

RESOLUTION NO. 2026-013

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Palm Desert is responsible for the governance of the City and the maintenance of public trust; and

WHEREAS, City Councilmembers and appointed officials serve the public in positions of responsibility and authority and are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with applicable law and the City's council-manager form of government; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to establish clear expectations regarding conduct, authority, and professional standards applicable to elected and appointed officials in order to support orderly governance and reduce the risk of misunderstanding, conflict, or legal exposure; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed best practices and codes adopted by other jurisdictions and has determined that adoption of a Code of Conduct focused on standards of conduct and governance is appropriate for the City of Palm Desert; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to apply selected conduct standards to appointed Board, Commission, Committee, and Task Force members as set forth in the Code of Conduct.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PALM DESERT DOES HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Adoption of Code of Conduct. The City Council hereby adopts the *City of Palm Desert Code of Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials*, attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference.

SECTION 2. Applicability. The Code of Conduct applies to City Councilmembers and, as specified in the Code, to appointed Board, Commission, Committee, and Task Force members.

SECTION 3. Intent. The Code of Conduct is intended to establish expectations for conduct and governance and does not supersede applicable law, the City Charter, or duly adopted ordinances or resolutions.

SECTION 4. Effective Date. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTED ON APRIL 9, 2026.

Signed by:

CD97D25AEE9F484

 EVAN TRUBEE
 MAYOR

ATTEST:

Signed by:

8063A189723D437

 ANTHONY J. MEJIA
 CITY CLERK

I, Anthony J. Mejia, City Clerk of the City of Palm Desert, hereby certify that Resolution No. 2026-013 is a full, true and correct copy, and was duly adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Palm Desert on April 9, 2026, by the following vote:

AYES: HARNIK, MORENO, NESTANDE, PRADETTO, AND TRUBEE
 NOES: NONE
 ABSENT: NONE
 ABSTAIN: NONE
 RECUSED: NONE

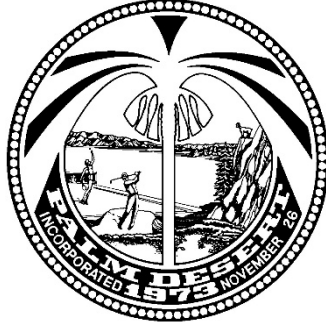
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the City of Palm Desert, California, this 4/20/2026.

Signed by:

8063A189723D437

 Anthony J. Mejia, MMC
 City Clerk

City of Palm Desert



Code of Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials

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ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL

Resolution No. 2026-013

April 9, 2026

Code of Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials

Section 1. Purpose, Scope, and Applicability

The City Council establishes this Code of Conduct to set expectations for the performance of duties by each individual Councilmember. This Code applies to Councilmembers acting in official capacities or when a title suggests City representation. This Code does not limit City Council authority or supersede laws governing the conduct of elected officials.

Applicability to Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces

The City Council appoints members to Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces to advise the City Council and support the public decision-making process.

The following sections of this Code apply to appointed Board, Commission, Committee, and Task Force members, to the extent relevant to their role and authority:

- Section 3. Standards of Conduct
- Section 4. Conduct During Meetings and Official Proceedings
- Section 5. Communications and Public Statements
- Section 7. Interactions with the Public and Other Participants in the Public Process

This Code does not alter the authority or duties granted to these bodies by law or City policy.

Section 2. Roles and Responsibilities

Authority of the City Council

The City Council acts as a legislative body. Authority rests with the City Council as a whole, and the Council exercises this authority through official action.

Role of Individual Councilmembers

Councilmembers represent the community and exercise independent judgment when voting on official matters.

Fiduciary Duty

Councilmembers serve as fiduciaries of the City of Palm Desert. This role requires a commitment to the public trust and the management of City resources for the benefit of the community.

A fiduciary duty obligates Councilmembers to act in the best interests of the City, prioritize public welfare over personal gain, and exercise care in the oversight of public funds and assets.

Role of the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem

The City Council designates the Mayor as the presiding officer and its representative for official and ceremonial events.

The Mayor Pro Tem performs the duties of the Mayor in the Mayor's absence.

Code of Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials

Section 3. Standards of Conduct

Professional, Ethical, and Fiduciary Conduct

Councilmembers shall conduct City business consistent with their fiduciary duty and ethical obligations. Councilmembers shall not use their position for personal benefit or for the benefit of others in a manner inconsistent with law.

Personal Attacks and Disparaging Conduct

Councilmembers shall conduct themselves professionally in meetings and official City proceedings and shall raise concerns regarding staff performance through the City Manager or established processes.

Use of Position and Title

Councilmembers shall not use their title or position to imply City endorsement of personal views, activities, or organizations without Council action.

Councilmembers shall distinguish between personal opinions and official City positions when speaking or acting in a public capacity.

Campaign Conduct

Councilmembers shall not use City resources, facilities, or staff time for campaign purposes.

This Code does not regulate lawful campaign speech or political expression.

Legal Considerations for Gifts, Travel, and Benefits

State law regulates the acceptance and disclosure of gifts, travel, meals, and other benefits that people may offer Councilmembers in connection with official duties.

Councilmembers shall consult the City Attorney or the Fair Political Practices Commission for guidance when questions arise.

Section 4. Conduct During Meetings and Official Proceedings

Order and Decorum

The presiding officer conducts City Council meetings. Councilmembers shall direct remarks through the presiding officer and shall not engage in side conversations or other conduct that disrupts the meeting.

Electronic Devices During Meetings

The City Council shall use electronic devices on the dais for City-related business and shall not be distracted from the proceedings. Councilmembers shall restrict personal use of electronic devices except to address a personal emergency.

Closed Session Confidentiality and Electronic Devices

Councilmembers shall not have personal electronic devices or any devices with recording capability accessible during closed session.

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To comply with this requirement, Councilmembers shall do one of the following:

- Leave such devices outside the closed session meeting room.
- Turn off such devices before entering the closed session.
- Place such devices in a designated, closed container within the meeting room.

Councilmembers shall return printed closed session materials to the City Clerk for proper disposal.

Confidential and Privileged Information

Councilmembers shall maintain the confidentiality of information that is privileged, confidential, or that the law protects, including but not limited to attorney-client privileged communications, confidential personnel information, and nonpublic litigation or negotiation materials, whether or not Councilmembers discuss such information in closed session.

Open Meeting Law Considerations

Councilmembers shall conduct City business in compliance with the Brown Act.

Councilmembers shall avoid serial communications and other conduct that could result in a violation of open meeting requirements, including informal discussions with other Councilmembers outside of noticed meetings.

Participation and Voting

Councilmembers shall disclose conflicts of interest consistent with applicable law and shall recuse themselves when required.

Section 5. Communications and Public Statements

Authority to Speak for the City

The City Council speaks through its official action. Individual Councilmembers do not have authority to speak on behalf of the City except when acting in an official capacity consistent with this Code or pursuant to Council action.

Use of Title and Public Statements

Councilmembers shall distinguish personal opinions from official City positions when communicating with the public about City matters. Use of a Council title in public communications shall not imply City endorsement of personal views, activities, or positions unless Council action authorizes such use.

Opinion Pieces and Media Contributions

The City Council encourages individual councilmembers to notify the City Manager when publishing opinion pieces, columns, or similar content that reference City matters using their Council title.

This notification allows City staff to identify and correct factual inaccuracies and does not require approval of content.

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Social Media

The City Council reserves City-operated social media platforms for official City communications. A Councilmember's personal, campaign-related, or other non-City-operated social media accounts shall not be used for official City communications or to announce official City actions. Such accounts shall clearly state that they are not official City accounts and that statements made on those accounts reflect personal views.

Communications, Transparency, and Legal Considerations

Councilmembers acknowledge that constitutional, open meeting, and public records laws may require them to disclose communications related to City business regardless of the format, platform, or device.

Use of social media, email, text messages, group messaging platforms, or intermediaries to discuss City business may create legal risks, including:

- Limitations on restricting access to accounts used to communicate official actions or positions.
- Brown Act concerns arising from serial communications, group messaging, or indirect communications through staff, members of the public, or other intermediaries.
- Public disclosure obligations for communications related to City business, including City business Councilmembers conduct on personal devices or accounts.

Councilmembers shall keep campaign activities separate from City business. Campaign representatives do not have a role in the conduct of City business and shall not participate in meetings or communications related to City operations or official matters.

Councilmembers shall direct questions regarding communications, public records, campaign activity, or related legal considerations to the City Clerk or City Attorney.

City Letterhead, Logos, and Branding

The City Council reserves City letterhead, logos, seals, and other official branding for official City use.

The City Council authorizes the Mayor to use City letterhead in connection with proclamations and other official correspondence consistent with established City practice. The City Council prohibits individual Councilmembers from using City letterhead.

Use of City Resources

Councilmembers shall not use City resources, staff time, and City communication platforms for personal, campaign, or any other use other than official City purposes.

Section 6. Interactions with City Staff

Councilmembers shall conduct themselves in a manner that is respectful and professional and consistent with the City's policies prohibiting discrimination, harassment, and retaliation.

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Authority and Direction

The City Council exercises its authority through collective action, including direction to the City Manager and the City Attorney. The City Manager supervises staff.

Councilmembers shall not direct staff or attempt to control individual administrative outcomes outside official Council action, including permitting, enforcement, procurement, inspections, or contract administration.

Requests for Information and Work

Councilmembers shall submit requests for information or work through the City Manager or established City practices. Requests shall not interfere with staff supervision, assigned priorities, or ongoing operations.

Staff Neutrality

City staff shall maintain professional neutrality in the performance of their duties. Councilmembers shall not seek to involve staff in advocacy for individual Councilmember positions, pressure staff to alter professional recommendations, or involve staff in campaign or political activities.

Concerns Regarding Staff Performance

Councilmembers shall direct concerns regarding individual staff performance to the City Manager and avoid public comments that compromise confidentiality, due process, or the fair administration of City operations.

Section 7. Interactions with Applicants, Appointed Bodies, and Public

Interactions with the Public

Councilmembers shall not make commitments, assurances, or representations regarding the outcome of pending matters outside the public decision-making process.

Councilmembers shall avoid private communications that could result in serial meetings, unlawful consensus-building, or other violations of open meeting laws.

Public Correspondence and the Public Record

Councilmembers shall forward written correspondence regarding a pending matter to the City Clerk and/or City Manager for inclusion in the public record.

Pre-Decision Communications with Applicants and Developers

For pending quasi-judicial matters, Councilmembers shall avoid private communications with applicants or developers that involve advocacy on the merits of the matter.

Councilmembers shall not:

- Indicate how they intend to vote on a pending quasi-judicial matter.
- Make commitments or assurances regarding the outcome of a matter.
- Provide strategic guidance on how to obtain approval.

Statements or conduct that suggests a closed mind or a predetermined outcome regarding a specific pending quasi-judicial matter may raise due process concerns and increase litigation risk.

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General policy views or expressions of personal values do not, by themselves, constitute bias. Councilmembers shall distinguish general viewpoints from statements regarding specific pending quasi-judicial matters.

Role of City Staff

Councilmembers shall direct applicants and developers to City staff as the primary point of contact for project information and process.

Councilmembers shall refer substantive information they received outside the public process to City staff for evaluation and inclusion in the public record.

Ex Parte Communications

Councilmembers shall disclose substantive ex parte communications related to a pending quasi-judicial matter during the public hearing.

Councilmembers shall direct questions regarding participation in quasi-judicial matters to the City Attorney.

Interactions with Boards, Committees, Commissions, and Task Forces

Councilmembers serving as a liaison to a City Board, Commission, Committee, or Task Force (“appointed body”) shall facilitate communication between the City Council and the appointed body.

A Council liaison is not a member of the appointed body and shall not direct, influence, or advocate regarding the appointed body’s deliberations or recommendations.

Councilmembers shall respect the independence of Boards, Committees, Commissions, and Task Orders and shall not seek to influence individual members outside of the public process.

Section 8. Representation of the City

Official Representation

The Mayor shall represent the City at official events, meetings, and functions. If the Mayor is unavailable, the Mayor Pro Tem shall represent the City. If both the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem are unavailable, the Immediate Past Mayor shall represent the City.

Personal Participation

Councilmembers may attend events or meetings in a personal capacity. When participating in a personal capacity, Councilmembers shall not present themselves as speaking on behalf of the City or imply City endorsement of their views or activities.

Section 9. Use of City Facilities and Resources

City Facilities

The City Council reserves City facilities and resources for official use and prohibits individual Councilmembers from using City facilities for personal, political, or campaign activities.

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After-Hours Access and Visitors

Councilmembers may access City facilities after normal business hours for official City business. Councilmembers shall not bring members of the public into City Council offices or other non-public areas outside of normal business hours, except for immediate family members or with advance notice and appropriate arrangements.

City Resources

Councilmembers shall use City equipment, supplies, and other City resources for official City purposes.

Section 10. Council Authority

The City Council adopts this Code of Conduct to establish expectations for the conduct of individual City Councilmembers. The City Council retains discretion to address conduct inconsistent with this Code. Actions include public censure or removal from Council-appointed committees, boards, or liaison assignments.

Section 11. Adoption and Review

The City Council authorizes the City Clerk to make non-substantive administrative updates to this Code to reflect changes in applicable state or federal law or to conform this Code to City Council-adopted policies, ordinances, or resolutions that affect or supersede its provisions.

The City Clerk shall redistribute the updated Code to the City Council following any administrative update.