



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-427, Version: 1

Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, May 07, 2019

Discussion

SUBJECT:

CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RULES OF DECORUM FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS (CITY COUNCIL)

I. SUMMARY

In March the City Council requested that the City Manager research and draft rules of decorum for public meetings. This report contains proposed rules for the Council's consideration. The rules promote mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among City employees, elected officials, and the public. This policy is not intended to deprive any person of his/her right to freedom of expression, but only to maintain, to the extent possible and reasonable, a safe, harassment-free space. Positive communication is encouraged and volatile, hostile or aggressive comments are discouraged. Staff seeks the City Council consideration of proposed rules.

The question of decorum in public meetings has become a matter of concern in many municipalities nationally, and cities have adopted such rules and even full civility policies to try to guide appropriate behavior in such settings, in order to allow for full participation in the process by all members of the public. Other South Bay cities have adopted such policies, and these rules are similar to what has been adopted within the region.

II. RECOMMENDATION

TAKE the following actions:

1. CONSIDER and PROVIDE direction.
2. Should the Council wish to adopt these draft rules, INSTRUCT the City Manager to finalize the draft rules of decorum into a Council Policy Procedure for formal adoption at a future meeting.

III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE no action at this time.

IV. BACKGROUND

The City has numerous public meetings such as City Council meetings, Commission meetings, Board meetings, etc. (hereinafter "Public Meetings"). In order to safeguard participatory democracy in Carson, all persons attending Public Meetings in Carson should strive to:

A. Goals During Public Meetings

- Treat everyone courteously
- Listen to others respectfully
- Exercise self-control
- Give open-minded consideration to all viewpoints
- Focus on the issues and avoid personalizing debate
- Embrace respectful disagreement and dissent as democratic rights that are inherent components of an inclusive public process and tools for forging sound decisions.

B. Rules of Decorum

1. No person attending a Public Meeting shall engage in disorderly or boisterous conduct, including but not limited to applause, whistling, stamping of feet, booing, or making any loud, threatening, profane, abusive, personal, impertinent, or slanderous utterance-that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.
2. All remarks by members of the public shall be addressed to the Mayor or the Chair (hereinafter "Presiding Officer") and not to any other member of the public or to any single Council, Board or Commission Member unless in response to a question from that Member.
3. Signs, placards, banners, or other similar items shall not be permitted in the audience during a Public Meeting if the presence of such item disturbs, disrupts or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.
4. All persons attending a Public Meeting shall remain seated in the seats provided, unless addressing the body at the podium or entering or leaving the meeting.
5. All persons attending a Public Meeting shall obey any lawful order of the Presiding Officer to enforce the Rules of Decorum.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

VI. EXHIBITS

None.

Prepared by: City Manager's Office