



City of Santa Clara

Meeting Minutes

Governance and Ethics Committee

01/16/2026

10:00 AM

City Hall - East Wing
Sparacino Conference Room
1500 Warburton Avenue
Santa Clara, CA 95050

Special Meeting

The City of Santa Clara is conducting Governance and Ethics Committee meetings in-person and continues to have methods for the public to participate remotely or in-person.

- Via Zoom: <https://santaclaraca.zoom.us/j/98559951444>
- Webinar ID: 985 5995 1444
- By phone: +1 669 444 9171

To submit written public comment before meeting:

Send email to mayorandcouncil@santaclaraca.gov by 10 a.m. one day before the date of the meeting. Emails will be forwarded to Committee members and will be uploaded as supplemental meeting material.

Note: Emails received as public comment will not be read aloud during the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Suds Jain called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

Present 3 - Member Raj Chahal, Chair Suds Jain, and Member Kevin Park

CONSENT CALENDAR

None.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Member of the public, Dr. Tom Shanks commented on the agenda meeting packet, specifically the lack of clarity on the proposed documents and what actions are being taken or not taken in relation to Item #2, Presentation by Outside Consultant for the Review of and Recommendations Regarding Potential Adoption of Ethics Commission and the Approval of Proposed Changes to City's Ethics Policies Previously Presented to Committee.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. [26-36](#) Approval of the October 30, 2025 Governance and Ethics Committee Special Meeting Minutes

Recommendation: Approve the minutes of the October 30, 2025 Governance and Ethics Committee Special Meeting

Member Raj Chahal motioned to approve the minutes for the **October 30, 2025 Governance and Ethics Committee Special Meeting**. The motion was seconded by **Member Kevin Park** and approved by the Committee.

Aye: 3 - Member Chahal, Chair Jain, and Member Park

2. [26-37](#) Presentation by Outside Consultant for the Review of and Recommendations Regarding Potential Adoption of Ethics Commission and the Approval of Proposed Changes to City's Ethics Policies Previously Presented to Committee

Recommendation:

1. Receive Consultant's Report and Provide Input or Direction Regarding Consultant's Recommendations on a Potential Ethics Commission or Alternatives
2. Review and Possible Action to Recommend to the Council Approval of Proposed Changes to City's Ethics Policies Previously Presented to Committee

Consultant, Morin I. Jacob, from Liebert Cassidy Whitmore (LCW)

presented recommendations regarding the potential adoption of an Ethics Commission and proposed changes to the City's Ethics Policies.

Members Jain and Park inquired as to what comparable sized city with an Ethics Commission was studied in regards to enforcement and oversight. **LCW** stated that they did not conduct a direct comparison and will report back to the Committee on this item.

Member Chahal inquired as to the difference of a separate Campaign Finance Commission and what exactly would this Commission address. **LCW** stated the Commission can be set up to cover items not addressed by the FPPC and Grand Jury.

Chair Jain commented on the various cities as to whether or not any of these commissions investigate employees and if commission members are appointed by the Mayor and Council, how are they truly independent. **LCW** responded that upon formation, it can be decided to include employees and how commission members are appointed to address these concerns.

Member Park questioned where the Ethics Pledge is coming from and its enforcement. In addition, he stated we need set up details and rules first before setting up an Ethics Commission.

Chair Jain stated Ethics is more subjective and a gray area that does not have a law to hold them to it. He suggested to pass by measure (public vote) to form the Ethics Commission.

Member Chahal inquired if there are ways to prevent weaponization of the Commission. **LCW** stated that it would be best to use state and federal laws and utilize your own City Attorney to address this. The City Council may retain an investigator as well to look into a member of the Council.

Member of the public Wanda Buck stated there is an ethics problem in Santa Clara and moving towards exploring more options as a new program or a separate Ethics Commission.

Member of the public Dr. Tom Shanks stated he was speaking on this agenda item and suggested to open up this discussion to the broader public for a public process.

Member Park made a motion for the following:

1) Direct LCW to consult with current or former Ethics Commissioners from other jurisdictions and any other relevant experts to provide recommendations and options, on other ways beyond forming an Ethics Commission to achieve transparency, accountability and ethics in the city. 2) City Manager Grogan added the inclusion of roles of key staff for clarity. 3) To return In-person to report back to the Committee.

Aye: 3 - Member Chahal, Chair Jain, and Member Park

STAFF REPORT

2026 Meeting Schedule: March 2, 2026, June 1, 2026, September 14, 2026, December 7, 2026.

Assistant City Manager Arcely Azevedo stated upcoming Committee meetings are currently to be at 10:00 a.m.

Member Kevin Park stated he would like to minimize meeting cancellations moving forward in addition to scheduling additional meetings to address the back log of issues before the Committee. He further stated that he would like to speak to Chair Jain about the list of items he would like the Committee to address, Chair Jain cited the Brown Act as to why Member Park should provide the list of issues to staff rather than speak to him directly about such items.

City Manager Jovan D. Grogan requested that priority setting be agendaized at a future meeting.

COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS / FUTURE REFERRALS FOR CONSIDERATION

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:39 p.m.