairs but approved only a permanent Chair and Vice Chair.

A detailed example of rotating leadership lies with the California Redistricting Commission (CRC). In 2020, the CRC rotates Chair and Vice Chair at every meeting, and has adopted a rotation schedule that ensures the Chair and Vice Chair be from different political parties as required by the California Constitution while also considering gender and balance of workload. In 2010, the CRC rotated Chair and Vice Chair at every meeting during the line-drawing process, ensuring that the Chair and Vice Chair be from different political parties as required. Chair and Vice Chair were selected by a random rotation schedule created by Commission staff from the pool of Commissioners who volunteered to serve. The previous Vice Chair ascended to Chair, “ensuring continuity,” according to the CRC and, “to emphasize the non-partisan nature of the Commission.”

Although not redistricting, a notable public example of leadership rotation based on geographical location is the General Assembly of the United Nations, Administrative and Budgetary Committee, which selects its officers for each session on the basis of a regional rotation. The officers, “shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution” among other factors, according to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

ROTATION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

There are various ways to implement a Chair/Vice Chair Rotation. At the direction of the Commission, the Chair/Vice Chair rotation process could be based on:

- Rotation among Commissioners from each of the five Supervisorial Districts
- Rotation among interested/volunteer Commissioners
- Rotation assigned by random drawing from a pool of all Commissioners, or from a pool of interested/volunteer Commissioners, or from sub-pools formulated on relevant criteria
- Formation of an ad hoc committee to determine a rotation process
- Some other factor as determined by the Commission.

The Commission can also determine not to implement a rotation process for the Chair/Vice Chair, consistent with the decision made by other commissions that have considered this issue.

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The Commission can opt to revisit the selection of Chair and Vice Chair as an agenda item at periodic intervals (e.g., quarterly, or as determined by the Commission). This method would allow for ongoing consideration of Commission leadership but would necessitate a vote of the Commission for each new Chair and Vice Chair decision. Alternatively, the Commission can vote to establish a rotation schedule for the remainder of the year.

SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

In addition to the consideration of implementing a rotation process, the Commission must consider the expiration of the interim term of the current Chair and Vice Chair on February 28, 2021. Article III, Section 1 of the Commission’s Bylaws states that, “the full Commission shall select from its membership a Chairperson and a Vice Chairperson and any other officers it deems necessary.”

Of the jurisdictions researched, limited information was available about the processes used to select Chair/Vice Chair. The County of Los Angeles Citizens Redistricting Commission established two Co-Chair positions, and a list of nominated and/or self-nominated candidates. Candidates were allowed time to discuss their qualifications and interest in the role. Commissioners each had two votes, one for each Co-Chair position. The top two candidates were selected as Co-Chairs. In the event there was not two top candidates, the Commissioners had determined to drop the candidates with the fewest votes and conduct a second round of voting with Commissioners given two votes each. The County of Santa Barbara selected a Chair and Vice Chair by nomination.

The Commission has a variety of means to choose a Chair and Vice Chair, including:

- Call for nominations (This was the method used by the Commission to select the current Chair and Vice Chair)
- Call for volunteers
- Ad hoc committee formed to nominate a Chair and Vice Chair
- Some other method as determined by the Commission

Selection of a Chair and Vice Chair can be permanent, or for an additional interim period of one or more meetings, or subject to rotation, as discussed above, as desired by the Commission.

RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss and take action on potentially extending the Chair and Vice Chair interim period ending on February 28, 2021, potentially selecting a new interim or permanent Chair and Vice Chair, and/or potentially implementing a Chair and Vice Chair rotation. The Commission will need to take one (or a combination of) these actions in order to ensure that the Commission has a Chair and Vice Chair in place after the expiration of the current interim term.

ATTACHMENTS:

None