

Council and Community,

The Zoom format is crucial for ensuring inclusive participation across our community. It has been a lifeline for many, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and continues to serve as an essential tool for engaging a broader segment of our population. Hybrid meetings have provided a platform for those who might otherwise be unable to attend due to health concerns, caregiving responsibilities, or mobility issues. Moreover, the environmental benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions through decreased travel to meetings cannot be overstated.

The agenda item highlights the city staff's recommendation to retain the current in-person/virtual format, emphasizing that the benefits of increased community involvement and participation significantly outweigh the financial and technical challenges that have been encountered. Implementing additional security measures has been a proactive step in addressing concerns related to "Zoom bombings," demonstrating a commitment to maintaining a respectful and inclusive forum for public discourse.

I fully advocate for the continuation of online/hybrid meeting modalities and would seek to return some version of them to Agenda Setting as well. This approach aligns with the city's goals of open and responsive government leadership and maximizes public participation in local governance. It is a statement to our community's adaptability and commitment to inclusivity, transparency, and environmental responsibility.

- Kyle Falbo