

Meetings nixed after complaint

Ex-mayor argues state law violated

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Los Altos' city manager has suspended all future meetings of the city's parking committee after a former mayor accused the group of violating the state's open-meetings law.

City Manager Marcia Somers sent out an email Friday to members of the City-wide Parking Committee, along with City Attorney Jolie Houston and City Clerk Jon Maginot, in which she wrote all of the committee's meetings "are suspended until further notice."

A key role

The committee plays a key role in determining how much development occurs downtown.

Most of the allegations raised by former Mayor David Casas center around the concept of serial communications in violation of the Brown Act, which means that a majority of the committee would communicate back-and-forth outside of a meeting on matters that they would later discuss publicly.

The parking committee is regulated under the Brown Act just like City Council or a school board would be.

In her email, Somers said that following requests made by the Friends of Los Altos, or FOLA, organization and based upon Houston's recommendation, she is suspending all meetings.

Casas, who is president of FOLA's board of directors, told City Council at its Feb. 9 meeting that committee members Kim Cranston, David Rock and Bill Maston "have been allowed to compromise the integrity of this committee through the use of subcommittees."

He handed out binders filled with pages that he said provided examples of the issues he raised.

Overlapping membership

With overlapping membership and subject matter, Casas said Cranston, Rock and Maston have been able to include a majority of the committee members in gathering information.

Under the Brown Act, a majority of the committee's members cannot discuss the same topic in private.

Cranston previously told the Post that the committee only operated the way the city told its members to.

When the subcommittees were set up Somers didn't say one person couldn't be on more than one subcommittee, he said. There are six subcommittees, of which most have two or three members.