

**James Pruet**

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**From:** Edmundo Larenas  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2020 2:12 PM  
**To:** James Pruet  
**Subject:** Commssioner Comment  
**Attachments:** Agenda item F July 2020.docx

Hello Jim,

Would you please publish the attached document for Agenda Item F, Commissioner Comments. Because we are allowed only two minutes I would like to refer to this document rather than read the entire text during my comments.

Respectfully

Edmundo Larenas

Commissioner Edmundo Larenas  
Commissioner Comment

**“Adopt formats, processes, and technologies that are designed to encourage widespread participation by residents in official public hearings and meetings....”**

**<https://www.amacad.org/>**

This a direct quote from a recommendation to local government taken from “Our Common Purpose” a recent report published by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The report recommends procedures to ensure a democratic process in government and enhance our democracy.

Counter to the message of this document this Board and especially its President are systematically suppressing dissent from the public and from commissioners. The public's ability to exert any meaningful influence on this board's action is rapidly approaching zero.

The false narrative used to justify this behavior is that our meetings are out of control and we need to bring order and civility to our meetings.

Well, here you have it, order and civility by oppression. The result is that we finish our meetings well ahead of time with little to no dissent.

Here are three examples of this board attack on Democracy.

### **Number 1: Quashing Dissent:**

At our last meeting President Reyering removed public and commissioner comments from the front of the agenda, where they have been traditionally and moved them to the end of the agenda and allowed only minimal time to speak.

When challenged she responded that she will decide how long and when comments will be made. This action has the effect of discouraging public comment and minimizing commissioner comment effectiveness.

This commission has taken to rushing approval of items on a packed agenda by **Calling for a Vote on a Motion** and allowing only a few minutes for comments effectively quashing discussion and descent.

### **Number 2: Noticing meetings to exclude Commissioners**

This is a particularly noteworthy way method of exclusion. It has been used by the Board President and Vice President to write Policy with minimal public and board input.

On matters of substance, such as writing policy, meetings should be noticed to allow participation by any Commissioner or members of the public. This board has consistently refused to do this.

### **Number 3: Excluding members of the public from seats on Committees**

In 2019 then President Brennan made a motion to allow members of the public to hold seats on committees with approval by the Board. The motion carried. The result was immediate. This simple act increased public participation on several of our committee's providing them with much needed expertise.

One of President Revering's first action was to make a motion to remove members of the public from sitting on committees. The motion passed by a 3 to 2 vote.

In protest I refused to sit on any committee that does not allow voting members of the public.

One rational for not allowing members of the public to become voting members of committees was that public members can attend committee meetings anyway, asserting that attending a



committee meeting has the same impact as sitting as a voting member of a committee.

**Number 4. Holding special meetings at inconvenient hours**

This has now become a common practice of this board to reduce public participation on controversial topics.

Noticing a meeting during normal working hours ensures limited participation and is in violation of Roberts Rules of Order.

Fellow Commissioners I urge you to read the report by the American Academy of Arts and Science and implement its recommendations. Bring the public back into our decision-making processes.