



Public Comment/Rules Governing Council Meetings

**Glendale City Council
January 21, 2025**

Issues

- Public Comment – Agenda and Non-Agenda Items
- Decorum & Disruptive Behavior
- Council Debate & Deliberation
- Removal of Agenda Items After Publication
- Meeting Cutoff Time
- Wide Angle
- Procedure for Councilmember Future Agenda Requests
- Other Agenda Issues



Public Comment/Oral Communications

- Brown Act Requirement: Opportunity to speak on agenda items before or during consideration and to speak on matters within the subject matter jurisdiction of legislative body
- Glendale: Each agenda item, Oral Communications, and Community Event announcements
- Reasonable regulations:
 - Total time allotted for testimony on particular issues
 - Time for each speaker



Other Agencies

- Combined Public Comment Periods: All agenda items, all consent items, agenda/non-agenda items
- Limits on Speaking Time: Often 2–3 minutes per speaker
- Sliding Time Scales: Adjusted based on the number of speakers
- Overall Time Limits: Some cap total time for comments (e.g., 30 minutes for non-agenda topics)
- Speaker Cards: Submission deadlines (e.g., no cards after item read into the record)
- Time Ceding Rules: Formal limitations on sharing speaking time between individuals



Rules Regarding Decorum and Disruption

Council meetings are classified as **limited public forums**:

- Created for a specific governmental purpose – e.g. conduct the Council's business
- Viewpoint Neutral
- Restrictions must be reasonable



Disruptive Conduct

- Exceeding allotted speaking time and not adhering to the presiding officer's order to cease
- Speaking out of order or yelling to the extent that it hinders another member of the public from addressing the legislative body
- Encouraging members of the audience to disrupt the meeting, which results in actual disruption
- Specific, credible threats to Council, staff or members of the public



Not Disruptive Conduct

- **Technical violation** of rules of decorum that is **not actually disruptive**
- Speech deemed merely **insolent or impertinent** but which does not cause a disruption or constitute a threat of violence
- Speech or nonverbal conduct that goes **largely unnoticed** by legislative body or the public and therefore doesn't disrupt meeting
- Criticism of City Council policies, programs, procedures or services
- Criticism of City officials or employees related to City business.



Proposed Rules of Decorum

- Prohibition on the utterance of **threatening, abusive or loud language or sounds, whistling, clapping, booing, hissing, stamping of feet, repeated waiving of arms, presenting of signs that interfere with the participation of others in the audience, or other similar disruptive acts**
- Prohibition on any **signs, placards, banners/flags, props or similar items larger than 8.5 x 11, illuminated, or attached to any pole, stick or other device**
- Prohibition on all **noisemakers**
- •A requirement that members of the public shall only **address the body from the audience microphone**, unless authorized by the Mayor/Chair to speak from another location



Proposed Rules of Decorum (Cont'd)

- A requirement that members of the **public shall direct comments to the body as a whole or the presiding officer**, and not to staff, individual members of the body, or the public and that no person shall be permitted to interrupt members of the body, staff presentations, or members of the public who are at the microphone during a meeting;
- Speakers must **cease speaking** immediately when their speaking **time has ended**;
- **Public comment on agenda items** must relate to the subject matter of that item; and
- **Non-agenda Oral Communications** are limited to the matters within the City Council's **subject matter jurisdiction**.

Decorum and Disruption

- Process for Removal:
 - At least one specific warning to disruptive individual required
 - Exception: Immediate removal for threats or force
- Mayor or presiding officer enforces order, guided by the Brown Act and City policy



Council Debate & Deliberation

- No interruptions during speaking
- Every member speaks once before a second round of comments
- Stick to the topic, avoid personal attacks
- Speaking time limits (e.g., 5 minutes for first comments, 3 minutes for follow-ups)
 - Exception: For Councilmember Questions
 - Alternative: Authorize Presiding Officer to Provide Reminders on Brevity and Staying on Point



Removing Items from Agenda after Publication

- Current Council-approved Policy: Mayor directs timing of placement of matters on agenda (Council may direct otherwise); Silent on removal after publication
- Past Practice: Council action to remove item from agenda after publication
- Recent: City Manager removes items at direction of Mayor



Other Meeting Management Issues

Time Limits for Meetings

- Example Policies: Burbank & Santa Monica:
 - 11 PM meeting cutoff
 - Extension requires a vote, consultation with City Manager

Why Consider This?

- Impact to decision-making and public participation



Other Meeting Management Issues

- Wide-Angle Camera Use:
 - Pilot program tested to show the entire Council dais during public comments
- Options for Moving Forward:
 - Continue wide-angle view for all public comments
 - Limit to certain sections (e.g., Oral Communications)
 - Discontinue for quasi-judicial matters (e.g., referral to visual aids, exhibits etc.)



Other Meeting Management Issues

Procedure for Future Agenda Requests

- Intent: Brief discussion on whether to agendize matter, gain consensus
- Streamline Discussion: Limit speaker time and Council deliberation?

Removal of Agenda Preview

- Agenda Forecast Published on Website



Key Decision Points

1. Adjustments to public comment time or format?
 - a. Revise limits on non-agenda Oral Communications speaking time?
 - b. Combine public comment periods?
 - c. Limits on total amount of time for any particular comment period?
2. Formalize rules for decorum and removing disruptive individuals?
3. Implement rules/limitations on Council deliberation/discussion?
4. Modify/Formalize Policy for removal of items from agenda after publication?
5. Introduce a meeting cutoff time?
6. Continue, modify, or discontinue the wide-angle camera policy?
7. Modify procedure for Councilmember Future Agenda Requests?
8. Remove Agenda Preview?



Next Steps

- Council to provide direction on desired policy changes.
- Staff will prepare changes via:
 - Amendments to the Glendale Municipal Code
 - Council resolution to incorporate rules on order of agenda, public comment/oral communication, rules on disruption etc.





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