

Guidelines for Citizen Participation In City Commission Meetings

1. Public Hearings before the City Commission are conducted under separate procedures. These Guidelines apply to regular and special meetings of the City Commission. They are enforceable by the Mayor.
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, generally, will not be taken from the audience.
3. Citizens may be permitted to speak to any matters to be voted upon before the vote occurs for up to three minutes total. Citizen comments on matters not on the agenda may be permitted after all matters on the agenda have been completed. A citizen may speak to, or comment on, no more than a total of three matters per meeting. These non-agenda comments may not exceed three minutes.
4. 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.
5. Citizens are expected to address the Commission in a courteous and respectful manner. Citizens should make their comments as brief as possible. The Mayor may ask speakers whose comments become extended to bring them to a close.
6. Citizens must recognize the role of the Mayor as presiding officer. For instance, citizens must be silent when asked. Citizens who fail to comply with the Mayor's direction will give up the right to address the Commission.
7. Citizens, generally, will not be recognized to speak to the same matter more than once at the same meeting. No citizen will be recognized to speak a second time to the same issue until everyone who wishes to speak has spoken once.
8. The Mayor will not recognize requests from citizens to poll the Commission prior to the time when an official vote will be taken.
9. When citizens raise questions or complaints that can be dealt with best by staff members and/or are not up 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.
10. 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.
11. Citizens are to address their comments to the Commission through the Mayor. Comments should not be directed at other citizens. Disrespectful or disparaging comments will not be permitted.