

GUIDELINES FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN CITY COMMISSION MEETINGS

1. These Guidelines apply to regular and special meetings of the City Commission. They shall be enforced by the Mayor. Public Hearings before the City Commission are conducted under separate procedures.
2. Commission work sessions (informal meetings) are primarily for the purpose of staff members or others briefing the City Commission on matters upon which the Commission may later take action. Comments will not be taken from the audience, unless the Commission suspends this guideline for a particular topic as provided in guideline #12 below. When comments are allowed, they shall be limited to one comment per person not exceeding 3 minutes per work session.
3. Citizens may be permitted to speak to any matters on the agenda. The Mayor shall permit comments on matters on the agenda not scheduled to be voted upon at that meeting. The Mayor shall permit comments on matters scheduled to be voted on at that meeting prior to the vote on each such matter. Each Citizen may comment on no more than three agenda items at any one meeting. Each Citizen is limited to a total of three minutes speaking time on all matters on the agenda.
4. Comments on matters not on the agenda may be permitted after all matters on the agenda have been completed. Non-agenda comments may not exceed three minutes. Topics should be limited to matters upon which the City has authority to act.
5. Citizens are asked to speak at the microphones and give their names and addresses for the record. Citizens who submit an audience participation card in advance will be recognized first.
6. Citizens are expected to address the Commission in a courteous and respectful manner.
7. Citizens should make their comments as brief as possible. When a Citizen has consumed two and one half minutes, the Citizen will be advised that thirty seconds remain. At the three minute mark, the Mayor shall direct the Citizen to stop. Citizens who fail to comply with the Mayor's direction are subject to removal from the meeting.
8. Citizens must recognize the role of the Mayor as presiding officer. Citizens are to address their comments to the Commission through the Mayor. Comments should not be directed at other citizens. Rude, vulgar, offensive, disrespectful or disparaging comments will not be permitted.
9. Citizens will not be recognized to speak to the same matter more than once at the same meeting.
10. The Mayor will not recognize requests from citizens to poll the Commission prior to the time when an official vote will be taken. Citizens shall not ask for a show of hands or other expressions of support or opposition from those in attendance. Signs and banners are not permitted.
11. When citizens raise questions or complaints that can be dealt with best by staff members or are not scheduled for immediate action, arrangements will be made for discussion outside of Commission meetings. Citizens can return to a later meeting of the Commission to speak to the subject if they are not satisfied with the response received.
12. The Mayor may interpret these guidelines in order to best achieve the balance necessary between participation and responsibility. A majority of the Commissioners present must vote to suspend or waive these guidelines.