



# CITY OF CARSON

## Legislation Text

File #: 2019-602, Version: 1

### Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, May 07, 2019

Discussion

#### **SUBJECT:**

**CONSIDER RECOMMENDATION BY CITY COUNCIL AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE 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. A set of proposed Rules was presented for the Council's consideration at the May 7, 2019 City Council meeting. The Rules were intended to promote mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among City employees, elected officials, and the public. The City Council considered the draft Rules and appointed an Ad Hoc Subcommittee comprised of Mayor Robles and Councilmember Dear to further refine the guidelines and bring them back for adoption. These proposal guidelines represent the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

#### **II. RECOMMENDATION**

TAKE the following actions:

1. ADOPT the Rules of Decorum.
2. Direct the City Manager to determine how to provide the Rules of Decorum to the general public in the City Council Chambers and at Public Meetings in other locations.

#### **III. ALTERNATIVES**

TAKE no action at this time.

#### **IV. BACKGROUND**

The City has numerous public meetings such as City Council meetings, Commission meetings, and Board meetings held in a number of locations throughout the City ("Public Meetings"). In order to safeguard participatory democracy in Carson, all members of the public attending

Public Meetings in Carson should adhere to the following Rules of Decorum:

#### Rules of Decorum

1. No member of the general public attending a Public Meeting in Carson shall engage in disorderly or boisterous conduct, including, but not limited to, applause, whistling, stamping of feet, booing, or making any other loud, threatening, profane, abusive, personal, demeaning, derogatory, impertinent, or slanderous utterance toward any Council member, Commissioner, Board member, staff member, or any other member of the general public, that disturbs, disrupts, or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting.
2. All remarks by members of the general public shall be addressed to the entire legislative body, commission, or board through the Mayor or the Chair and not to any other member of the general public or to any single Council member, Commissioner, or Board member unless in response to a question from that individual; and, public comment does not include the right to engage in dialogue with the Mayor, Council member, Commissioner, or Board member.
3. Speakers must cease speaking immediately when their time has expired.
4. All persons attending a Public Meeting shall obey any lawful order of the Mayor or the Chair to enforce the Rules of Decorum.
5. Any member of the general public engaging in conduct that disturbs, disrupts or otherwise impedes the orderly conduct of the meeting is subject to being removed from the Council, Commission, or Board meeting.

This policy is not intended to deprive any person of his/her right to freedom of speech or 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. 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 cities, including other South Bay cities, have adopted such policies, and these Rules are similar to what has been adopted within the region.

The City Manager is given the responsibility of determining how to provide the Rules of Decorum to the public, through signage, flyers, video display, or other means.

#### **V. FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

#### **VI. EXHIBITS**

None.

Prepared by: City Council Ad Hoc Subcommittee